Diversity, Inclusion, and Gender Equity Initiatives in Football Workplaces: A Cross-National Comparison

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Diversity, Inclusion, and Gender Equity
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A Cross-National Comparison

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Abstract

Literature on gender issues has highlighted that industries, such as sport, are to be considered highly male-prevalent. Acknowledging these inequitable practices, a number of decisions and programmes have been established in favour of both the involvement and development of gender equity in sport. Nevertheless, the impacts of these initiatives are not supported by a cross-comparative analysis to understand their potential overlap, and their actual efficiency. The formation of this study is based on the suggestion that future research needs to investigate the evolution of gender equity in sport from managerial and business perspectives. There already is a great deal of literature about women who have broken the glass ceiling in sport. Thus, the main aim of this study is to investigate the perspectives of those who hold entry and middle management roles (positions held prior to management opportunities). The purpose is to explore if current diversity initiatives are perceived as effective by those in the leadership pipeline within professional football clubs. This research employs a sequential explanatory mixed-method design (survey then interviews) to examine whether sport policies, funding incentives, organisational initiatives, and employment legislation impact diversity, equity, and inclusion in the football management workplace. A cross-national study (England, Scotland, USA, Canada) involves interpreting institutional processes, in which national cultural characteristics play a major role, that are directly focused on gender equity in the football workplace. From the data collected, an evaluation on individuals' perceptions around gender equity efforts within football club workplaces can occur. A total of 488 participants engaged with the survey in this study, with 14 of these participants taking part in interviews during phase two. The key findings in this study indicated that participants do not perceive diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) efforts to address gender equity as appropriate, and that work needs to be done to include more marginalised groups voices during strategic diversity planning. This cross-national comparison helps identify best practices and reflects on transferability in varying geographical and cultural contexts. It enables the identification of 11 practical recommendations in the conclusion of this PhD thesis.

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Table of Abbreviations in Thesis (To Be Continued)

AIAW	Association for Intercollegiate Athletics for Women
BJK	Billie Jean King
BLM	Black Lives Matter
CHRA	Canadian Human Rights Act
CoE	Council of Europe
COVID-19	Coronavirus
CPL	Canadian Premier League
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
CRT	Critical Race Theory
DEI	Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
DGWS	Division of Girls and Women in Sport
EEA	Employment Equity Act
EFL	English Football League
EHRC	Equality and Human Rights Commission
EPL	English Premier League
EU	European Union
FA	Football Association
FAWSL	Football Association Women's Super League
FIFA	Fédération Internationale de Football Association
FFP	Financial Fair Play
FST	Feminist Standpoint Theory
HMRC	Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs
HR	Human Resources
HRM	Human Resource Management
KPI	Key Performance Indicator

Table of Abbreviations in Thesis (Continued)

LGBTQ+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer or Questioning, Plus
MLS	Major League Soccer
NBA	National Basketball Association
NCAA	National Collegiate Athletic Association
NFL	National Football League
NGB	National Governing Body
NISA	National Independent Soccer Association
NWSL	National Women's Soccer League
OCR	Office for Civil Rights
PLES	Premier League Equality Standard
SHRM	Strategic Human Resource Management
SFA	Scottish Football Association
SPL	Scottish Premier League
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics
SWPL	Scottish Women Premier League
TIDES	The Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sport
UCF	University of Central Florida

1. Introduction

1.1. Background and Aim of Thesis

The sport of football has commonly been referenced to as the 'global game' due to its popularity in many cultures (Chadwick et al., 2018). Being also referenced to as 'soccer', it is considered the only major team sport where the rules of the game are the same for both women's and men's teams (Kaelberer, 2019). Football is especially popular in Europe, and in particular the United Kingdom, including both England and Scotland (Coluccia et al., 2018). Due to the sports industry following reproductive patterns with hiring and promoting traditionally accepted individuals (white, straight, cis-gendered men), many forms of discrimination have been observed, causing inequitable opportunities at all levels of sport for many ostracised groups (Clarkson et al., 2019). To address these issues, there have been several types of affirmative action policies, practices, schemes, and quotas introduced within different countries, football structures, and clubs. As systemic injustices are still prominent in the year 2021, specifically evidenced through the more recent 'Black Lives Matter' (BLM) protests, and campaigns towards addressing gender inequity in sport, it is important to understand what approaches have been taken to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) within the industry.

The aim of this empirical study is to investigate the impact DEI initiatives have had on the progression of gender equity within semi-professional and professional football clubs cross-nationally. With a recent increased amount of research focused on the development of women's sport and women in sport, there has been minimal focus on the initiatives around equity in managerial roles throughout the industry, specifically relating to gender. The formation of the present project is based on this gap, as well as Valenti et al. (2018) suggestions that future research needs to investigate the evolution of gender equity from managerial and business perspectives. This chapter provides an overview of the thesis, and its purpose in presenting research regarding the potential impacts DEI initiatives have made within professional football workplaces.

After having presented the rationale for this study, the research questions and objectives are introduced and discussed, with a/the justification of their relevance to the research topic presented. The methodology for this empirical research is based on a mixed-methodological approach that will be later outlined. A synopsis of each data collection phase, and the structure of the thesis, are also presented. It is also important to feature that I began this research as a 23-year-old white, American, middle-class, queer, non-disabled woman who holds a master's degree as her highest educational qualification. I am mindful of my white privileges, interconnected with multiple other social identities, and my responsibility to use this positional power as a researcher who seeks to challenge rather than perpetuate power structures (Norman, 2018). Undoubtedly, my privileged status as a white, Western academic impinged on this research.

1.2. Rationale of Study

> "I'm not a massive lover of initiatives because I don't always think that they deliver ultimately what is required; I think you need more forceful change. But I think there have been initiatives in the last four or five years that are starting to make a difference." (Southgate, 2020)

The quote above is what England Men's National Football team manager Gareth Southgate said during an interview regarding the current systems in place, which serve to recruit and retain Black, Asian, and other minority individuals into football leadership roles. Acknowledging this criticism, there is a call for greater research to be done around the actual initiatives and programmes in place, and an understanding of the potential impacts they may or may not have. When exploring the topic of DEI in sport management, several scholars have examined gender inequities through the dynamics of networking. Examples include the works of Shaw and Hoeber (2003), Anderson (2009), Pfister (2010), Norman and Rankin-Wright (2018), and more recently Ahn and Cunningham (2020). Each of these researchers have fostered inquiry around the different organisational structures and priorities found within the industry. Key findings have indicated that men are considered the gatekeepers through maintaining power not only through controlling

discourse, but also with hiring 'the next wave of workers', as they are the ones who organise and run institutions (Anderson, 2009).

Across the growing number of research publications concerning the subject of DEI in sport management, a common theme is a focus around the public and non-profit side of the sport sector. This is believed to be due to the nature of the public sector being geared towards inclusion and transparency. There is however an appreciation as to why this has occurred. Examples of public sport sector organisations that have been explored regarding gender equity are national governing bodies (NGBs), intercollegiate institutions within the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), and The Football Association (The FA). Themes have focused on volunteer demographics, coaching experiences, and access to board level opportunities (Clarkson et al., 2019; Piggott and Pike, 2019; Sotiriadou and de Haan, 2019), thus leaving a gap in the analysis of individuals outside these areas holding full-time positions within private, corporate sport institutions.

Within the elite side of sport, there are several structures worth noting. Leagues such as the National Football League (NFL), the National Basketball Association (the NBA), and the English Premier League (the EPL) have produced minimal research exploring the impact programmes and initiatives have made for promoting minority groups, specifically regarding their workforces. The Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sport (TIDES) from the University of Central Florida (UCF) began exploring this topic back in 2002, which led to its publishing of reports on the racial and gender hiring practices of major professional sports, college sports, and the media in the United States (US) (TIDES, 2020). Professional sports in the United Kingdom (UK) use a similar format, referred to as the 'Equality Standard', assigning ranks of status based on evidence submitted from clubs regarding their diversity efforts. With these two formats of evaluation already in place, part of the rationale for this study seeks to further investigate how tools like report cards and ranks are perceived by individual employees based on their gender identity.

Reports that have investigated gender equity in sport previously have predominantly used survey methods (Greenhill et al., 2009). This additionally has led to a desire of interested researchers to investigate diversity efforts through a mixed-methods approach to gain a

further narrative behind survey results. Working as a cross-national comparison, this study will show how societal-level policies and laws are shaping women's and men's work experiences in football workplaces (Wharton, 2012). The importance of cross-national research stems from the globalising of gendered capitalism according to Acker (1998), as it is important to investigate how businesses that appear to have similar offerings (products or services) vary regarding their organisational processes. A major limitation for previous literature around gender equity in sport is that it primarily focused on American intercollegiate athletics (Reade et al., 2009). There is a call for greater attention beyond these programs, justifying the need for this cross-national study to additionally focus on the private sector of sport.

As the corporate sport sector has been found to influence areas of society more heavily compared to other industries, it is important to understand the impact of the above efforts. This influence is constructed off the industry's ability to mirror the market to identify needs of stakeholders, including employees (Doherty and Chelladurai, 1999). This is particularly timely, considering the more recent attention to movements like #MeToo and BLM calling for societal change, and utilising the sport industry as a catalyst, with athletes using platforms to address injustices. This research examines the perspectives of individuals within entry and middle management roles because of the extensive literature that showcased narratives of women who have considerably 'broken the glass ceiling', and have progressed beyond those roles. With this identified gap in research around privately funded sport organisations (such as professional clubs), the rationale and justification of this study also concern the examination of whether and how traditional business behaviours influence or impact priorities around addressing DEI concerns in sport workplaces.

Needing more implementation of monitoring systems, the EU Gender Equality in Sport Proposal for Strategic Action 2014-2020 (European Commission of Sport, 2014) indicated that there needed to be a more systematic way for evaluation of DEI from the macro and micro levels. This research seeks to explore if the sport industry uses strategic human resource management (SHRM) systematically with DEI concerns. Thus, as with any organisational initiative, Kang and Kaplan (2019:581) indicate that "gender equality

should be approached with an open and scientific attitude, and the willingness to experiment and measure outcomes", which is the validation behind exploring this subject further. The theoretical framework outlined in this study follows institutional theory, intending to extend the "application of gendered organizations theory to sport through consideration of "institutional logics" that stem from the complex environment of gender in sport" (Allison, 2016: 240). Using this model provides a lens for assessing drivers and barriers around "governance convergence" in sport (McLeod et al., 2020:146). The originality of this study is its focus on specific DEI initiatives and / or programmes offered in the professional football workplace, hence contributing to expanding the understanding of "governance convergence" around institutional DEI convergence in sport through institutional theory.

While incorporating institutional theory, this study also follows Argote (2015) through legal transplant theory adopting cross-cultural scholarship. This will provide valuable perspectives around how and why resistance to change in varying settings occur. In combination with utilising institutional theory, there is a great deal of knowledge researchers can learn from listening to marginalised individuals (such as women). This insight around experiences and perception can help sport stakeholders improve diversity management strategies, which, in turn, can build employee attractiveness and staff retention, with increased opportunities for innovation and revenue (Walker and Melton, 2015).

1.3. Research Questions

Based on the aim and rationale of study, this project investigates the following research questions:

RQ1: Within football clubs, how are employees perceiving gender equity efforts, and does this vary cross-nationally?

RQ2: How aware are employees within football clubs of policies, funding incentives, organisational initiatives, and legislation around gender equity, and do they consider them appropriate?

RQ3: *What do employees think is the best approach to achieve gender equity, and who is responsible for implementing, measuring, and monitoring it?*

Acknowledging that sports institutions are becoming more committed toward creating the conditions which encourage the development of gender equity in sport, one of the objectives of this project is to examine the effectiveness of gender equity initiatives and policies that have been implemented in football management workplaces. As the consequences of not maintaining a gender equitable workplace include lower profitability, harassment lawsuits, lower staff retention, and a negative reputation, many professional football clubs can find benefits to analysing and utilising results of this research in future business opportunities (Flood, 2015). Previous research around gender equity in the workplace derived from mainstream business administration and sociology research. The sport industry has been linked to different socio-cultural contexts as a result of globalising business. Thus, the research team formulated and attempted to answer questions derived through relevant research through a mixed lens approach to ensure full applicability and usefulness over the conventional background information (Byon and Zhang, 2019). Following the process of 'analogy', the design of these research questions involved the importing of ideas and procedures from the mainstream business areas, where similarities around gender equity were determined, and were considered interdisciplinary (Collis and Hussey, 2009).

The four countries examined in this thesis are England, Scotland, Canada, and the United States of America (US). Although all four nations are located within the Western Hemisphere, and are fundamentally similar (e.g. same main language), their individual approaches to inequitable practices in the workforce differ from both a legislative perspective, as well as a league structure variance, allowing for investigation and interpretation of similarities and differences in a systematic and comprehensive way to occur (Karlsson, 2019). Additionally, there are arguments that problems with comparability studies can be minimised by selecting respondents and cases that are similar to a certain extent (Karlsson, 2019).

1.4. Overview of Empirical Study

Following the use of a Sequential Explanatory Mixed-Method Design, this empirical research consists of two phases of data collection, with an initial virtual self-administered questionnaire, followed up by semi-structured interviews. The purpose of the survey was to provide insights on attitudes and beliefs towards the current programmes and initiatives in place addressing DEI and gender equity in various workplaces. The survey consisted of 22 questions, and had n=488 participants. Participants were recruited through virtual snowball sampling, which had to be adapted due to COVID-19, based on employees' availability. This was derived from factors such as furlough schemes and redundancies being made across the sport and entertainment industry. Participants' representation came from 17 leagues (including both the men's and women's side of the game), with over 80 clubs being accounted for. Grassroots and amateur clubs were not selected, as they do not adhere to the Fédération Internationale de Football Association's (FIFA) definition of elite football, lacking paid players or employees[1].

Following participation in Phase One, individuals who voluntarily put their names forward in the survey were invited to participate in Phase Two of the study, through an online, semi-structured interview lasting no more than 60 minutes. The voluntary nature of the participation means the process followed convenience sampling, which allowed collection of a range of participant attitudes and opinions around DEI in their workplaces (Galloway, 2005). It was important, however, to also acknowledge the weaknesses behind this method as it can create selection bias (i.e., the systematic exclusion of some unit from the data set) (Baxter et al., 2015). As an attempt to minimalize this bias, invites were extended out to every participant in Phase One who expressed interest in engaging in an interview. Additionally, the research team established a goal to gain an equitable representation from each participation legislative system. In Phase Two, 14 interviews occurred. The data collected was utilised to address the three research questions posed in this specific study.

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[1] FIFA defines a professional as a player who has a written contract with a club and is paid more for his footballing activity than the expenses he effectively incurs. All other players are considered to be amateurs (FIFA, 2020).

The outcomes for this research will aid the design of a framework to help clubs and leagues develop a more appropriate approach to correcting discriminative practices, as well as optimising measurement and monitoring devices that may already be implemented in occupational settings. This research design was utilised based on several factors, including a discussion with academics in related fields about the research, as well as the conclusions of previous studies regarding work as an expansion of research extending beyond the sport domain, and tapping into areas of social sciences, humanities, and management, which are considered critical when investigating the intricate dynamics surrounding the experiences of women in sport. To establish if efforts are being perceived as effective, a form of theory-based evaluation will occur, which involves examining the assumptions underlying the causal chain from inputs to outcomes and impacts, through a well-established approach (White, 2009). Through the process of isomorphism (defined later in Chapter 3), this study generates new insights around how DEI works in the private, corporate sport industry as it stems as a result of institutional theory (McLeod et al., 2020). The three types of organisational change found in institutional isomorphism include coercive (when external agencies impose changes on organisations—most obviously through practices of state regulation), normative (when professionalisation projects shape entire occupational fields), and mimetic mechanisms (the copying of what is constituted as culturally valuable ways of doing or arranging things—cultural capital), and will be evaluated in the findings and recommendations chapters of this thesis (Clegg, 2010).

1.5. Coronavirus Study Impacts

The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic is an ongoing crisis that began in December 2019 in Wuhan, China. It began making significant impact in the UK starting in March 2020, leading to both national and international lockdowns, which indirectly impacted the work of this study. This section aims to make examiners aware of the indirect impact COVID-19 has had on the research plans for this thesis. The researcher had been working distanced since early 2020 as this exploration is considered adequate to be carried out remotely. Due to health regulations, this study was forced to modify plans to collect data

in an applicable way to prioritise the safety and well-being of the researcher and participants. Being a mixed-methods design, Phase One was not impacted due to the usage of an online, self-administered questionnaire. However, Phase Two was forced to adapt The World Health Organization (WHO) recommendations of maintaining physical distance and avoiding crowds (World Health Organization, 2021). Original plans for the study included hosting a series of focus groups at football club workplaces (on-site). Thus, virtual interviews were scheduled in-place. Interviews occurred through the video communication software, Zoom. In addition, COVID-19 impacted representation levels of participants with domestic governments' furlough schemes, placing many relevant contributors on 80% salary for the hours they were not working, making it difficult for recruitment during the end of Phase One and the entrance into Phase Two (Lawrie, 2021).

1.6. Structure of Thesis

This thesis contains eight chapters (Table 1.1). Chapter 1 has provided an introduction to the empirical research study. Chapter 2 will present a literature review around gender, discrimination, and sport. In Chapter 3, another literature review around business, diversity, and football will occur. Presenting the research design and methodology used in this study, Chapter 4 will highlight areas around the research timeline and stages, as well as the hypotheses drawn for each research question. Chapter 5 focuses on analysis during Phase One of the study, while Chapter 6 focuses on the analysis of Phase Two. Through triangulation in Chapter 7, comparative analysis and discussion will be undertaken regarding the findings mentioned in previous chapters, and confirming whether hypotheses can be accepted or not. Lastly in Chapter 8, recommendations will be made, stemming from research conclusions, and summarising main points to answer each of the research questions. Chapter 8 will also evaluate the key contributions to knowledge, any limitations of this research study, and an overview of future research suggestions.

Table 1.1 Structure and Key Content of the Thesis

Chapter	Section	Key Content
1.	Introduction	Background and rationale; research questions; and objectives
2.	Literature Review on Gender Discrimination and Sport	Introduction to gender discrimination; diversity and gender equity in sport; gender pay gap
3.	Literature Review on Business, Diversity, and Football	Introduction to gendered business; gender in football; legal structures; football structures; affirmative action in sport; monitoring diversity, equity, and inclusion
4.	Research Design and Methodology	Research positions: methods used and data collection; hypotheses
5.	Research Phase One Data Analysis	Online self-administered survey results
6.	Research Phase Two Data Analysis	Semi-structured interview results
7.	Discussion	Answering research questions from data analysis; returning to hypotheses
8.	Conclusion	Practical and academic implications; limitations; areas for future research

1.7. Chapter 1 Summary

In Chapter 1, an overview of the aim, rationale, objectives, and structure of this thesis was provided. Through an introduction of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), this overview shared not only why, but also how the topic would be explored through the questions posed and the data collection methods utilised. This PhD research investigates whether sport policies, funding incentives, organisational initiatives, and employment legislation impact gender equity in the football management workplace cross-nationally. This chapter has also introduced theoretical and practical implications in the sport management domain. Institutional theory will be expanded upon in Chapters 2 and 3 through relevant literature, which will be discussed to develop a conceptual model which guides the empirical research

2. Literature Review. on Gender Discrimination and Sport

2.1. Introduction

Through numerous legal cases, mass media presentations, and academic publications, inequitable practices found in society have been revealed. These practices have created forms of marginalisation for individuals of varying races, genders, sexual orientations, and disabilities (Bobbitt-Zeher, 2011). As gender primarily has been regarded using a binary categorical approach, a phenomenon referred to as 'gender polarisation', which is the belief that what is acceptable for members of one gender is not for the other, has led to socially inequitable practices referred to as discrimination (Wharton, 2012). Diversity issues like gender discrimination are often considered important in the business sector, as they push companies to focus on producing resolutions which lead to increased productivity and competitive advantage, while companies that do not manage diversity arguably face obstacles for achieving success (Mazur, 2010). As diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) will be the main topics focused on in this research, this chapter reviews literature exploring gender holistically, and will highlight the necessity for greater levels of examination within the sport management industry.

2.2. Overview of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Society

As the world is considered ever-changing, with factors such as migration and technological advances always prevalent, it is crucial to understand their impacts on whole societies and local communities. As we are frequently unaware, we live in social spaces that are occupied by individuals with different origins than our own (Blaine, 2013). All these factors have been found to contribute to DEI in society. Diversity is defined by the variances every individual has, resulting in potential behavioural differences among cultural groups, as well as identity differences among group members (Larkey, 1996). These variances have not made diversity simple, as it is often challenging to manage, and observed in a myriad of ways (Mazur, 2010). A common purpose of viewing and dealing with diversity is to understand the range or proportion of social differences that are represented in a group of people, organisations, or situations, which are informative tools to help categorise and retain information (Blaine, 2013). Diversity has been

attributed to shifts in demographics as a result of immigration, family backgrounds, and aging populations, contributing to economic pressures influencing the workforce to incorporate minority groups so that businesses are able to meet the needs of their consumers (Doherty and Chelladurai, 1999). Diversity has been linked to influencing aspects of culture in society. When interactions of both culture and diversity occur, there are greater differences between groups, which lead to greater levels of both innovation and individual success (Doherty and Chelladurai, 1999). With various definitions around what constitutes culture, most researchers believe culture is an ideology shared by members of a social group (Danisman et al., 2009).

It is not commonly disputed that women and minority groups in society are often undervalued, and frequently ignored, leading to diversity, equity, and inclusion to become conceptualised as buzzwords. 'Buzzwords' are considered to be phrases that are fashionable at a particular time or in a certain context (Cambridge Dictionary, 2020). Buzzwords such as diversity, equity, and inclusion are examples where meanings get seized by homogenous stakeholders (traditionally white, cis-gendered, able-bodied individuals), and eventually become conceptualised, and which often do not advance a movement, but instead disguise absence (Bart, 2003). Recognising these behaviours, there are three types of diversity ideologies researchers must understand when evaluating DEI in contexts such as the sport industry. These diversity ideologies, similarly referred to as 'diversity models', are individual perceptions of practices regarding diversity, which include melting-pots, colour-blindness, and multiculturalism (Rattan and Ambady, 2013).

Explained in Blaine (2013), these three notions of diversity have different implications for individuals from minority groups, with some focusing more on race. Colour-blindness often ignores racial or ethnic group membership by focusing on individualism and equality (Blaine, 2013). However, as an ideology held by a traditionally majority group, colour-blindness receives criticism that race is relevant because of the persistence of racial discrimination in society (Blaine, 2013). Closely related to colour-blindness, melting-pot ideologies perceive that a diverse society should be where all are welcome, and differences are understood and accepted, and social differences relate 'harmoniously'

(Blaine, 2013). In contrast to North American perspectives regarding melting-pot ideologies, multiculturalism arose to demonstrate how ignoring group memberships was a disservice to those who value their cultures (Rattan and Ambady, 2013). As multiculturalism promotes recognition, appreciation, celebration, and preservation of diversity, it is often metaphorically viewed as patches of a large social quilt (Blaine, 2013). Melting-pot, multiculturalist, and colour-blindness notions of diversity have different implications for individuals from varying minority groups, and have been researched to highlight the strengths and weaknesses of these notions. This doctoral research study follows multiculturalism ideology, which will be showcased through the findings and analysis in subsequent chapters through an intersectional lens.

Research has shown that those in non-majority identity groups often are associated with exclusion in society (Findler et al., 2007). Although the definitions regarding diversity can be considered simple, having a well-established comprehension of their value has been considered challenging, especially within some areas such as science and technology, where diversity of thought is prominent, and yet it can remain under-appreciated (Stirling, 2007). Similarly, this can apply to industries such as sport, as it follows historical hegemonic patterns prolonging the achievement of DEI. Research focusing on diversity has been conducted by academics in various fields such as psychology, economics, sociology, anthropology, deduction research, and organisational management (Phillips, 1998). Predominately focusing on stereotypes and particular group traits, researchers have linked defining diversity characteristics.

Acknowledging the different backgrounds and characteristics of individuals and groups revealed, inclusion has been defined as both an objective and a process through which individuals are enabled to participate, where these individuals become highly valued and respected contributing members of society (Harmon, 2019). As inclusive practices over time have become formalised into domestic practices, institutions such as the Sports Council Equality Group (2014) have further established defining terms. Institutions (including the Sports Council Equality Group) have called for inclusion to reference positive action of the community, thus reducing inequalities between populations, and closing opportunity gaps that ensure resources reach those who need the most support,

leading to much-desired greater social equity. As diversity has been found to be useful as a reference, complement, or catalyst toward achieving equity and inclusion, and as inclusion practices are becoming ubiquitous in legislation and public policies (Stirling, 2007), this thesis explores the relationship between DEI initiatives and gender equity in professional football workplaces across the globe.

Gender diversity is the focus in this study, and the research team will be exploring women's representation in highly male prevalent industries, as it has slowly increased over the past few decades. Although there has been a more recent rise in the number of women sport participants (or gender diversity), it has not been matched by a rise in gender inclusion deemed necessary (Kang and Kaplan, 2019). While male prevalence is common within the paid labour force and professional institutions across the globe, sport has been considered especially slow to embrace the value of diversity and inclusion relating to gender (LaVoi and Wasend, 2018). However, with the influence from technology over the last fifteen years (i.e., social media) and with movements like #MeToo and #TimesUp, there has been a greater emphasis on lessening violence against women, especially sexual violence, which is especially prevalent in the sport industry (Lange and Young, 2019).

Traditionally, it has been women or other minority groups in male prevalent industries who bring DEI issues to the public agenda. Nevertheless, it has been argued that as men can be seen as part of the problem toward achieving gender equity, they equally have an important role becoming part of the solution (Flood, 2015). Given that many communities and cultures may be able to address DEI, there often are ineffective attempts to 'ensure' or 'enforce' it into cultural normalities and practices (Spaaij et al., 2019). Even for those who successfully put these initiatives into practice, Milliken and Martins (1996) have indicated that DEI initiatives can be a double-edged sword, with both benefits and undesired consequences occurring, which group leaders need to keep in mind (Phillips, 1998). Some argue that diversity initiatives have not been considered inherently good or bad, as they often only refer to limited benefits for members of only certain gender groups or races, while missing out on other minority backgrounds (Blaine, 2013). This thesis focuses on the gender-related inequitable practices found within the football workplace,

specifically in Western societies, as it is important to recognise the recent rekindling of protests against both anti-black racism and sexual violence against women. It is argued that diversity is a key factor regarding justice, and can only occur when all groups are afforded equitable rights and opportunities. In line with this notion, this thesis will explore impacts of current institutional norms, and how roles of intersectionality come to play in achieving gender equity and social justice.

2.2.1. Marginalised Groups

Discriminative practices against one individual on others causes groups of people to experience forms of marginalisation, which is the delayed progression of inclusion in society (Hooks, 1994). Discrimination defined by Straubel (1996:1064), in the simplest form, is the "denying or awarding of a benefit because the recipient possesses or does not possess a characteristic unrelated to the qualification necessary to receive the benefit." Examples historically include women being denied the right to vote, or denying citizenship to those who qualify. Traditional stances on stereotypes and social categorisation theory have suggested that we as humans use differences and similarities to categorise others into 'in-groups' or 'out-groups' (van Knippenberg et al., 2004). 'Othering' (Hooks, 1994) is a form of marginalisation that categorises those of different backgrounds and communities. These groups historically have included women, ethnic minorities, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning, and plus (LGBTQ+) persons. They have also included individuals diagnosed with physical and/or intellectual disabilities (Larkin et al., 1993). As 'othering' follows hegemonic reproductive patterns, white men are least likely to face marginalisation, because groups accept the status quo established by a dominant form of masculinity (Hoeber and Kerwin, 2013). Hindman and Walker (2020) as well as Pfister (2010) argue that women and the other groups mentioned above have been, and continue to be marginalised. Furthermore, when individuals of different skin colours, clothing preferences, or political attitudes interact, humans are often given two choices: to either accept and incorporate the different impressions and beliefs, or to reject these differences and the individuals manifesting them, developing discriminative practices (Blaine, 2013).

Focusing on marginality, Kanter's (1993) framework, used recently by Skrubbeltrang (2019), shares how individuals need to consider gender as one of the key constitutive elements of the social structure. Kanter's framework allows for an understanding of how and why women in marginalised settings (such as the sport industry) encounter barriers, which limit access to opportunities (Kanter, 1993). Recognising the significant impacts marginalisation was making on the quality of many individuals' lives during the 1980s and 1990s, an advocacy approach which acted to challenge this oppression developed (Yiamouyiannis and Osborne, 2012). This approach, however, received criticism from groups who thought 'positivist assumptions' and 'constructivist approaches' were not appropriate to address marginalised groups (Yiamouyiannis and Osborne, 2012).

Specifically relating to the sport industry and gender equity, marginalisation is found to occur for many women's sports (Carlman and Hjalmarsson, 2019). It has been found that women with more than one marginalised identity (such as being non-white or identifying as not straight) struggle more with day-to-day events (Hartzell and Dixon, 2019). This is especially concerning for some sport institutions, where their player population is over 84% women of non-white backgrounds, such as the Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA) (Lapchick et al., 2018). With recent rekindling of protests pushing for a more progressive and equal world, discussions have opened up around the ways in which industries, such as sport, can transform power relations that give rights to less powerful groups, so their needs can be addressed (Shannon et al., 2019).

Hidden power, which is considered subtle and complex, is an issue that is finally being addressed, as it has not previously been a priority for diversity agendas, yet it is considered a barrier for many fighting marginalisation due to the lack of awareness (Hartzell and Dixon, 2019). Discrimination for marginalised groups can occur both directly and indirectly, which is considered an example of hidden power. As key homogenous stakeholders are highly over-represented in many societies', decision-making influences, (a further hindering for women and other marginalised groups) is found to occur (Anderson, 2009). As majority groups in society often take their high levels of social, cultural, economic, and political power for granted, a form of privilege is constructed. Those without majority identities do not experience similar privileges and are

subsequently separated as 'others' experiencing prejudice and discrimination regularly (Sartore and Cunningham, 2010).

A specific form of discrimination women often experience is referred to as sexism, which includes bigotry-themed jokes, sexual harassment, and gender-based unequal pay for qualified employees (Kang and Kaplan, 2019). The only way to correct these injustices is for majority groups to become aware of these discriminative behaviours, so that they take corrective steps to ameliorate their own and others' biases (Chang and Milkman, 2019). Through an intersectional lens, examining racial discrimination in sport further, Hylton (2010) and Rankin-Wright et al. (2019) have highlighted a framework established to challenge racialised inequalities in society, referred as critical race theory (CRT). Although gender diversity is the focus of this study, it is important to illustrate other identities in which diversity has been observed and researched in the sport industry.

2.2.2. Protected Characteristics: The Example of the United Kingdom

With more inequalities being identified, there has been an increase in protection through inclusive legislation. Due to discrimination occurring for individuals with independent non-majority traits, and others holding intersectional identities, in 2010 the Parliament of the United Kingdom launched a form of anti-discrimination legislation referred to as 'The Equality Act of 2010', bringing together nine protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or religious belief, gender, and sexual orientation (Johnson-Ross, 2018). With more legal and other regulating practices for protected characteristics, such as 'The Equality Act', there are requirements for institutions to support inclusion through 'positive action'. Positive action occurs when organisations take the necessary steps to improve equality for individuals who share a protected identity (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2018a). Through following positive action, Kilvington (2019) highlighted that where positive action approaches act as mechanisms to address some residual patterns of institutional closure, meaning as white hegemonic power relations are challenged and destabilised, protection of marginalised groups can occur.

Prior to positive action practices, discrimination for those with identities within the nine protected characteristics (regarding access to resources and fairness) was prevalent. As a response to discriminative practices, positive action is often implemented reactively to address these past injustices for disadvantaged groups, yet is commonly found to vary country-to-country (Hideg and Wilson, 2019). Reactive responses to discrimination have caused challenges to current processes in all industries, as they only occur when a problem arises (Ocon, 2006). To avoid the occurrences of reactive actions, there has been a call for more attention to proactively review policies and factors which lead to varying levels of protection. To successfully intervene, attempts to understand various systems through continuous monitoring and evaluation should occur. With following proactive practices, it is crucial to understand that those who share a protected characteristic have needs that differ from the needs of those who do not, and that there can be some variance even within these marginalised groups (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2018a).

2.2.3. Equality versus Equity

With references to 'equality' and 'equity', there is an acknowledgement that humans are equal in dignity, and are equally deserving respect, protection, and equal treatment with reference to a mean in dignity, in standing, and in expectation of protection of the law (Harmon, 2019). It can be argued that nations like the UK have taken the necessary steps to adequately address varying cultural backgrounds. This doctoral research sets to explore how effective initiatives, campaigns, and programmes are for individuals with varying identity characteristics within the football industry.

Expanding on Rawls', Dworkin's, and Nagel's theories of equality, McKerlie (1996) describes it as a relationship between different people, where resources and supplies are equally distributed between them. More recently, the UK's Equality and Human Rights Commission has defined equality as being about ensuring that each individual has an opportunity to make the most of his or her life (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2018b). Recognising how equality has historically been defined, many have begun referencing equity instead. Kidd and Donnelly (2000) define equity as the means of giving

all persons fair access to social resources, while recognising that they may well have different needs or interests, which in sport can relate to helping everyone reach the most appropriate, proverbial finish line. Shaw and Penney (2003) acknowledged that gender equality in sport generally means 'equality of opportunity', and elaborate on the fact that this has been designed to increase women's overall participation in sport, whereas the shift to equity is geared toward a more comprehensive view, focusing no longer exclusively on just women, but on all genders. More recently, researchers have further expanded on Shaw's and Penney's (2003) definition, due to many having trouble understanding the difference between the concepts of 'equality' and 'equity'. For example, while acknowledging cultural differences, Canadian Women and Sport (2020) indicate that gender equality is the process of allocating resources. This principle, however, tends to ignore the fact that people differ in areas of capacity and interest. Equality focuses on creating the same proverbial starting line for everyone. Equity has the goal of providing everyone with the full range of opportunities and benefits – working towards the same finish line (Canadian Women and Sport, 2020). As 'equality' and 'equity' are often referenced incorrectly and synonymously (Shaw and Penney, 2003), there has been a push towards going away from using gender equality across as a spectrum. This is because equality does not take into consideration the different barriers and challenges that have been experienced for different groups, and thus, there are varying needs for resources required to create a balanced playing field for all.

2.2.4. Equity, Gender, and Intersectionality

To fully understand gender equity, it is critical to comprehend the relationships it has with intersectionality. Intersectionality is defined as the interconnected identities of individuals coming from varying socioeconomic statuses, sexual orientations, ethnicities, religions, and disabilities (Shinbrot et al., 2019). Although current definitions reference factors such as race and gender, early origins link intersectionality to dynamics of embodied power (Cho et al., 2013). Gender as a factor within intersectionality leads to what is referred to as 'double' or 'triple' binds, which are where individuals from non-majority groups face discrimination for holding various interconnected identities (Burton, 2015). Intersectionality has also been found to impact women and men differently (Shinbrot et

al., 2019). Intersectionality is defined as the 'crossing of multiple forms of oppression' (e.g., gender, race, ethnicity, class, and sexuality) (Walker and Melton, 2015). From a theoretical standpoint, this terminology has been heavily referenced by Dr. Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989:140), where she indicates that when people's social identities overlap, the most privileged group members (i.e. white, cis, able-bodied individuals) often marginalise those who are "multiply-burdened, and obscures claims that cannot be understood as resulting from discrete sources of discrimination."

Intersectionality literature, such as Crenshaw (1989), provides a lens showcasing marginalised persons through examining how backgrounds influence one's experiences within sport (Walker and Melton, 2015). Spanning from feminist theory, it is critical to acknowledge that women who have predominantly been labelled as minority groups in industries (such as sport) face higher risks to factors like gender-based violence and discrimination. This is especially relevant for women of colour, or women who identify with having a disability due to systemic constraints that emerge from institutionalised discrimination (Lange and Young, 2019). Following the suggestions from Norman and Rankin Wright (2018) that future research should be directed to produce more understanding around minority groups in sport with an intersectional lens, this thesis is geared toward looking at perspectives from all individuals from varied backgrounds within the sport workplace. A model of intersectional-ecological identities can be found below in Figure 2.1 which was created by (LaVoi and Dutove, 2012).

Figure 2.1 Barriers for Women within the Intersectional-Ecological Systems (Source: Adapted from LaVoi and Dutove, 2012:20)
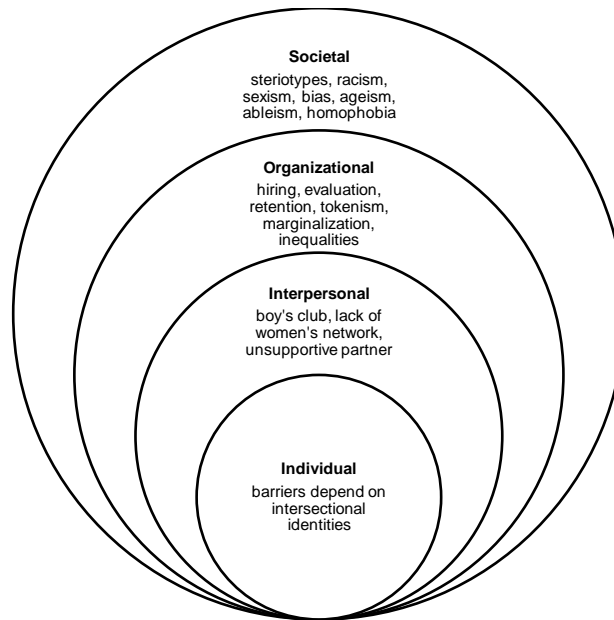
2.3. Review of Gender

Historically, being recognised as a social form of categorisation, 'gender' has been utilised as a reference to one's economic, social, and cultural attributes and opportunities associated with identifying as either male or female (Marchbank and Letherby, 2007). Gender additionally has been defined as the socially-produced differences between being feminine and being masculine (Holmes, 2006). As gender ideologies across cultures have varied, Ortner and Whitehead (1981) point out that one consistency has been the interaction of men and women regarding sex and reproduction. With the notion conventionally recognising two classifications of either being 'male' or 'female' gender has become the depiction of membership in particular social groups. In comparison to other factors (such as race), gender is a categorical element that every culture accepts (Ridgeway, 2011). By following these forms of memberships and as a binary construct, using the terms 'men' and 'women' is linked to the cementing of these gender differences (Pfister and Radtke, 2009).

The observation of gender in society has been defined by Wharton (2012) as 'doing gender' or 'gender norms', which refers to the process that individuals develop views of

gendered qualities and characteristics. These activities, however, have been observed to cause several forms of marginalisation and inequity for individuals throughout their lives. Before trying to understand gender discrimination, researchers need to consider the larger process connected to the gender system by exploring cultural components of ideology and structural features (Bobbitt-Zeher, 2011). There are considerable limitations for individuals based on the gender they identify with, according to Ridgeway (2011). With evolutions for defined marginalised populations occurring, these inequities must be frequently investigated to observe variations that could transpire. Researchers must acknowledge the process connected to the gender system that explores the components of societal ideologies, structural features (sex segregation and formal policies), and behaviours of institutional actors (Bobbitt-Zeher, 2011).

In addition to the extensive literature from women's studies, viewed from a feminist perspective, themes of gender inequities in society have been applied over several disciplines. There have been extensions in this area around management, business, and leadership, indicating that many women find themselves disadvantaged (Holmes, 2006). This also has been recognised in areas of sciences such as technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) (Martin and Phillips, 2019). There has been a call for future research regarding gender to make non-limiting (as in more than two) categorisations which serve to broaden the definition of gender to recognise that it in fact is not binary, and it is a social construct that is experienced (Nauright and Zipp, 2018).

2.3.1. Sex and Gender

Similarly, to 'equality' and 'equity', the terms 'sex' and 'gender' are often incorrectly referenced, and are perceived as being synonymous. Initial research focusing around gender began being published in the early 1970s, when 'sex' was defined as a word referring to biological differences, and 'gender' meant a matter of culture linked to social classification of masculinity and femininity (Delphy, 1993; Oakley, 1985). Later in time, researchers have argued that when people combine their understanding of sex (the physical biological status of male and female) with the definition of gender (social constructs of being a man or a woman), a framework referred to as gender discrimination

is constructed (Ridgeway, 2011). Extending on Delphy's (1993) definition, many have indicated that gender is socially constructed, and lacks biological characteristics (such as chromosomal attributes) (Marchbank and Letherby, 2007).

It has also been argued that gender interacts with sex through socially constructed norms (Shannon et al., 2019), and individual biological characteristics define men and women through imposing roles and relationships. Based on this, gender identity has been defined as an individual's sense of their own sex and/or gender (Beemyn and Rankin, 2011). More recently, gender concepts have begun to extend beyond the binary models of 'male' and 'female' as individuals who consider their sex/gender identity as 'fluid' challenge the original ontological assumptions (Monro, 2007). Members within the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning, and plus (LGBT+) community often challenge the binary models that are different from the sex they were assigned at birth (Shannon et al., 2019).

2.3.2. Construction of Gender Traits and Stereotypes

Diversity extends beyond how we identify ourselves, and additionally includes how we act and behave in society (Blaine, 2013). Our identity typically follows reproductive construction, using terms such as 'men' and 'women' (Pfister and Radtke, 2009). This reproductive process occurs in children at a young age. Humans are exposed to portrayals of what 'norms' are associated with being a man and a woman (family, household, and career duties) (Blaine, 2013). Gendered traits have been recorded as defining men with masculinity linked with agentic behaviour attitudes revolving around risk, appetite, and overconfidence, while women are associated with femininity, which follows communal behavioural attitudes revolving around altruism and trust (Sent and van Staveren, 2019). 'Hegemonic masculinity' is defined as the theory that legitimises men's position in society, and can be found at the regional level constructed within cultures and countries (Cunningham and Sagas, 2008). This argument has been expanded further through 'Gendered Ways Theory', which shares the expectations about the defined appropriate ways members of each gender go about their living patterns through activities such as dialogue and behaviours (Holmes, 2006).

From these traits, forms of discrimination have evolved, and have caused barriers to participation and advancement of women. Though it has been argued that not all stereotypes are inherently bad, as gender stereotypes can affect society both consciously and unconsciously, stereotypes have led to several forms of discrimination and inequity (Chang and Milkman, 2019). Stereotypes thus develop, and are reinforced, when differences between genders become consensual, and individuals make judgements about the assumed behaviours and qualities of others based primarily on their genders (Eagly and Karau, 2002; Piggott and Pike, 2019). Examples of gendered stereotypes include the ideas that girls should have long hair, and should grow up playing with dolls (Oxford, 2019).

Although every society has recognised two classifications of either 'male' or 'female' within their social settings by convention (Ridgeway, 2011), gender-related ideas and norms can be seen differently in cultural, historical, and community contexts (Carlman and Hjalmarsson, 2019). Building from this, Oxford (2019) highlights linguists Messner and Bozada-Deas's (2009) argument that cultural differences, such as language, are used as powerful tools contributing to the construction of what is normal and what is an aberration. Additionally, as argued by feminists, the use of sexist language has consequences regarding gender relations, and can shape interpretations. This recently has been explored by Piggott and Pike (2019) with their research uncovering the use of androcentric language as a collective gendered disposition that normalises the position of men within leadership roles in sport. This empirical research intends to work as an extension of their findings.

2.3.3. Gender Discrimination

Pincus (1996) indicated that society faces three types of discrimination: individual, institutional, and structural. As individual discrimination involves direct actions affecting a given individual, institutional and structural discriminations occur through embedded behaviours shaped by social constructions (Pincus, 1996). Institutional discrimination specifically refers to the actions intended to differentially impact minorities and women, whereas structural discrimination refers to policies that are race or gender neutral (Pincus,

1996). More recently, stemming from these definitions, in 2014, the United Kingdom produced an 'Equality Standard Resource Pack' that further broke down the definition of discrimination into two forms: direct and indirect. Direct discrimination is "where circumstances are similar, treating an individual, or group of people, less favourably than others, because of a protected characteristic", and indirect discrimination is "applying a provision, criterion, or practice which, on the surface, applies equally to all, but which, in practice, creates a disadvantage for individuals or groups with a particular protected characteristic" (Sports Council Equality Group, 2014a:5). Such requirements or conditions are lawful only if they can be objectively justified. Examples of direct discrimination are often clear, while indirect discrimination is more difficult to understand, but has been referenced through titles such as "chairman" or "policeman" descriptions (Shaw and Hoeber, 2003).

In this thesis, institutional and structural discrimination will be investigated specifically within the football management workplace. Gender specific discrimination stems from stereotypes and gendered norms associated with cultural and institutionalised practices, which needs to be considered part of a larger gender system (Bobbitt-Zeher, 2011). Gender discrimination can be found in all three of Pincus' (1996) categories, and has been shown via research that it shapes the structures of various institutions, such as the sport industry. As gender discrimination is considered a categorical form of inequity, it creates a segregation of particular social groups, restricted to men or women (Ridgeway, 2011). These memberships (being either exclusively man or woman) have been theorised to create what sociologists label as 'gender-roles', which lead to limited attributes and positions persons of each gender are described by or entitled to (Byrd and Scott, 2014). These roles have led to gender related norms that vary with cultural, historical, and social contexts (Carlman and Hjalmarsson, 2019). These stereotypical attitudes have worked as a disadvantage to many women in several areas of society, ranging from religious, cultural, political, and sporting institutions (Hannan, 2006).

Research regarding gender-based inequitable practices has predominantly been done in the sociological domain (Marchbank and Letherby, 2007; Johnson-Ross, 2018). More recently, however, gender inequitable practices are being explored in other disciplines,

such as business and sport management, with regard to the gender pay gap phenomena (Pike et al., 2018). These practices have also been explored within the national governing body (NGB) system of sport, as well as participation levels from grassroots to the elite side (Clarkson et al., 2019; Hindman and Walker, 2020; Gaston et al., 2020).

2.4. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Sport

Reviewed earlier in this chapter, DEI has been examined in several domains. Specifically, within sport, DEI has historically been researched through data collected regarding the experiences of discrimination among marginalised groups within the sociological sphere (Evans and Pfister, 2020). Work regarding managing diversity, particularly through a cross-cultural approach, helps stakeholders overcome ethnocentric perspectives, and awakens greater understanding around diversity to clarify the connections between sport, gender, and society (Spaaij et al., 2019). Contributing to this argument, LaVoi and Wasend (2018) established the notion that positive influences can be found from fostering diversity in sport organisational staffing, especially when this diversity reflects athlete diversity, promoting an argument that 'diversity begets diversity'. Supporting the value of diversity (and perceived gender diversity) within sport, Gomez-Gonzalez et al. (2018) similarly found a positive relationship between fostered diversity of personnel, and organisational fiscal health and ability to expand operations.

Through recent protests organised by the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement, various stakeholders within the industry have demonstrated acts of support through kneeling during national anthems, and committing to anti-racism initiatives. Club brands, such as the previously recognised 'Washington Redskins', have reconsidered their appropriation of indigenous American imagery through their branding, and have adopted name change plans (Schad, 2020). When addressing diversity in sport, previous work has shown that club leaders and managers tend to define diversity in abstract terms with broad, universal terminology, relying on the notion that their clubs are "not a singular, homogenous entity" (Spaaij et al., 2019:4). Even with perspectives like this, the sport industry has struggled with diversity, often instead consciously or unknowingly maintaining 'the old boys network', with unconscious discrimination occurring holistically (Piggott, 2016). Attempts

to address the lack of DEI in sport have been met with planned efforts, ranging from informal initiatives to mandatory, compulsory policies. With these frameworks geared to both raise awareness and evaluate levels of equity, diversity in governing bodies remains low at all levels of representation and performance (Norman, 2016). One example of a framework from 2018 is The Football Association's (The FA) 'Inclusion and Anti-Discrimination Action Plan', which was geared toward making strides toward improving diversity equity, and inclusion across English football organisations through recording high-profile incidents geared toward improving annual monitoring and reporting (The FA, 2017). However, The FA has received criticism in the past for its efforts, especially as it has allegedly disregarded some protected characteristics / identities (disability and women), as well as its handling of racism from supporter groups at clubs. This has led to research regarding the impact these efforts have made toward eliminating discrimination throughout the football industry.

2.4.1. Discrimination and Inequitable Practices in Sport

It has been argued that sport consistently remains an inequitable industry, and that although it is considered an important and influential institutional sphere, there are several aspects regarding practice which need to be revisited (Ezzell, 2009; Allison, 2016). Research has suggested that within the sports context, stakeholders will oftentimes only conceal one of their marginalised identities in an effort to "reduce minority stress" (Walker and Melton, 2015:258). Initial endeavours around approaching discrimination have occurred through corporate social responsibility (CSR) efforts, as they are viewed as necessary business functions. The agents and beneficiaries of CSR efforts are both internal and external, ranging from employees to local communities (Sheth and Babiak, 2010). CSR has been defined as "the ways in which a business seeks to align its values and behaviour with those of its various stakeholders" (Filizöz and Fişne, 2011:1407). This similarly could be related to women's access to sport, and how it has been established and monitored. Women's sport participation at every level (including exercise, coaching, elite competition, volunteering, and employment) has recorded inequitable numbers of opportunities in comparison to their male counterparts (Sports Council Equality Group, 2014b). In addition to these participation areas, there are higher levels of recorded gaps

in media representation, funding incentives, facilities, and the spread of resources (LaVoi and Wasend, 2018). It has been argued that inequitable practices in sport occur for groups not following heteromasculine reproduction (those with non-white male identities). Recognising the increasing levels of representation of women in sport, the quality of opportunities and support still have room for improvement, as women are additionally far behind in coverage and decision-making roles (Hartmann-Tews and Luetkens, 2003). Through a study conducted in the US, 2,219 respondents indicated that within their employment roles of coaching and administration, over 60% felt men had an easier time gaining promotions and negotiating salary compared to women (Darvin et al., 2018). Within industries such as sport, social capital is a necessary element employees must grow to develop skills, organisational knowledge, and relationships (Burton, 2015). Reasons for slower progress for women's sports in comparison to men's sports also stem from the subpar recognition, facilities, and psychological and financial rewards (Darvin and Sagas, 2017). This shows that women's sports are still falling short in comparison to men's in terms of coverage and opportunities as women in sport face especially difficult barriers (Burton, 2015). Thus, previous literature has found that gender discrimination often contributes to diminished access to resources and inferior treatment of staff and athletes in all areas of the sport industry (Darvin et al., 2018).

More recently through the impacts of the coronavirus pandemic, there has been additional research suggesting that many women within sports are experiencing extensive marginalisation. Women in Football (a network that champions women's talent in the football industry), commissioned a study in 2020, showcasing what they referred to as a 'cry for help', as respondents reported higher levels of 'institutionalised sexism' during the pandemic's difficult times (Wilson, 2020). Their results also indicated 66% of participants shared that they had experienced gender discrimination in their own workplace. In addition to facing this discrimination, and due to the devastating effect of the coronavirus pandemic, women have become four times more likely to leave their roles (Zalis, 2021). As this has not been uncommon in other sporting institutions around the globe historically, it is an indication that discriminative practices that are only being approached via reactive procedures, should instead be approached proactively. Outside of the time frame of the

coronavirus pandemic, sport managers work extensive hours, including evenings and weekends, making staff and participant childcare needs unfulfilled (Dixon and Bruening, 2005). Research has shown that when many individuals (such as women) are exposed to discrimination around pay inequity, "harassment, gender bias, homophobia, stress, pressure to perform, and the constant scrutiny that come with being a token, morale is diminished", and staff turnover is increased (LaVoi and Wasend, 2018:2). Reactions from being perceived as a 'token' have caused some hiring managers to increase representation of women in organisations. However, as a result, in some cases, 'twoken-ism' has been established, where there are two women represented, however making minimum impact due to discrimination (Chang and Milkman, 2019). This has led to different outcomes ranging from burnout all the way to class-action lawsuits.

Throughout this thesis, the various types of approaches, policies, practices, and frameworks toward addressing diversity, equity, and inclusion will be presented. It is important to note that when addressing these inequitable practices, there is 'persistence of inequity', which many individuals have faced, and infrequent questioning of this status, particularly in professional sport (Harmon, 2019). Given that women make up less than 15% of the football workforce, and their mental health concerns have been neglected, there is a vital call for employers to create a culture where staff are encouraged and empowered to share how they have faced discrimination (Wilson, 2020). Failing to incorporate DEI policies may diminish the impact of efforts geared towards creating opportunities for women in sport management and/or coaching (Dixon and Bruening, 2005).

2.4.2. Competitiveness and Masculinity in Sport

Anderson (2009) suggests that the sport industry promotes heteromasculine domination, and recruits individuals who have only the mindset of straight, white, cis-men. Designed to feature competition as declaring a champion, the outcomes have shaped the sport industry to become a winner-takes-all market (Heslin, 2005). Expanding on this, Adriaanse and Schofield (2013) suggest that the highly masculine and hierarchical nature of sport offers insight into how gender impacts several areas within competitive fields and

organisations (Sotiriadou and de Haan, 2019). One of the most prominent examples of where the sporting culture has caused players to temporarily abandon competitive and aggressive behaviours is in controversial and news-worthy, non-playing situations. One example includes Brock Turner's indictment and trial, where an American collegiate swimmer was found guilty of raping a woman at a party. Quite probably due to his being a straight, white, cis-male athlete, he served minimal time compared to non-athletes, and especially compared to people of colour (Lange and Young, 2019).

A common manifestation of the competitiveness and masculinities linked in sport is through American football, according to Shaw and Hoeber (2003). In professional and collegiate American football, male athletes are showcased as tough and aggressive participants, whereas femininity (if shown) is frowned upon (Shaw and Hoeber, 2003). The nature of these behaviours has supported what McKay (1997) with a suggested 'Group Think' concept, where intertwined male groups (such as in frats, gangs and the armed forces) develop a mindset that the competitive nature found on the playing sphere within the industry also is prevalent in their personal relationships, manifesting as harassment and violent behaviour toward vulnerable persons. This configuration has built a militarised, masculine concept, in which the sport industry has been influenced (Lapchick, 1996). It has been argued the 'winning at all costs' reinforces these hegemonic masculine behaviours, which additionally follows the values in 'Group Think' institutions (Burton, 2015).

2.4.2.1.   Gender in Sport

When defining the sport industry, many will often use terms such as 'masculine', 'power', and 'forceful' (Welford, 2011). These terms have shaped various gender-related beliefs and have delayed the progression of gender equity in sport (Sotiriadou and de Haan, 2019). According to Trolan (2013), there are results of gender role differences that society has established which require certain genders to overcompensate for their masculinity as an athlete. This has also been referred to as gender discourse (Shaw and Hoeber, 2003). When discussing gender discourse, Shaw and Hoeber (2003) indicated that it refers to the social and cultural language and interactions occurring within families, organisations,

and sectors (such as sport), and is often left unchallenged, creating barriers for individuals in many male-prevalent industries. Being defined from social contexts (compared to sex being biologically defined) we must acknowledge Bourdieu's (2001) argument regarding gender relations being predominantly reproductive in nature in relation to body habitus, which is the way individuals perceive and react to the social world around them, making gender within sport an 'engrained' feature (Krais, 2006; Skrubbeltrang, 2019).

Historically, it has been argued that women athletes have to overcome the barrier of being recognised as the 'other sex'. This means having limited opportunities that are considered 'suitable' forms of sport at one point in time (Pfister, 2010). Skrubbeltrang (2019) argued about how society often underestimates the power sport has with reproducing and reinforcing the patriarchal conceptions of gender. In 1921, bans were put in place for women participating in sports like football, as it was seen as unsuitable forms of physical activity for them (The FA, 2019). Lasting for 50 years, bans like this have prolonged gender inequity in several areas outside of participation, making an impact in the sporting workplace as well. To address these issues, gender equity has been considered a key objective for sport councils around the globe, such as the Council of Europe (CoE) (Helfferich, 2016). The predominant understanding of councils such as CoE of gender equity is not just about women's rights; it is also about changing social categorisations. Yet, no country in the world has achieved gender equity in regard to all areas within sport (Ford, 2019), and it is estimated that it will take over 200 more years to actually change this inequity (Tulshyan, 2019). Examples of specific attempts will be later outlined in this thesis. However, a common theme regarding these attempts at reform is the adopted nature of sport organisations 'de-gendering' norms of specific elements in the industry (Harmon, 2019). Initial academic analyses around gender equity in sport management has been based on liberal feminist theory originating during the 1980s, leading to the development of a great deal of sport policy (Sibson, 2010). Liberal feminist theory is known for imposing arguments regarding increasing representation of women in managerial roles. However, it has been critiqued, as arguably little has been done to alter reproductive sport business structures (Shaw and Frisby, 2006).

Since research addressing gender in sport has emphasised hegemonic gender relations (Valenti et al., 2018), and there are findings of informal gendered practices that normalise the position of men within sport (Piggott and Pike, 2019), this thesis sets to explore directly how gender equity is being impacted through recent implementation of diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives. There is currently no single model recommended on DEI within the sporting context, leading to a critique which suggests that more appropriate and accurate testing of initiatives going forward is warranted (Skrubbeltrang, 2019). The findings in this doctoral research intend to support the implementation of a model catering to measuring and monitoring gender equity and DEI within sport management institutions.

2.4.2.2.   Women in Sport

As women from different social structures and cultures receive different opportunities regarding access to sport, it is important to acknowledge the barriers many women have faced historically (Pfister and Hartmann-Tews, 2003). Not until the 1900 Olympics in Paris were women able to compete in the international games, when 22 women out of the 997 athletes, began participating in five of the Olympic sports (IOC, 2021). This opened doors of participation for many women and girls to compete across the globe. Even with this stride, women sport identities have been constructed differently in comparison to their male counterparts (Puig and Soler, 2003). In the UK, with recognising the growing numbers of women participating in sport, male participants still greatly outnumber women. As a response to this, institutions such as the Sports Council have set targets to increase participation by nearly 70% (White and Brackenridge, 1985). Although there are increasing numbers of women participating in sport across the globe, gender inequitable practices can be displayed in other ways, such as "unequal social relations, invisibility or heterosexist representation within the media, invisibility within sports leadership, less value ascribed to sporting and leadership performances, and gendered expectations and ideologies" (Norman, 2016:999). It is important to recognise that even in countries such as the US, where they have had legislative mandates regarding levels of women participation opportunities for over three generations, and considered an "all-time high" level of girls participating in sport, there are just around 43% of participants who are women (LaVoi and Wasend, 2018). Thus, there is a call for further research regarding

how and why this has occurred, so practitioners can understand why women's representation in sport organisations, such as football, ranges only between 4-15% globally (Litchfield and Kavanagh, 2019).

2.4.2.3.   Depictions of Women in Sport

Although more participation opportunities in sport have been offered over recent decades for all genders, media coverage of women's sports and competitions has remained marginal (Pfister et al., 2015). There are arguments that the media can both empower and oppress women in sport (Litchfield and Kavanagh, 2019). It has been shown that in countries like the UK and US, only 4% of sports media coverage involves women's sports (UNESCO, 2021). Another alarming factor, in addition to this low percentage, is the type of women's sports coverage presented. Kaelberer (2019) shares that the types of images of women athletes highlighted in the mass media rarely involve any action or celebration photos, in contrast to men, who are typically represented by strong and active athletes being portrayed as heroes. Women athletes' photos typically show winners smiling, with their bodies portrayed in a more beauty-centric, elegant manner. These differences in photo presentation by the media have led to the diminishment of athletic accomplishments of many women athletes, and the leagues in which they participate, thus prolonging the implementation of gender equity in sport (Kaelberer, 2019). In addition to the inequitable areas of participation and media coverage of women in sport, another highly controversial topic is professional athletes' gender pay gap. This gender pay gap exists in areas such as athlete compensation, sponsorship allocations, and coaching salaries (Greenhill et al., 2009).

In the 1970s, world renowned tennis player Billie Jean King (BJK) began fighting against the highly male prevalent sport industry, lobbying for equal prize money between genders, as well as pushing for more young women athletes to continue their journey in sports to become professional athletes. Now, over 50 years after BJK began her pioneering career, the sport industry has developed many other athletes with global recognition. In tennis, players such as Naomi Osaka, Maria Sharapova, and Serena Williams have continued BJK's legacy, becoming highly respected tennis athletes. Outside the sport of tennis, we

have seen other pioneering representations of women in sport through examples such as the professional football players Marta Vieira da Silva, Megan Rapinoe, and professional basketball stars Maya Moore and Diana Tarasiu. Although all these women have successfully shattered some form of barrier to get to where they are today, there still comes public scrutiny and forms of discrimination. Megan Rapinoe, a two-time football World Cup champion, is an example of a athlete who receives criticism for her non-traditional practices and beliefs, with using her platform to address social injustice (Roper, 2019). Following the findings of Satore and Cunningham (2010), where any woman similar to Rapinoe who challenges traditional gender norms become labelled as a 'bitch' or 'ice queen', this contributes to 'very macho and very offensive' mindset that refers to these types of women as tomboys, lesbians, and or dykes (Oxford, 2019; Hartzell and Dixon, 2019).

2.4.2.4.   The Gender Pay Gap in Sport

One of the most commonly discussed realms within society where inequitable practices occur is through the gender pay gap. Sport as an industry has been found particularly guilty of feeding into the pay gap disparity through being "amplified by the media industries and sponsorship deals available to athletes" (Williams, 2019:3). Equal pay as defined by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) is where both men and women are paid equally for work of the same value. However, the gender pay gap is the difference between men's and women's pay average, often used synonymously as well (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2020). As the gap is considered to be complex, and not being fully understood, the underlying reasons for the gender pay disparity have been found to contribute to increased rates of depression and anxiety for many women, and suggest that the issue is far bigger than just an economic one (Bermingham-Shaw, 2019). One mechanism that has been used to explain gender gaps in the labour market focuses on how men are inclined to negotiate pay, as gender stereotypes have encouraged them to be more competitive compared to women (Säve-Söderbergh, 2019).

When looking at the sport industry and gender pay disparity directly, areas of sponsorship are key points. Previous research found that men are more likely compared to women to

have sponsors, as 46% of athletes who identify as men have a sponsor compared to athletes who identify as women at less than 5% (Hewlett et al., 2011; Women in Sport, 2014). As women's sports such as football, basketball, and cricket have grown in fan interest and media representation, there are issues with the gender pay gap as showcased through pay disparity in prize money, with examples of the United States Women's National Team (USWNT) and the English Football Association Cup having men's prize money over 100 times more than the women's (BBC Sport, 2020). Although there have been strides by the French, Australian, and US Opens now offering men and women equal prize money, there currently is no country in the world where equitable gender pay has been achieved (Tulshyan, 2019). As the sport industry is particularly known for perpetuating gender pay disparity, cases such as the USWNT amplify institutionalised gender discrimination (Williams, 2019).

2.5. Chapter 2 Summary

Based on the literature discussed throughout this chapter, the acknowledgement of how gender is constructed and the direct and indirect impacts it has made on the sport industry have been exemplified. Acknowledging that previous literature has predominantly been done in the sociological domains, it is crucial to explore this gender-related controversy in sport further through the business and management lens. This PhD is mostly concerned with the gender inequitable practices occurring in the footballh workplace. However, it is important to recognise how these practices came to exist. Therefore, from understanding previous empirical studies, a review of the relevant literature and conceptual considerations have helped to create the road map for this study.

3. Literature Review on Business, Diversity, and Football

3.1. Introduction

Acknowledging that discriminative practices occur throughout society, this chapter deals with how discrimination impacts the business of football directly. More specifically, this chapter reviews literature concerning diversity and the business of football with particular focus on gendered practices' relating to factors like 'gendered norms' and the 'glass ceiling barrier'. The sport industry traditionally has been described as consisting of three sectors including: public, private, and non-profit (Hartmann et al., 2002). Previous research around DEI has mainly focused on the public or volunteer sector, which establishes a gap around the private, commercial side of sport, leading to the need for further investigation in this area (Pike et al., 2018; Leberman, 2017). Additionally, as this study is a cross-national comparison, this chapter also consists of literature that has outlined the national structures in which competitive football occurs in each of the examined countries. Lastly, literature around how DEI has been introduced and monitored within the industry is discussed.

3.2. Private Sector Business and Sport

Similarly to the sport industry, business management has three sectors: public, private, and non-profit. Organisations in each of these sectors have different advantages and challenges for securing and mobilising capital, varying also with their diverse stakeholders and responsibilities (Sharpe, 2006). Compared to public and non-profit institutions, the private sector traditionally has focused on its improvement of productivity, cost reductions, customer service, and profit-building year-to-year (Jurisch et al., 2013). As many public and non-profit organisations receive federal and corporate support to meet certain obligations, private businesses tend to self-fund and self-regulate, based on their own adopted corporate cultures (Larkin et al., 1993). Private business tends to maintain a neo-classical point of view, according to Filzöz and Fişne (2011), meaning these entities provide products and/or services through creating value and generating profits.

Bowles (2011:4) shares that capitalism "appears in a variety of ways across the globe, and even with forms of variation, elements are similar at the root as it works as a form of economic organisation, which is considered adaptable, flexible, and evolving, but contains constant and unchanging feature." It has been found that there have been mutations around global capitalism, by rising inequalities since the 1970s, making it a significant factor leading to the gender pay gap (Diamond, 2006). The positives behind capitalism include that it seeks to "create new innovations, penetrate new markets, create new industries, engender skill development, and cast aside fetters to its development wherever possible" (O'Hara, 2004:415). Therefore, without it, the growth and globalisation of the professional sport industry would be non-existent.

With capitalism, it is important to recognise that practices fluctuate country by country, and the universal objective is for private businesses to focus on economic growth and product development. Research around capitalist practices in the sport industry have referenced institutional theory, as it is one of the most dominant perspectives within organisational studies (McLeod et al., 2020). The reason institutional theory is so heavily referenced is due to it not only explaining why organisational structures and practices become entrenched, but also how organisational change occurs (de Jonge, 2015). Compared to institutional theory, resource-based theory calls for diversity management to reduce costs in order to exploit the benefits of diversity, focusing on the development of competitive advantage, instead of just legitimacy as the outcome (Yang and Konrad, 2011). Later in this study, a discussion around capitalism and business priorities will occur, as the emphasis on revenue generation can be proposed as a factor leading to the slow progression of gender equity in business and sport.

Private business activities are also linked with practicing hegemonic reproductive patterns (Kaelberer, 2019). Acknowledging that sex has become synonymous with gender, and with societies 'sex-role socialization process', many women historically have struggled to enter and stay within the private sector. It has been argued that because feminine qualities are seen as less suitable, women are perceived as showing "poor performance in business" (Norman, 2016:979). With the focus on customer service, 'gendered patterns' of the labour market occur. Focusing on customer satisfaction and revenue

generation, private businesses do not have to adhere to binding laws and regulations the same way which public or volunteer institutions do, which has led to a popular call for more "accountability, transparency and strict adherence" to avoid forms of discrimination or foul business practice (Jurisch et al., 2013:6).

The same 'gendered patterns' can be found in professional and elite sport organisations that are registered as for-profit institutions. Referring to the saying 'winning at all costs', this philosophy is prevalent within sport, relating to performance both on and off the pitch. As an example, front offices focus on income generation from resources like television and corporate sponsorship deals (Allison, 2016). Sporting careers (both as players and administrators) are to be considered high pressured, demanding consistent success, consistently turning a profit, and otherwise placating varying types of stakeholders. Stakeholders in sport can include "owners, investors, shareholders, employees, players, agencies, spectators, fans, other clubs, rivals, community, public, commercial partners, media, broadcasters, governments, national sport management bodies, international sport management bodies, sport equipment industry and wider societal interests on whom the operations of a sport related body may have an impact" (Filizöz and Fişne, 2011:1408). Acknowledging pressure from these stakeholders, sport practitioners (typically those who are men) have demonstrated higher levels of emotional competence, which has been found to negatively impact family and home life. Similar to traditional businesses, sport organisations are valued for factors like revenue and performance, in which each sport and/or league have different income streams at several levels, ranging from gate receipts to broadcasting rights fees (Sheth and Babiak, 2010). A visual representation of football stakeholders can be found in Figure 3.1 below, referencing Boon's (2000) non-hierarchal map.

Figure 3.1 Non-Hierarchal Stakeholder Map of a (English) Football Club (Source: Boon, 2000:30)
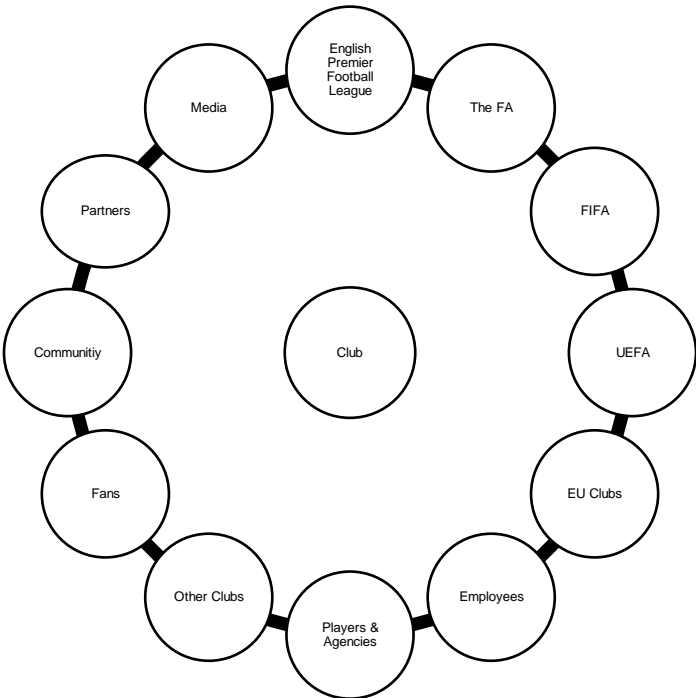
Over time, with shifting consumer demands and social justice movements making greater progress, the 'purely profit' business strategy has been challenged. This has caused many businesses to pivot and build stronger relationships with communities and non-profits, with the aim to meet these shifting consumer demands (Oleck, 1989; Spaaij et al., 2019). Following these shifting demands, athletes additionally have become more outspoken against acts of racism and police brutality, through supporting organisations such as Black Lives Matter (BLM), initially led by former professional quarterback Colin Kaepernick (Evans and Pfister, 2020). Kaepernick is most famously known for kneeling during the national anthem in solidarity during his NFL playing career (Boykoff and Carrington, 2020). The reproductive nature of sport has also been found in university sport management courses, through emphasis around economic generation, with minimal focus on social and cultural issues in sport (Allison, 2016). This led to an investigation of the holistic experience of practitioners, from the sport management classroom, to the stadium workplace, focusing on diversity, equity, and inclusion.

One last disparity found between public, private, and non-profit sectors in sport comprises types of capacity, including physical, financial, structural, and human resources.

Structural capacity is most often linked with institutional theory, since it includes organisational infrastructure and processes through the planning and development of organisational activities, as it relies on the ability of the institution to draw on internal and external networks (Sharpe, 2006). As capacity has a number of unique features that impact organisational performance, it has been argued that it is detrimental when institutions follow a 'one size fits all' framework for workplace settings (Clutterbuck and Doherty, 2019). Later in this thesis, capacity will be further explored in relation to DEI and gender equity in professional football workplaces.

3.3. Business Institutions

Recognising the aims and objectives of the private sector in comparison to public and non-profit ones, for this thesis, it will also be important to acknowledge organisational culture and values as factors which help to determine priorities around business management and change regarding discriminative practices. Geertz (1973) defined culture as the creation of meaning where humans interpret experiences that go on and guide actions which are focused on both personal and professional settings. Extending further on Geertz's (1973) definition, focusing more on the professional business setting, it is important to understand how culture varies between those operating with a focus on 'management by results' and those with a focus on 'management by values' (Jaakson, 2010).

Bobbitt-Zeher (2011) and Ridgeway (2011) discuss 'gender construction' and 'norms' through highlighting the practices taught to humans around their behaviours at a very early age, a process referred to as 'socialisation', which has been found to impact business institution settings, significantly impacting equitable practices. 'Socialisation', according to Giddens and Sutton (2013), is the process where humans develop awareness of their gendered 'norms' and establish their values and distinct sense of selves. Acknowledging 'socialisation' as a factor which varies for individuals from different cultures and family backgrounds, this thesis sets to explore how DEI has been taught from an early age and has shaped individuals throughout their professional careers.

Additionally, through 'socialisation', it will be necessary to understand any positive or negative experiences employees have towards DEI in their own workplaces.

The sport industry has historically been labelled as 'militarized' (Lapchick, 1996) meaning it is viewed as considering practices important to differentiate specific values and priorities of private sport organisations, in contrast to public or non-profit organisations. Management practices can be explored through features like language and visual arts. Private sector businesses (such as Microsoft, Apple, and Virgin Atlantic) operate with a focus on 'management by results'. Examples of sport organisations that follow this process include Nike, Adidas, Sky Sports, and professional football clubs. Extending from institutional theory, the concept of isomorphic pressure, in which organisations become increasingly similar in 'structure, culture, and processes', evolved (McLeod et al., 2020). The Chartered Government Institute's (2018:10) report titled 'Organisational Culture in Sport', referenced when defining normative behaviours, as discussed in Lent and Studdert's (2018:10) description, indicates that it is "the norms and values that determine the behaviour of those who work within an organisation." These norms result from complex processes of emulation and reinforcement, often occurring unconsciously in each employee, following colleagues' behaviours. The norms are frequently not reflected in the explicit formal processes of an organisation, but can often also act in contradiction to those formal processes. Thus, culture in the private, commercial sector of sport tends to be focused on profit maximisation, which is geared toward entertaining crowds via sporting success, and follows a highly bureaucratic process which is both controlled and structured.

Bourdieu's idea of economic capital referenced in Sharpe's (2006) work indicates it acts as any resource that can be converted into money, while additionally recognising it as human capital, or the capital embodied in human labour, and has been accepted into the norms of the sport industry. Relating to human capital, this thesis will utilise Schein's (2004) theory of organisational culture, as it has been referenced in other gender equity publications regarding sport, and is considered "the most commonly accepted framework in business management for uncovering the levels of workplace culture" (Norman et al., 2018:128). It is important when relating Bourdieu's concept of human capital with Schein's

(2004) theory of organisational culture to keep in mind that employees bring their own personal intellectual properties with them to the organisation. It is additionally important to recognize that if employees leave, this form of capital goes with them. When employees leave, this includes the normative behaviours which create patterns of productivity and know-how, and is based on individual employee intellectual property (Sharpe, 2006).

As there are a range of ways organisational culture can be measured and studied (Maitland et al., 2015), this thesis will continue following the sport research theme, and use Schein's (2004) definition of organisational culture. This includes idea of the shared basic assumptions groups of individuals learn and teach to new members, is perceived as the correct way to think and feel in relation to those problems (Maitland et al., 2015). Later in this study, interpretation following Meyerson's and Martin's (1987) three-perspective framework of integration, differentiation, and fragmentation will occur through linking how institutional theory and organisational culture impact workspaces achieving DEI. A visual representation of how diversity works with varying identities as depicted by Gardenswartz and Rowe (2003) is represented in Figure 3.2. Following this model, further understanding of participant intersectional identities can be attained.

Figure 3.2. Diversity with Varying Identities (Source: Gardenswartz and Rowe, 2003:239)
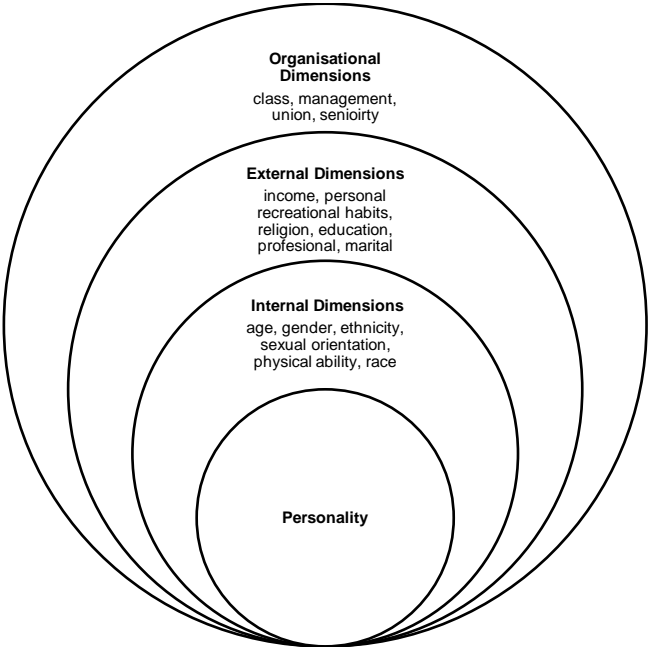
3.3.1. Diversity in Business

As diversity policies and practices are becoming omnipresent in nearly all professional organisational settings, it is critical to understand the reasons behind why and how they are constructed (Kang and Kaplan, 2019). Concomitant with the increased diversity in the business workforce, more research has been conducted around the experiences of individuals, as well as the barriers they face, within the workplace. The topics studied typically are around human resources, education, leadership, and development (Byrd and Scott, 2014).

The cause of shifting demographics is understood to be globalisation, which has challenged the heterogeneous nature of the workplace. Through bringing in assorted groups of international students and employees, a 'melting pot of cultures' was introduced in the early 1900s. For instance, through his work, playwright Israel Zangwill created a protagonist character that represented United States Senator Moynihan, who pushed for agendas where foreign-origin persons moving to America had to acclimatise, and abandon their old cultural identities, causing immigrants to experience increased stress, via increasing bureaucracy and discrimination (Bhattacharya and Groznik, 2008). As a suggested practice to replace the 'melting pot', a new concept referred to as a 'salad bowl' was introduced as a way by which migrating persons are able to keep their separate identities and harmoniously co-exist, while becoming citizens of their new country (e.g. 'America') (Bhattacharya and Groznik, 2008; Advani and Reich, 2015).

3.3.2. Gendered Institutions

Gender has been found to make significant impacts on industries, as it is built from both individual and systemic biases (Wharton, 2012). Gender construction develops unwelcome environments for those of non-homologous groups (women and ethnic minorities), and serves as a foundation upon which stereotypes around interests, personalities, and skills are formed and identified (Kang and Kaplan, 2019; Martin and Phillips, 2019). Exploring how these individual and systemic biases endured for traditionally disadvantaged groups in our society is crucial for comprehending the roots of gendered institutions today (Hideg and Wilson, 2019). Based on these biases, social

categorisation inevitably occurs through constructing institutions to 'do gender' through altering different social groups' perceptions of and reactions to other individuals (Holmes, 2006; Kang and Kaplan, 2019). While further investigating gendered organisations, Acker (1990) developed the concept that organisations may already have established sets of gender practices, recognising that organisations operate not as gender neutral but rather as workplaces with embedded notions of gender, where men are privileged, and women and other minority groups are disadvantaged (Williams, 1992). It is important to showcase that it is not just men who exhibit gendered biases, but women as well (Chang and Milkman, 2019).

Industries and institutions that follow hegemonic reproduction have been labelled as 'male-prevalent' spaces. They follow militarised practices that historically have been organised by men, and have produced stereotypical gender roles and gender-blind or biased institutional norms and procedures (Oxford, 2019). These practices are believed to occur as indicated in the 'Social Identity Theory'. This theory suggests that people value self-worth through gendered classification and different social characteristics, and the ability to be able to maintain self-worth and status, as they are then inclined to protect a positive image of their identities (Tajfel and Turner, 2004; Hideg and Wilson, 2019). Specific examples of gendered institutions include the armed forces, police, business organisations, scientific entities, technology firms, engineering and math entities (STEM), as well as nursing departments. Women are underrepresented in some of the most powerful companies in the world, many of which are in STEM fields (Martin and Phillips, 2019; Ovide and Molla, 2016). In the health workforce globally, 75% of the industry is represented by women, however, they disproportionally hold lower leadership positions (Shannon et al., 2019).

Acknowledging the forces which lead to gendered stereotypes, an informal system, referred to as the 'division of labour', has been discovered; this highlights the gender-based breakdown of domestic, economic, and parental labour responsibilities, which have developed within societies. The 'sexual division of labour' is the process that assigns tasks for individuals based on their biological sex (Wharton, 2012). The division of labour has been troubling for areas concerning gender equity at various points in history

(Diamond, 2006). This has been found to have shaped a perspective that within the 'division of labour', men are to be considered aggressive hunters and women as passive mothers and nurturers (Marchbank and Letherby, 2007). The 'division of labour' and resultant gender inequalities have predominantly been found to benefit men through what is referred to as 'hegemony theory', alluding to the idea that masculinity serves as the most useful and profitable paradigm (Anderson, 2009). This, however, has not always been historically the case. A distinctive element of the 'division of labour' during pre-industrial times showed that, within the domestic setting, labour was equally split, and contributions of women were similar to those of men (Ocon, 2006). As time continued, gendered traits developed further in culture, strengthening concepts that men were supposed to be working for money and resources, while women took on unpaid domestic roles (Greenhill et al., 2009). Built on the idea that women should not work due to health risks, the construction of the 'sexual division of labour' was formed (Wharton, 2012). The 'sexual division of labour' has been related to Connell's four-fold model in relation to understanding the concept of patriarchy, including power relations, cathexis (emotional relations), symbolism, and production relations (the division of labour) (Marchbank and Letherby, 2007). Power has been viewed as a major contributor to gender inequity in society (Lukes, 2005). Specifically, within historically male prevalent industries (such as sport), inequitable practices have been based on gender, hegemony theory, and the sexual division of labour and power.

3.3.2.1. Gender and Leadership in the Workplace

Kanter's (1977) theory further acknowledges that discriminative actions and behaviours occur in various disciplines and industries across the globe. This has been found significantly prominent within the occupational workforce. As historically the business industry has been considered 'male-prevalent', researchers have spent time observing factors like cultures and structures to understand how male prevalence has developed. In 1977, Kanter, who has been described as a pioneer in the study of gender dynamics (Adriaanse, 2016), formulated a theory around how areas of 'homologous reproduction' made a direct impact on the workforce. Kanter's theory of 'occupational sex segregation' acknowledged that in all areas of business, from recruitment to reattainment and

advancement, there is a continued preference for members of the majority prevalent group to maintain authority, because they are considered a 'best fit' (Kanter, 1977). Relating to gender and leadership in the workplace, COVID-19 arguably has made a significant impact. Although women are four times more likely to leave due to domestic obligations (Zalis, 2021), often when sport organisations are in crisis (like global pandemics), a dramatic shift occurs, where men in powerful roles will seek women to lead (Ahn and Cunningham, 2020).

Business research expanding on Kanter's theory has focused on power and opportunity, for a better understanding of why there are lower numbers for specific groups, examining issues related to women and minority groups in the various sectors of business and industry (Yiamouyiannis and Osborne, 2012). Kanter's work has additionally been used to study the sport industry, as he argued that the role of managers is profoundly masculinised, similar to how the sport business industry as whole operates, due to rationality and efficiency (Adriaanse, 2016). An example where women predominantly face marginalisation is that they are often restricted to low-level, low-paying roles (such as coaching), leaving few opportunities to advance (Reade et al., 2009). As men have been evidenced to rarely see their gender as a source of privilege, women have been found to believe that men have access to greater resources (Kanter, 1977; Claringbould and Knoppers, 2007). From this, Claringbould and Knoppers (2007) indicate that these different views create 'dominant and subordinate' groups which impact the behaviour of men and women, especially if the latter want access to positions controlled by the former. With patterns of 'domination of talking time' and 'disruptive interruption', these patterns often result in the formation of dominant and subordinate groups (Holmes, 2006).

As each department within an organisation often can be identified as a subgroup with varying responsibilities, it is crucial to understand where DEI has historically been prioritised. Danisman et al. (2009) indicated that subgroups can emphasise particular values that each occupational or functional group shares, which can often involve ignoring others depending on the nature of their work (e.g. athletes less likely to commit to organisational planning and professionalism). Also referencing Schein's work through Danisman et al. (2009:314), it is understood that these subcultures underscore each

group's "common values about the nature of their work regardless of what particular organisation they belong to." A visual example of institutional values by subgroups is found below in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1. Institutional Values by Subgroups (Source: Danisman et al., 2009:314)

Values	Administrative Staff	Technical Staff	Officials	Coaches	Athletes
Quadrennial Plans	High/moderate	Moderate/low	Moderate/high	High	High
Organizational Rationalization	High	Moderate/low	High/moderate	Moderate/low	Moderate/low
Planning	High	Moderate/low	High/moderate	-	Moderate/low
Professionalism	High	High	High/moderate	Moderate/low	Moderate/low
High Performance Emphasis	Moderate/low	Moderate/low	Moderate/low	High	High
Corporate Involvement	Moderate/high	Moderate/high	Moderate/high	Moderate/high	Moderate/high
Government Involvement	Moderate/high	Moderate/high	Moderate/high	Moderate/high	Moderate/high

3.3.2.2.   The Glass Ceiling Effect

Inequitable practices within the workforce are considered the main factors leading to the 'glass ceiling barrier', a common term used to indicate that women and individuals from minority backgrounds have difficulty rising to senior management levels in occupational settings (Pfister, 2010). In industries outside education and nursing, where there are higher levels of representation of women in management, a 2001 study indicated that women were receiving lower pay than men in every occupation, forming the 'glass ceiling barrier' (Lovoy, 2001). The aforementioned negative experiences have arguably created this barrier for many women in sport, similar to the situations in other male-prevalent industries.

In these situations, men are compelled to maintain and sustain numerous achieved and ascribed attributes associated with hegemonic power (Anderson, 2009). With homologous reproduction, resultant partnerships and networks have made it more difficult for women to assume new leadership roles and otherwise thrive in the industry, as sport boardrooms have been described to have been created by and for straight, white, cis-men (Anderson, 2009). Being considered an invisible barrier, researchers have concluded the glass ceiling is difficult to approach and breach (Norman et al., 2018). Although there have been actions in the forms of compliance-based quotas enacted and

legislation passed, suggestions regarding informal networking and mentoring have been found to be more beneficial, and to have demonstrated superior effectiveness in breaching these barriers (Bell et al., 2002). Examples of quotas include the 40:40:20 target, which was incorporated by the Australian Human Rights Commission in its 2010 Gender Equality Blueprint Report (Adriaanse, 2016). The 40:40:20 target means that a gender-balanced workforce would be made up of 40% men, 40% women, with the remaining 20% unspecified for non-binary identities (Adriaanse, 2016). Even with these impactful practices being implemented, it has remained especially difficult for small organisations that may not have a large draw of internal candidates or resources to become more gender-diverse (Fernandez and Campero, 2017).

As the glass ceiling is not considered a novel phenomenon, and has been around virtually since women's entrance into the workforce, many have accepted the status quo. Claringbould and Knoppers (2012) highlighted that the existence of the glass ceiling often forces many to 'respect' and thus accept these barriers, leading to the creation of a term referred to as 'gender normalcy'. As a result of the glass ceiling, women may choose to leave the workforce, unless offered methods for eliminating the barrier, which can include policies and/or clear expectations (Lovoy, 2001). Opposite of the glass ceiling is a concept referred to as the 'glass elevator', which is believed to be a process promoting men at an exceptionally different speed over women in female-prevalent industries (examples include nursing, social work, and teaching) (Byrd and Scott, 2014). From the glass elevator, men receive an advantage in areas of opportunity, pay, and promotion due to a societal perception that men are more suited than women to hold leadership positions (Williams, 1992).

3.4. Football Business and Structures

As the sport of football is seen to be the most popular game globally (Chadwick et al., 2018), the financial yield has been estimated at over £22bn within the European market (Deloitte, 2020). It is claimed that European football is the epicentre of the game, however, its prominence is observed in nearly every country across the globe (Breitbarth and Harris, 2008). Football came to be considered a 'big business' in the 1990s, as several

clubs, sportswear firms, media outlets, and other business entities began investing more into the products internationally (Chadwick et al., 2018). With dramatic professionalisation since the 1990s, football is arguably recognised as an industry by itself (Breitbarth and Harris, 2008). The main factor around the success of football is the process of globalisation. Globalisation is based on constituting metanarratives of how society and the world are everchanging, as it has been defined as "the antithesis of nationalism and as a homogenising process whereby all national differences are progressively eradicated", meaning reproductive norms in one society are altered based on trends from international groups (such as clubs or brands)" (Penn, 2018:8). Sport teams, like all other businesses, are mandated to follow federal, state, and local regulations. However, they do receive legal benefits due to community status (Sheth and Babiak, 2010). With legal benefits, teams do not have specific obligations to support social causes beyond any legal responsibilities (Filizöz and Fişne, 2011).

Acknowledging globalisation as a key factor for the increase of profit in sport business, another factor referred to as 'digitalisation' has additionally been found as a significant profit-driving factor, as it offers opportunities for clubs and brands to grow their portfolios through technologies (Schmidt and Holzmayer, 2018). Through 'digitalisation', clubs can more promptly follow globalisation trends so brands can hit markets faster and with a stronger impact. Examples of where there have been opportunities to grow business portfolios within football include private investments, through gaining shares, and expenditure into full or partial ownerships in clubs, shifting from the traditional merchandise structure, leading to more sustainable and more profitable market, thus developing a focus around commercialisation (Penn, 2018). The more recent stakeholder structure is often explicit, through contractual acknowledgments, which cause owners to show demanded transparency of business conduct and interaction with supporter groups. There is a need to strategically manage relationships "in order to gain or sustain advantages the game holds against other sports in the global sports industry marketplace" (Breitbarth and Harris, 2008:183).

Another influence worth highlighting within football includes the battles surrounding retail, media rights, and sponsorship growing through globalisation. Within retailing, popular

brands such as Puma, Nike, Adidas, and Under Armour are examples of which a battle for space in markets occurs, where they are trying increase brand association, loyalty, awareness, and image in as many international markets as possible (Emerald Group, 2015). With increases in demand, and celebrity endorsement supported by technology, sport retailing operates not just for fashion, but for additional consumer groups that may have not been advertised to previously (i.e., women), thus creating additional roles in football workplaces (Kolyperas and Sparks, 2018). With new added features and products, retailing channels have become more popular with crossover markets. With consumers' purchasing purposes varying there have been new tasks created for those stationed within football workplaces, diversifying positions further (Kolyperas and Sparks, 2018). This thesis seeks to determine if and how this has impacted football workplaces, as Penn (2018) indicates there has been notable feature changes of development from the most recent phase of globalisation, with increasingly diverse backgrounds of individuals in all positions within the organisations, ranging from players to staff.

Institutional theory has been referenced through research around football business and structures. The institution of football (as a spectator sport) relies on supporters in several ways, as those who are committed fans stand by teams regardless of performance, developing codes 'as the set of rules', incorporating institutional ethos belonging to a higher-order institutional logic, comprising structures located in the domain of the real. As stated by Clegg (2010:7), "institutional logics provide the frameworks that sustain the assumptions, beliefs, and rules through which individuals organise time and space, according to the seasonal fixture list and the sponsoring arrangements that permit the televising of matches." Focusing further on football workplaces, outside of the business activities employees complete day-to-day, it is also worth highlighting the structures in which they operate, so a clearer understanding of values and objectives can be comprehended.

This thesis is looking directly at clubs who have professional and semi-professional players within North America (United States and Canada) and the United Kingdom (England and Scotland). As there is little analysis around system differences about DEI in professional sport, and few attempts have been made to theorise similarities and

differences of practices, the rationale for this study has been argued by researchers such as Raffe et al. (1999) promoting 'home international comparisons' which compare nations that share common elements. Raffe et al. (1999:22) indicate that 'home international comparisons' can be considered "easier and/or cheaper to conduct as they are facilitated by common language, cultural affinities, a common administrative environment and geographical proximity." The four countries chosen in this PhD thesis have a common language and cultural affinities (predominantly English-speaking within Western society), while each group of two (i.e., United States and Canada in North America, and England and Scotland in the United Kingdom) shares a common administrative environment and geographical proximity. Yet, they still represent two different continents (America and Europe), i.e., the international comparisons are not restricted to one single continent in order to reach a broader and more inclusive representation of what is happening in different parts of the world. Besides, the nations selected for this study have distinctive features, as well as some degree of autonomy in education, training and labour (Hannan et al., 1996). It is also important to note that even though each country has English-speaking prevalence, there are geographic regions (i.e., Canadian provinces) that have other languages represented (i.e., French). However, the football clubs involved in this study operate with majority English-speaking correspondence. These distinctive features and degree of autonomy are explored further, and will make the comparisons relevant for the present study, as they may explain some differences in the perceptions held across countries.

A further argument in favour of studying these four specific countries is that they offer an appropriate setting to study the impact of legislative and policy frameworks, based on their similarities and differences evoked above. More specifically, the United States and Canada have different legislations towards DEI, while both England and Scotland follow the legislation applied in the United Kingdom.

Overall, the relevance of 'home international comparisons' for the present study is that they are more likely to generate conclusions that have direct implications for policy or practice (Hannan et al., 1996). Although England and Scotland are a part of the United Kingdom, and the United States and Canada are part of North America, there are varying

systems of policy and education frameworks. Thus, the rationale for this study produces a greater awareness of the diversity of national contexts, and potential implications for transitions, helping to provide stronger frameworks for analysis (Hannan et al., 1996). It remains to be seen if these similarities and differences in legislations translate into perceptions towards DEI being closer between England and Scotland than they are between the United States and Canada. The legislations relevant to DEI are developed further towards the end of the chapter.

Beyond the rationales provided previously, attention needs to be drawn to the impact of the countries selected on a priori relevant composition to the sample. The United States, Canada, England, and Scotland are considered high income countries that "have experienced significant levels of immigration (both planned and enforced) in recent decades with consequent increased ethno-cultural diversity" (Salway et al., 2011:2). This statement justifies further the reasoning behind selecting these countries to be represented in this study. Cross-cultural research must establish a priori relevant composition to the sample in every country surveyed (to achieve comparability of data). This was successfully achieved, as these nations operate following similar Western society business practices, and they are all characterised by English-speaking dominance (Usunier, 2011). As attention to the comparability across national settings is a hallmark of studies such as Salway et al. (2011), cross-national research across these nations has been argued to be a benefit in defining the meaning of 'diversity' and 'gender equity', with ambitions to move beyond broad descriptions, and to better observe any differences and/or prescriptions for policy and practice. As a result, 'home international comparisons' can provide opportunities for institutional theory to be developed further while observing homogenous systems with unique boundaries (Hannan et al., 1996).

Given the focus of the PhD thesis, there is not only a need to justify the choice of the nations studied but also to define 'professional' and 'semi-professional' clubs and players. Following FIFA's (2005) definition of 'professional', players must have written contracts with clubs, and be paid more than the expenses effectively incurred for their footballing activities. Additionally, 'semi-professional' has been defined as having participants who have other regular employment besides football (FIFA, 2005). It is important to recognise

how the sport is governed, in order to showcase similarities and differences. Following the descriptions of McLeod et al. (2020), the football industry, with diverse stakeholders across the globe, constitutes an organisational field which will be the unit of analysis in this study. Further descriptions of each country's domestic playing structure will be summarised in the sections below.

3.4.1. United Kingdom Background

Expanding further on the United Kingdom's (UK) structure of football, it is important to clarify that for this study, England and Scotland were included, as they both legally follow and enforce The Equality Act of 2010 (Sports Council Equality Group, 2014a). Both countries follow the European model of sport, with a pyramid, vertical channel of governing bodies for leagues at each level (Clarkson et al., 2019). Within each country, there is a designated football association (The Football Association or FA in England and Scottish Football Association or SFA in Scotland), overseeing all areas of the game, from grassroots to elite levels for both men and women. Specifically, it is important to recognise the differences in semi and professional status of clubs, as the participants in this study varied. At the top of all domestic pyramids within the UK, the England and Scotland national teams sit. Overseen by their domestic football association, employees of these bodies did not participate, as these football associations are non-profit entities, making them unsuitable.

Following a hierarchical structure, England's top men's league of football is called the 'English Premier League' (EPL), and it operates separately as a private company owned by the 20 member clubs which make up the league at any one time (Premier League, 2021). Each team within the EPL is independently owned. Below the EPL in the tiered structure is the governing body known as the 'English Football League' (EFL), which is the largest single institution in European football, with 72 professional clubs (EFL, 2021). Within the EFL, three leagues operate, which include the Championship League, League One, and League Two. Further below as the third tier within the English pyramid is the National League, consisting of 23 teams, which hosts a mix of both professional and semi-professional clubs. Even further under the National League are the National League North

(22 clubs) and the National League South (21 clubs), with professional and semi-professional clubs. At the bottom of the pyramid are a series of amateur leagues throughout the country. As the National League North, National League South, and amateur leagues have minimal paid players nor staff, only teams from National League up were included in this study.

Within the women's side of football in England, The FA took over the top competitive leagues for women and girls in 1993 (Welford, 2011). Referred to as 'Tiers 1-3', the Women's Super League, the Women's Championship League, and the Women's National League are showcased (The FA, 2021). The only fully professional league is the Women's Super League, which has 12 club affiliates. Similarly to the men's set-up, teams have the opportunity to get promoted and/or relegated each season based on their performances. For both men's and women's football, the differentiation between the top and bottom varies with factors like finances and supporters, as "the degree of committed active support gets stronger as one ascends the pyramid with the weakest support at the base" (Duke, 2002:9). Visual representation of the England football structure with explanations for the different levels can be found below in Figure 3.3.

Figure 3.3 England Football Structure
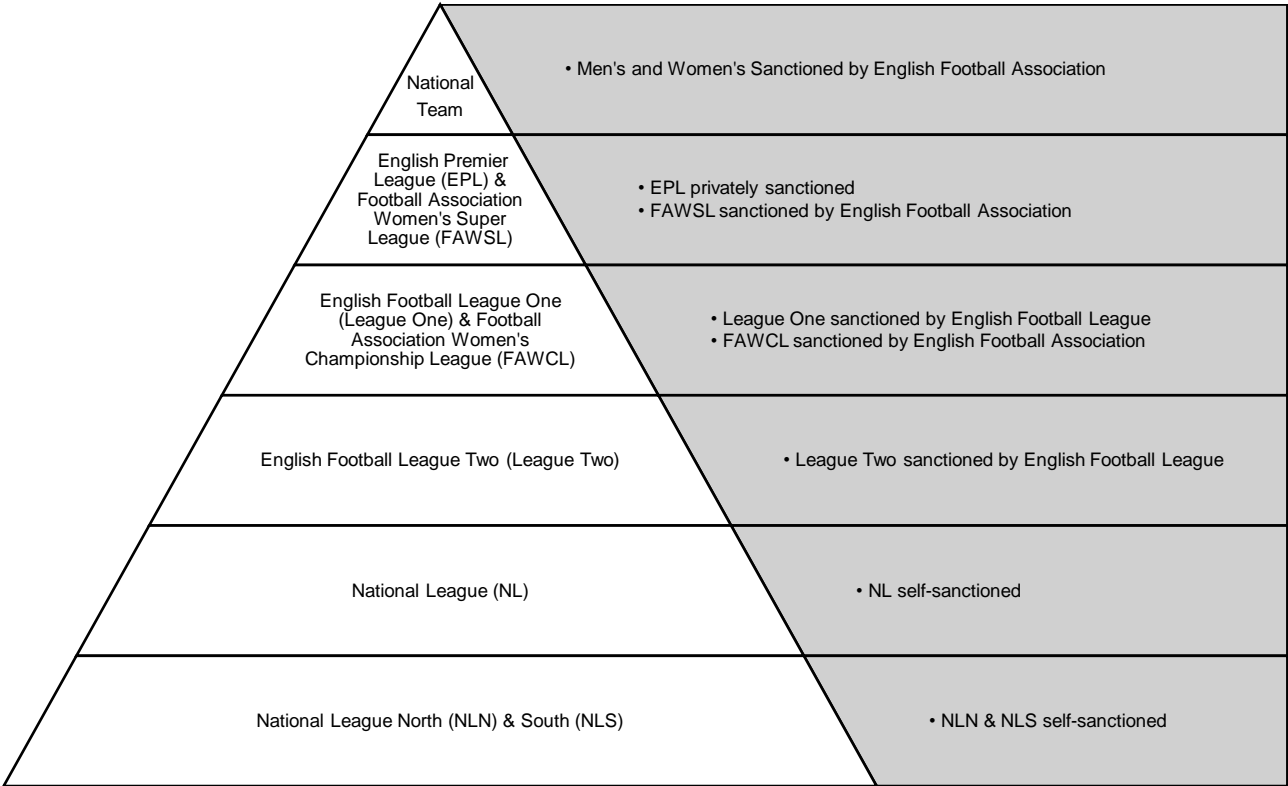
Within Scotland, a similar hierarchical structure exists, with top clubs defined as professional and those at the bottom as amateur. Distinctive to the EPL, the men's top league, the 'Scottish Premiership League' (SPL) is overseen by the Scottish FA. Within the SPL, there are 12 teams that compete. Also overseen by the Scottish FA are three leagues referred to as the Scottish Championship League, Scottish League One, and Scottish League Two, which are below the SPL. These three leagues also have a mix of semi and professional clubs. The Scottish Championship League, Scottish League One, and Scottish League Two consist of 10 clubs each.

Women's football in Scotland has one semi-professional system which operates at the top of its football structure, and it is referred to as the Scottish Women's Premier League (SWPL). Within the SWPL, there are two leagues referred to as SWPL 1 and SWPL 2, with a total of 18 teams. The SWPL is owned and overseen by Scottish Women's Football, which also directs lower-level leagues in which amateur competitions occur. The visual

representation of the Scotland tier system with explanations for the different levels is in Figure 3.4.

Figure 3.4 Scotland Football Structure
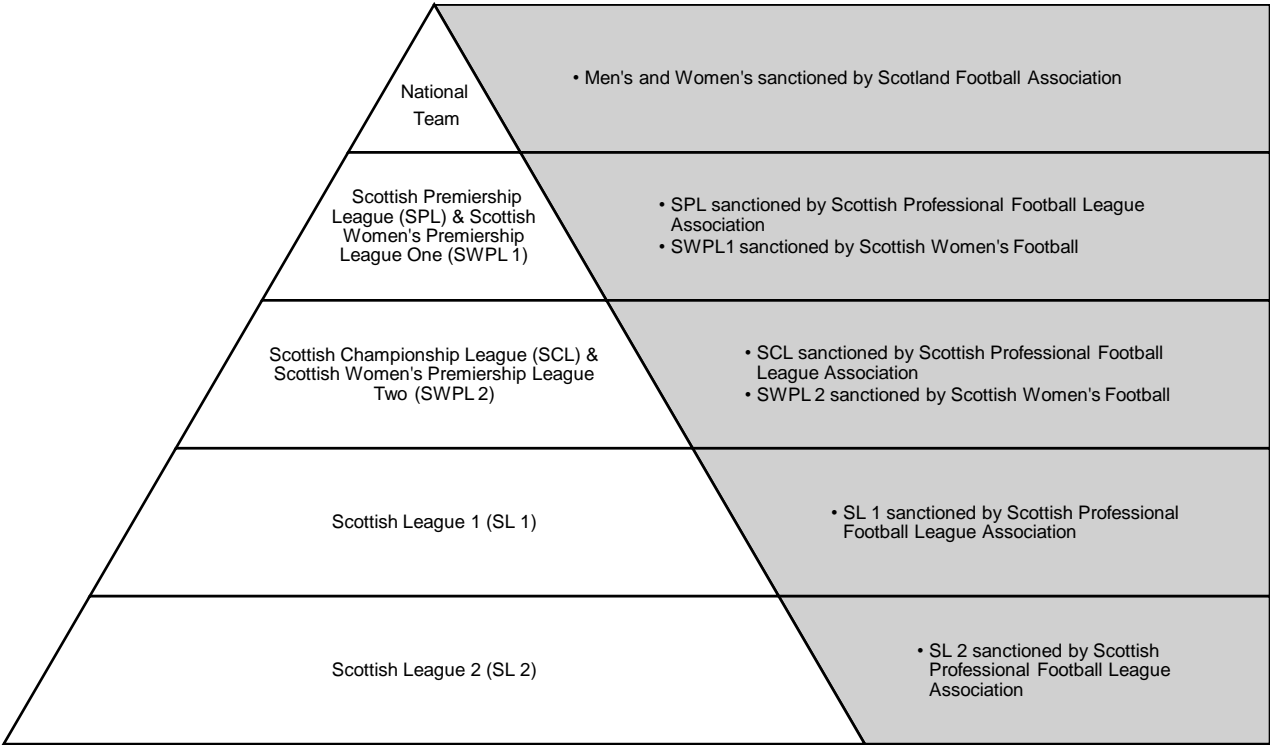
3.4.2. Canada Background

Within the North American markets, the sport of football is referenced as 'soccer' (Breitbarth and Harris, 2008). As the official governing body for 'soccer' in Canada, Canada Soccer "promotes the growth and development of soccer in Canada, from grassroots to high performance, and on a national scale", and oversees over 1,200 clubs that operate in 13 provincial/territorial member associations, while being affiliated with the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA), the Confederation of North Central America, and Caribbean Association Football (CONCACAF) and the Canadian Olympic Committee" (Canada Soccer, 2020:1). In 2017, as a means of attempting to grow domestic talent, Canada Soccer commissioned the Canadian Premier League (CPL), which consists of eight professional teams from across the country (Canadian Premier League, 2021). Ownership within the CPL similarly follows the UK, with a club-based structure, with each club having its own shareholders.

Continuing to develop in 2018, the CPL announced a new sports enterprise to develop commercial assets and domestic competition (Canada Soccer, 2018). As the CPL sits atop the domestic Canadian football structure, the additional introduction of systems like League 1 Ontario, Première Ligue de soccer du Quebec, and First Quebec Soccer League were introduced as lower semi-professional tiers. In addition to these leagues, Canada has multiple franchises from the US-operated Major League Soccer (MLS) and the United Soccer League (USL). Further discussion around the MLS and USL will occur in the next section when discussing the US structure. Although it has had teams which have been successful qualifying for participation in the Women's World Cup, Canada does not have a professional or semi-professional league for women and girls. For purposes of this study, participants were recruited from clubs within the semi and professional structures in Canada, who indicated they were in full-time roles within the organisations. The visual representation of the Canada football system with explanations for the different levels is in Figure 3.5.

Figure 3.5 Canada Football Structure

National Team
• Men's and Women's sanctioned by Canada Soccer

No league sanctioned at this level

Canadian Premier League (CPL) & Major League Soccer (MLS)
• CPL sanctioned by Canadian Soccer Association
• MLS sanctioned by United States Soccer Federation

League 1 Onatrio (L1O), Première Ligue de soccer du Québec (PLSQ) & United Soccer League One (USL 1)
• L1O & PLSQ sanctioned by Canadian Soccer Association
• USL 1 sanctioned by United States Soccer Federation

United Soccer League Two (USL 2)
• USL 2 sanctioned by United States Soccer Federation

3.4.3. United States Background

Growing in popularity, football in the US has over three million registered players, ranging from grassroots to elite (Warren and Agyemang, 2018). Football took off after the US hosted the 1994 World Cup, when the country fulfilled FIFA requirements to launch Major League Soccer (MLS) (Breitbarth and Harris, 2008). As the sport is largely overseen by the United States Soccer Federation (USSF), that structure acknowledges two types of stakeholders, with national and international governing bodies, including FIFA and CONCACAF, while also referencing 16 US Soccer affiliates (US Soccer, 2021). After the 1994 World Cup, the USSF received a $50 million endowment surplus from hosting the competition (Breitbarth and Harris, 2008). Like other NGBs referenced in this study, the USSF was not considered applicable due to its non-profit status.

On the domestic competitive side of professional football in the US, the only sanctioned USSF Division I outdoor men's league is Major League Soccer (MLS), with 27 clubs spread across the nation (Warren and Agyemang, 2018). Although the popularity of MLS is growing, literature around the MLS has less frequently been studied, arguably due to the league's relatively short history, or the slowly-growing acceptance of soccer in North American culture (Gomez-Gonzalez et al., 2018). Compared to other leagues, the MLS is the only sport organisation in the US to operate under a single entity structure, meaning ownership is through the league, as owners have less power comparably (Brownlee and Lorgnier, 2017). Also making the league unique, in 2007 the Designated Player Rule (DP), also referenced as the 'Beckham Rule', was introduced, allowing each franchise to sign up to three players that would be considered outside their salary cap, which was decided in order for the league to draw more international interest and players (MLS, 2017). The individuality of the MLS structure is not only unique within the North American system, but also compared to European football, as "the MLS is a closed league structure, and does not have a promotion or relegation", while following a salary cap that differs from the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) Financial Fair Play rule (Brownlee and Lorgnier, 2017:78). Despite being a popular game among children, as well as Hispanic and European immigrants, professional football has been less successful in economic terms than the 'big four' of basketball, American football, ice hockey, and

baseball (Breitbarth and Harris, 2008). As all MLS teams operate as for-profit, private entities, participants were recruited from all 27 clubs.

On the women's side of the professional game in the US, domestic competitive leagues have historically struggled to stay afloat. Despite being described as 'institutionalized gender discrimination', USSF has generally been recognised as a world leader for its support of women's soccer, resulting in women's teams winning numerous Olympics and World Cups (Williams, 2019). Although numerous World Cups have been won by the US Women's National Team (USWNT), financial sustainability for a women's league has been a common hurdle for the USSF. The USWNT is internationally recognised for both their teams' talents and winning records, as well as legal battles with the parent soccer governing body. In April of 2016, the USWNT filed a lawsuit against the USSF in regard to a gender pay gap with their male counterparts; five of the top USWNT players on behalf of the team filed a wage discrimination complaint (Das, 2020). The case currently has been extended into December 2021, as the players' collective bargaining agreement with USSF is set to expire then (McCann, 2020).

Even before this lawsuit began, women's football and the USSF had conflicts between the years 2001 and 2012, when two women's professional leagues had started and failed due to insufficient financial investments (Haile, 2020). However, in 2013, the National Women's Soccer League (NWSL) was launched, now being considered the most recent and strongest women's professional league in the country's history (Warren and Agyemang, 2018). Ownership structures for clubs vary, some independently operating as for-profit, private entities, while others are defined as 'integrated clubs' (Valenti, 2019), operating under the same umbrella as their MLS or USL counterparts (i.e., Orlando and Houston). All nine teams within the NWSL were considered applicable for this study, and additionally had staff recruited to participate.

Underneath the MLS, in tier two of competitive men's football in the US, is the United Soccer League (USL). The USL (which was formerly known as USL PRO) was formed in 2011 through a merger of two existing professional leagues (USL, 2021a). Since its inception, it has further grown, and followed the formats of the EFL and Scottish FA,

offering competition at three levels, including USL Championship League, USL League One, and USL League Two (USL, 2021b). Ownership structure of the clubs within the USL Championship League and USL League One vary, as some serve as secondary teams to MLS counterparts (i.e. New York Redbulls II and Loudoun United), while others are independently operated (i.e. Tampa Bay Roudies and Austin Bold). It was assumed that all USL clubs with an MLS affiliate had full time employees, as they operated as for-profit private entities. Clubs that independently operated in all levels had to be individually evaluated to gain an understanding of whether they fit the parameters with full-time staff.

Within the third tier of men's football in the US sits the National Independent Soccer Association (NISA), which was launched in 2018, and is also sanctioned by the USSF. As clubs varied in terms of having full-time staff, and / or paid players, an understanding had to be gained regarding which teams would be considered applicable. In total, 8 teams were confirmed. Below the NWLS currently sits United Women's Soccer (UWS), which is a second-division pro-am (professional-amateur) women's soccer league, founded in 2015. Within the UWS, however, there were no recognised full-time employees within any clubs, making the league not applicable. The visual representation of the US football structure with explanations for the different levels is in Figure 3.6.
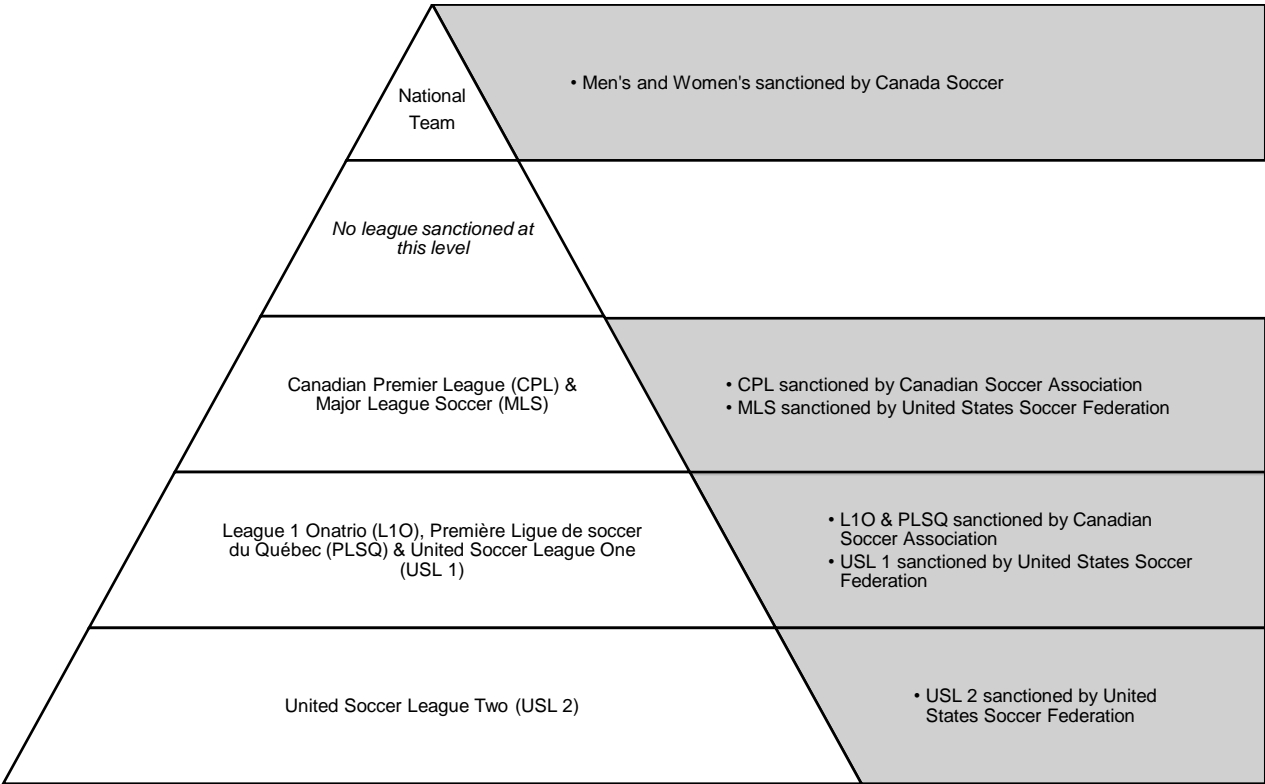
Figure 3.6 US Football Structure
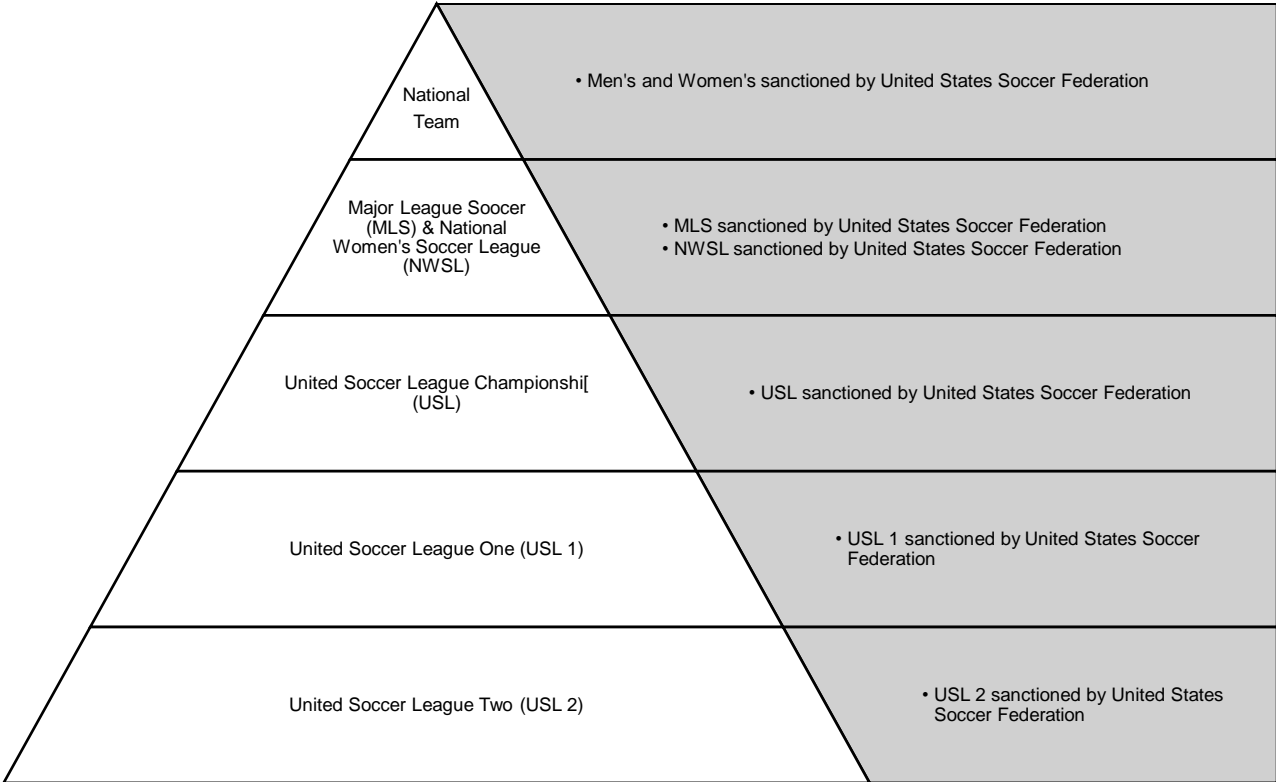
3.5. Diversity and Gender in Football

Being considered the world's most prominent sport, football has been impacted through the persistent migration flows changing ethnic fabrics in areas of Europe and North America (Pettigrew, 1998; Meier and Leinwather, 2013). Acknowledging this, and with understanding how diversity is constructed, football follows hegemonic reproductive practices found in society (Cashmore and Dixon, 2016). It was transformed into a 'white working-class man's sport', meaning up until more recently, research and understanding around 'race' and 'diversity' have been minimal, and foundationally have only been around Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups' experiences with participation, in comparison to being around spectating, managing, or coaching (Lawrence and Davis, 2019). Following persistent migration flows supports the institutional theory of 'mimetic pressure', which involves organisations "voluntarily adopting the structures and practices of other organisations in their fields as a way of gaining legitimacy and other benefits", normalising the concept of DEI (McLeod et al., 2020:146). From mimetic pressures, institutional isomorphism co-exists, producing organisational change and development

(Clegg, 2010). Researchers have argued that although there has been greater diverse participation across the globe for the sport, it will not be able to continue without establishing sustainable gender equity (Carlman and Hjalmarsson, 2019).

Originally addressing the subject around battling discrimination (such as sexism and racism) through corporate social responsibility (CSR) efforts, several initiatives have been established by governing bodies within sport, as efforts to resolve these concerns. An example during the 2012 EURO's occurred with UEFA's 'Respect Diversity' programme geared toward bringing individuals together to celebrate and recognise diversity (Jurczyszyn, 2015). CSR programmes have been respected as strong initial attempts to change institutional practices. Clubs that earn a higher revenue have reported greater levels of involvement with organisational CSR-related initiatives, as they often have more capital available (Sheth and Babiak, 2010). Valenti (2019) supports the argument that literature focusing on CSR in sports organisations has not yet accounted for initiatives, including the integration of women's football, due to the lack of data available, and this can be similarly said for DEI within football workplaces. Examples of how countries' sport structures recognise CSR agendas can be found in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2 Football's CSR Agendas in England and US (Source: Breitbarth and Harris, 2008:192)

ISSUES/COUNTRY	England	US
General/CSR Agenda	→ Racial & gender equity → Issues around financial accountability and governance → Food safety and provenance → Financial service products → Protected areas and species → Supply-chain issues and auditing → Management systems and reporting → Area regeneration → Community projects → Public/private partnerships	→ Good corporate governance → Executive rewards → Consumer protection → Consumer health and safety → Low level of legal obligations on business → Ethical policies regarding local community involvement → Philanthropic initiatives to sponsor art, culture, or fund university education
Professional Football's CSR Agenda	→ Organisational governance → Club ownership → Racism → Hooliganism → Regional development → Local community involvement → Youth education (inside and outside the game)	→ Urban development → Local community involvement → Development of grassroots football → Social inclusion → Youth education → Charity/donations

Gender diversity within the sport workplace has always been an issue. As football historically has been described to be "for the men, not for the women" (Pfister et al., 2015:2), sexist stereotypes have been constructed. Compared to other sports in the UK, football clubs have the lowest level of gender equity, with only seven percent female representation on boards (Wigmore, 2019). Similar figures have also been found in lower-level positions within workplaces. Within football governing bodies, like The FA, there still remain gender imbalances in positions of football leadership, "including coaching, coach development, on boards and committees", and in decision making roles (Norman et al., 2018:396). This is due to the structures of football being considered unwelcoming to those of non-majority groups, which has prevented many women from securing leadership positions (Pfister et al., 2015). As more women continue to secure qualifications needed to satisfy prerequisites towards entering the industry, another barrier around networking is found, as participants in the Ronkainen et al. (2019) study indicated a 'whom you know' culture, leaving room for further marginalisation, as many females and minority group members exist in smaller circles of influence in comparison to those from the majority groups in sport.

In addition to gender diversity, this PhD thesis also incorporates other diverse, intersectional identities. Racial diversity has been another prominent area that the football industry has begun addressing. During a documentary, retired football player Anton Ferdinand shared his story from an incident in 2011, where he became a victim of racially-motivated abuse during a match (Varley, 2020). Racial abuse in the game has been especially prevalent due to social media advancements, where current EPL players like Raheem Sterling and Anthony Martial are regularly virtually attacked due to the colour of their skin. Attempts to internally promote diversity within clubs has occurred in several ways. Following a US National Football League (NFL) procedure, English football has tried rolling-out the Rooney Rule, which guarantees interviews, and requires shortlists for head coach job interviews to have at least one 'person of colour' (Gardiner and Riches, 2016). The actual efficiency and impact of protocols like the Rooney Rule have been investigated by academics such as Kilvington (2019), with initial indications that many

coaches who identify as coming from an ethnic minority group often feel the rule only serves as 'tokenistic'.

To demonstrate its commitment towards diversity, The FA announced in 2014 its Inclusion and Anti-Discrimination Action Plan. As English football faces ongoing work to tackle forms of discrimination, The FA's Inclusion Advisory Board has become a constant overseeing body, meeting four times a year, and communicating regularly during intervening periods (The FA, 2015). Jobs within the game, of all disciplines, are promoted openly through a large network to attract a diverse pool of applicants, so there is more ethnic diversity and female representation at the board level (The FA, 2015). Externally to The FA are a number of organisations that are considered key to the evolution and delivery of DEI in football. Examples of organisations include Kick it Out, Women in Football, and the FARE Network. Drawing on strategic management arguments by Breitbarth and Harris (2008:201), football institutions have a big role in pushing diversity and gender equity through social change, and can use their role "for the further growth and development of the game."

3.5.1. Addressing Systemic Issues in Sport

There are two recognised types of institutional pressures that can be instrumental in promoting change: coercive pressures (compliance) and mimetic pressures (copy of successful efforts) (de Jonge, 2015). Supporting this argument, prior research has also shown that when government regulations are significant, there are more prominent forms of adoption around diversity management practices (Yang and Konrad, 2011). As new standards are frequently adopted, they become gradually more legitimised in the environment, which labels those who discriminate or otherwise stifle diversity as being irrational (de Jonge, 2015).

Outside of regulated practices, CSR programmes have been found to be the initial efforts around addressing systemic issues in sport. Although some positive outcomes have come from CSR and policy agendas, there have been topics of debate around inclusion, indicating there still are many minority groups facing barriers in all areas (Burdsey and Randhawa, 2012). This has led to a more sustainable and impactful call for sport

organisations to proactively address these topics to dissimilate obstacles. Defined by Ocon (2006), proactive approaches occur before issues, whereas reactive efforts are introduced when a problem occurs. As CSR organisations traditionally have been linked with non-profit, third-party groups outside of sport, many teams and leagues have begun hiring officials to specifically address discriminative topics. Within college sports in North America, the NCAA introduced the role of a Senior Women Administrator (SWA) as the highest ranked female within an intercollegiate athletic programme, with the intention of increasing representation of women in senior-level roles across institutions (Wells et al., 2020). The NCAA voted to create the SWA designation in 1981. However, it is not legislatively required for institutions to have a SWA, although 99 percent of NCAA schools do (NCAA, 2021).

In addition to the creation of positions like the SWA, efforts to address systemic issues in sport have occurred through events and campaigns. Discussed in the previous section, UEFA's 'Respect Diversity' programme is just one example of where efforts were implemented through a group like the FARE Network, which operates as an anti-discrimination group of over 50 non-governmental organisations (NGOs) from across Europe (Jurczyszyn, 2015). In addition to the 'Respect Diversity' programme, in 2019 The #EqualGame Conference took place in London as the fifth conference in the Respect Series, where 260 representatives of UEFA member associations, clubs, political bodies, NGOs, academic institutions, and other entities observed and participated in a series of panel discussions, short talks, and a number of round-table discussions (UEFA, 2019). Attempts to monitor and evaluate the success of these types of events have occurred, as both quantitative and qualitative methodologies in both mid-term and post evaluation formats were utilised (Jurczyszyn, 2015). There have only been a few studies that have tried to clarify whether a 'top-down' or 'bottom-up' accountability approach works better for promoting DEI (Joshi, 2013). However, results often are mixed, leaving room for this study to explore the perspectives of those impacted directly.

3.5.1.1. Affirmative Action and Legislation

As an example of ways to address systemic racism, affirmative action, also referenced as positive action, is often utilised (Kilvington, 2019). Having policies like affirmative action has been observed to positively influence organisational outcomes (Walker and Melton, 2015). Prior research has shown that diversity management has originated through affirmative action, and is gradually transforming the tactics used by diversity specialists (Kang and Kaplan, 2019). There are many factors recognised as influencing organisational climate, including but not limited to "policy, language, and coworker support", as Walker and Melton (2015:267) stated in their study, with participants indicating these impacted their own initial sense of belonging. Recognising that sport is considered both a tool to positively fight discrimination, as well as a catalyst for encouraging it, the five UK sports councils (UK Sport, Sport England, Sport Wales, sportscotland and Sport Northern Ireland) attempted to unify and modernise an approach to different strands of equity issues in November 2004, launching 'The Equality Standard: A Framework for Sport' (Norman, 2016).

Understanding that research shows significant inequities for minority groups around participation within sport at all levels (including coaching, officiating, volunteering and working), the Equality Standard produced objectives around promoting a framework for achieving equality in sport. This was through ensuring democracy and governance, with higher levels of involvement for minority groups, including policy making, while providing a positive public image (Sports Council Equality Group, 2014b). As a tool geared toward supporting sporting organisations and governing bodies seeking to improve services for individuals, The Premier League Equality Standard (PLES) also sets rewards following a four-level tier system promoting best practices. The tier system ranges from a foundational phase to the advanced level that requires outcomes to be met in order to be awarded a classification.

The initial foundational level is geared broadly for organisations which are committed to equality without defining metrics (Sports Council Equality Group, 2014b). The next level of achievement is through the preliminary level, which is earned when good practice

examples are set, or a template is created (robust equality plans, staff paid and unpaid understanding, diversity training) (Sports Councils Equality Group, 2021b). To earn the intermediate title, three outcomes must be met, which include: demonstrating, implementing, and reviewing an equality action plan, adopting internal policies and procedures considering the impact on people who share protected characteristics, and showing the organisation is working towards increasing the diversity of people participating / using its services (members/ participants) (Sports Councils Equality Group, 2021b).

Finally, to be awarded the highest level of advanced status, organisations are required to provide fair and equal opportunities to their staffs and local communities (Norman, 2016). To reach this renowned status, clubs must make significant progress towards diversity within board, staff (paid and unpaid), coaches, officials, members, and participants. Equality is mainstreamed through each organisation's functions, policies, and procedures, and by developing further initiatives to address each protected characteristic (Sports Councils Equality Group, 2021a). Given that this framework has made momentous strides to raise awareness of DEI since 2004, it has demonstrated limited levels of performances regarding diversity of athletes, coaches, and administrators. Indeed, there remain low levels of performance, questioning how sporting organisations define and understand 'equality' and 'equity' (Norman, 2016). Better practices compared to The Equality Standard according to Helfferich (2016) can be found from Scandinavian nations, where well-established governmental policies on gender equity are found with realistic targets. Outside of the Premier League, the English Football League (EFL) operates following a similar system referred to as the 'Code of Practice'. In contrast to the PLES, the Code of Practice is the foundation level for equality for EFL clubs, and serves as a compulsory requirement covering 12 individual areas in order for clubs to be inclusive holistically (The FA, 2015).

Business organisational tasks outside DEI often indicate how well clubs will do with achieving inclusion success. Doherty and Chelladurai (1999) indicated that complex tasks (e.g., event planning and policy development) compared to more simple tasks (event registration and towel service) are more valuable for pushing DEI, as they demonstrate

commitment to outcomes of an organisational culture valuing diversity. Hence, affirmative action legislation such as Title IX and The Equality Act of 2010 now require sport businesses to activate DEI throughout both simple and complex organisational tasks. There is no single model to be recommended regarding how to develop and implement a national plan or strategy on gender equity in sport, nor can it be said which sector should take the lead in coordinating this process (European Commission of Sport, 2014). Some organisations now use funding incentives to convince teams to examine the notion of gender equity (Sibson, 2010). While rewards incorporate positive reinforcement, they can influence leaders' decision-making to solely focus on financial prizes, which does not cause leaders to reflect more deeply, and eventually "failing to recognize structural inequalities" (Turconi and Shaw, 2021:3).

Other affirmative action approaches, such as legal measures, can challenge assumptions and prompt increases around value for diversity (Gardiner and Riches, 2016). This is due to affirmative action legislation favouring marginalised groups, forcing businesses to revise their policies in support of a more diverse workforce (Doherty and Chelladurai, 1999). Data from previous studies suggest that, at a basic level, there is still a good deal of work needed to review legislation aimed at addressing discrimination (Spaaij et al., 2019).

3.5.1.1.1. Brighton Declaration of Women in Sport

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, the development of women in sport occurred within domestic independent collectives of American, Australian, British, Canadian, and Nordic national non-governmental organisations (Matthews, 2020). Acknowledging the international concern around the slow progression towards gender equity in sport, the United Kingdom became home to one of the initial international efforts of affirmative action, attempting to achieve gender equity in sport. Held in Brighton in 1994, the International Working Group on Women and Sport (IWG) was established (de Soysa and Zipp, 2019) as a more sustainable agency to address the topic of gender and sport. As an initial four-page document, The Brighton Declaration of Women in Sport was created,

and aimed to establish conference legacies to accelerate change in sport (Adriaanse and Claringbould, 2016).

The Brighton Declaration of 1994 is considered the first international conference on women in sport. It was organised by the British Sport Council, and is supported by the IOC, with the first conference focusing on the background to the Declaration (Larkin et al., 1993). Following a four-year cycle, the mission of the Brighton Declaration was continued as the Windhoek Call for Action in 1998, Montreal in 2002, Kumamoto in 2006, Sydney in 2010, Helsinki in 2014, Botswana in 2018, and Auckland in New Zealand in 2022 (Matthews, 2020).

As the overriding aim from the Brighton Declaration was to support the full involvement of women in every aspect of sport, including in management and leadership capacities, this thesis seeks to explore any impacts that can be traced to the professional football workplace globally, as the conference in 1994 included 280 delegates from 82 countries representing both public and private sport organisations (Larkin et al., 1993). Being most recently revised and updated in 2014, retitled as the Brighton Plus Helsinki Declaration, there has been a call to invite all sport institutions to apply the principles set out in the declaration by developing appropriate policies, structures, and mechanisms ensuring quality levels of opportunity and recognition of women in sport globally (de Soysa and Zipp, 2019). Additionally, this research seeks to investigate and compare how public sport organisations who have previously been researched around these topics compare to private sector workspaces, such as professional and semi-professional football clubs.

3.5.1.1.2.   United Kingdom Equality Act of 2010

As highlighted previously, The Equality Act of 2010 is the prevailing legal doctrine in the UK that is geared towards protecting individuals from discrimination (Haves, 2018). It replaces separate forms of legislation that previously had covered several forms of discrimination, including: The Equal Pay Act of 1970, The Sex Discrimination Act of 1975, The Race Relations Act of 1976, The Disability Discrimination Act of 1995, The Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations of 2003, The Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations of 2003, The Employment Equality (Age) Regulations

of 2006, The Equality Act 2006, Part 2, and The Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations of 2007 (Haves, 2018). In October 2010, it consolidated these practices in three of the four nations within the UK, i.e., in England, Scotland, and Wales (excluding Northern Ireland), building more protocols for employers, service providers, and public bodies (Sports Council Equality Group, 2014a). However, after the Equality Act was passed, the extent to which it would be brought into force remained uncertain. Combining these different forms of legislation allowed governments to address systemic issues, and created a clearer understanding around what is considered discrimination more boldly.

An example of a specific outcome from The Equality Act of 2010 is the requirement for organisations with 250 or more employees to report annually their gender pay gaps, both on their websites, and on a dedicated governmental reporting portal (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2018a). Based on respecting the nine protected characteristics, The Equality Act of 2010 allowed the UK to address discrimination, and this would allow the government to take legal action against organisations if discriminative practices weren't adequately handled by employers or public bodies. As countries further adopt legal policies like The Equality Act, it is important to observe their actual efficiencies in settings that are most prone to discrimination, such as sport. It is also important to assess any overlaps or similarities regarding employee knowledge and understanding.

3.5.1.1.3.   Canada Employment Equity Act and Human Rights Act

The Canadian Employment Equity Act S.C 1995 c.44 is often cited as The Employment Equity Act (EEA), and works as a revised piece of legislation to encourage equity in the workplace (Government of Canada, 2021). The EEA attempts to make sure there is no room for denied employment for reasons unrelated to ability, and aims to correct the conditions of disadvantage in employment experienced by marginalised groups (Government of Canada, 2021). The Employment Equity Act of 1986 was drafted after the royal commission established a group to start investigating the fairness around employment after severe discriminative cases began entering legal courtrooms (Mentzer, 2002). After becoming enacted on October 24, 1996, the new act aimed to increase obligations for employers that would strengthen enforcement, while improving evaluation.

These provisions were all within The National Employment Equity Strategy that was to serve as a model for other jurisdictions (Bakan and Audrey, 2007). The EEA was designed to support four categories of people including: women, people with disabilities, aboriginal peoples, and visible minorities (Mentzer, 2002). The EEA applies to industries including: crown corporations, other federal organisations with 100 employees or more, and portions of the federal public administration, with punishments for those who fail to develop and implement the programme, with fines of $50,000 (Mentzer, 2002).

Functioning alongside the EEA is The Canadian Human Rights Act (CHRA), which is a statute passed by The Parliament of Canada, with the goal of extending the law to ensure equal opportunity holistically throughout the country (Government of Canada, 2021). Compared to the EEA, the CHRA corrects discriminatory practices which hinder persons who are employed by or receive services from the federal governments (i.e., private companies regulated by federal government). However, the CHRA only prohibits discrimination broadly, whereas the EEA requires employers to use measures that improve employment opportunities for the four designated groups (Government of Canada, 2021). With the focus of this study on better understanding the impacts systems around monitoring and evaluation of DEI have, the EEA was referenced during data collection. Pertaining to sport, a federal government initiative in 1991 regarding employment equity was passed, so that organisations in the sport sector were required to address girls' and women's representation at all levels (Larkin et al., 1993).

3.5.1.1.4. United States Title IX

In the US, affirmative action around gender equity in sport was introduced in the 1970s through a form of legislation referred to as Title IX. As a federal law, Title IX prohibits discrimination based on sex in publicly funded educational programmes that receive federal aid, and reaches both public and private programmes where federal dollars are utilised (Acosta and Carpenter, 2004).

Prior to the 1970s, female sport participants and administrators within the US struggled to enter into collegiate and professional sport settings due to perceptions of women in nonfeminine roles being perceived negatively (Rubin and Lough, 2015). In the year 1971,

physical education leaders serving on The Division of Girls and Women in Sport (DGWS) approved the creation of an entity referred to as The Association for Intercollegiate Athletics for Women (AIAW), which was the first national women's collegiate association (Yiamouyiannis and Osborne, 2012). A year later, on June 23rd, 1972, a form of federal legislation that prohibited discrimination based on sex (requiring equal access and opportunity for women in education and employment) became a law, referred to as Title IX (Acosta and Carpenter, 2004; Yiamouyiannis and Osborne, 2012). As Title IX did not originally intend or mention sport in 1972 (Rubin and Lough, 2015), The Office for Civil Rights (OCR) passed the Javits Amendment in 1974, in order to expand on Title IX to include intercollegiate athletics, including three areas: "1) compliance in financial assistance based on athletic ability, 2) compliance in other program areas (e.g., academic support, facilities), and 3) compliance in meeting the interests and abilities of male and female students" (Rubin and Lough, 2015:112).

As a result of Title IX and the Javits Amendment, through the late 1980s and early 1990s, there was an increased institutional awareness of the need to comply with Title IX. However, with factors like revenue-production considered to be increasingly important in college sport, Title IX struggled to promote women in sport, as the system remained inherently unequal, producing a business model approach which defeated the purpose of the law (Staurowsky, 2003). As being only associated with women's athletics (Perez Beene, 2019), Title IX was heavily criticised, as its enforcement would wind up indirectly depleting financial resources for increasingly expensive, but still revenue-generating men's American football programmes, as budgets were being revised (Lapchick, 1996). The impacts of Title IX to ultimately improve the experiences for women in college athletics have taken a considerable amount of time, and has required many individuals to fight for resources regularly (Rubin and Lough, 2015). When Title IX came into existence in 1972, females administered 90% of women's athletics programmes (Acosta and Carpenter, 2004). Since the passage of Title IX, however, women have lost a significant proportion of the administrative and coaching positions available in collegiate sport, further questioning the actual impact this legislation has made (Darvin and Sagas, 2017).

Currently, with the millennial generation progressing from entry level to middle management roles more frequently than previous generations, and growing up with Title IX allowing for more gender equity through organised sports (Porter et al., 2019), there is a significant call to understand how this piece of legislation in the US makes its way (if at all) into the professional sport workplace. Additionally, it is worth exploring the idea of whether legislation like Title IX can be compared to other countries' practices (such as the UK's Equality Act of 2010), similar to Birdsall-Strong (2015) questioning the UK's existing practices in both the educational and sport systems, focusing on its framework of the decision-making process as a foundational aspect and not an afterthought.

3.5.1.1.5.   United States Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964

Although the legislative framework around Title IX has been highly influential around the topic of gender equity in sport, it is a piece of legislation only considered for publicly funded institutions, making its direct impact on private sport sector unknown. The most commonly referenced legislation about employees' rights around discrimination is referred to as Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Being most recently amended in 1991, Title VII includes punitive damages, and prohibits sex discrimination in the US in all employment-related matters (Bell et al., 2002). Similarly to The Equality Act of 2010 in the UK, Title VII outlawed employment discrimination based on race, sex, colour, religion, and national origin, thus changing perceptions around employment practices in America (Lytle, 2014). Lovoy (2001) indicated that Title VII's objective was to eliminate artificial barriers around discrimination. Being a federal law in which organisations (such as professional football clubs) operate, it is legally mandatory for all US professional and semi-professional teams to comply. There is minimal research around how Title VII has impacted DEI in sport, and thus this has led to a call for future research to explore its potential impacts. As addressed earlier, overt discrimination has been a historical factor in women's employment experiences, especially within the sport industry. However, gender inclusion in Title VII is said to have been an 'after-thought', being perceived as certain to ensure its failure to pass (Bell et al., 2002). Thus, this leaves room for researchers to explore how compliance systems, such as laws, are impacting DEI within sport workplaces.

3.6. Effects of Affirmative Action in Football

There have been varying effects within the football industry due to implemented types of affirmative action. With The Equality Standard, results within governing bodies like The FA have included in 2018 achievements of 32% of staff identifying as women, 13% staff from ethnic minority backgrounds which was an improvement, and additionally introduced new targets to be met by the end of 2021, focusing on improving opportunities around gender and ethnicity (The FA, 2018). Reported benefits of The Equality Standard have included increases in participation reaching new audiences, as well as increases in equality practices (Sports Council Equality Group, 2014b). The benefits of affirmative action, according to Malleson (2006), include the radical development that threatens traditional power.

With progress reported due to affirmative action, there are conversely negative effects that many believe have come from it. Referring back to the double-edged sword, Title IX received backlash after 1972, when it was introduced, when more than 90% of women's teams were coached by females. However later in 1978, this dropped to 58.2% (Acosta and Carpenter, 2004). Eventually, Title IX ultimately improved women's athletics, as they were "slow to emerge and required women to fight for every resource needed" (Rubin and Lough, 2015:120). Concerning the current affirmative action approach to women's full inclusion in the institution, sport and its ancillary occupations will never fully embrace the cause of women in sport (Anderson, 2009).

Similarly in the UK during this time, questioning the actual efficacy of equal opportunity policies, White and Brackenridge (1985) stated how there appeared to be little effect of previously-enacted gender equity policies and laws, and gender stratification was highly prevalent in The UK Sports Council. Labelling many attempts as ineffective gender equity policies, Shaw and Penney (2003) accused governing bodies like Sport England of following a 'one size fits all' approach. Now, with several years since introductions and initial discussions around the effects of affirmative action, researchers and practitioners are regularly monitoring and evaluating systems like The Equality Standard.

Flaws observed around The Equality Act of 2010 have also been researched, noting it failed to adequately address specific single equality issues as individual identities, as well as not addressing an intersectional approach, creating single 'dimension silos' for the nine protected characteristics (Rankin-Wright et al., 2019). Despite both affirmative action and employment equity systems being controversial and resisted, they are still argued to be most effective towards overall increases of representation (Hideg and Wilson, 2019). Thus, this thesis aims to explore further how aware employees are with regarding the affirmative action initiatives in place, and whether they are considered appropriate for their workplace, and the football industry as a whole.

3.6.1. Monitoring and Evaluation

As more positive and affirmative action practices are introduced into the football industry, it is vital to observe what impacts are made. 'Gender Equality Duty' is the reference of carrying out DEI impact assessments through data collection and reviewing policies in relation to equalities (Johnson-Ross, 2018). Evaluation as defined through The Equality Standard is about reviewing the requirements from an evidence-based approach to determine if this standard has successfully been achieved or not (Sports Council Equality Group, 2014b). As a measurement tool, gender indicators can refer to quantitative indicators based on sex disaggregated statistical data, which can provide measures for men and women, developed to answer a specific set of questions (i.e., are systems dismantling discrimination) (Helfferich, 2016). Examples of gender indicators could be referenced by The Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sport (TIDES) gender and racial report cards, utilising census-based demographics of workforce staff.

Relating to forms of affirmative action like Title IX, Canada's Employment Equity Act and the UK's Equality Act of 2010, monitoring and evaluation deal with the way positions/roles are performed, and not with the people who give meaning to these functions. Thus, "positions or jobs can be rationalised and standardised and supposedly separated and abstracted from those who hold them and thus be defined as gender neutral" (Claringbould and Knoppers, 2012:408). Gender equity in sport is discussed and analysed through arguments in research such as Valenti et al. (2018) indicating there is

a need to measure and understand the positioning of women's football and women in football from different cultures. This study follows these instructions by carefully looking at three different types of affirmative action and legal practices to approach DEI in sport from varying countries (including club policies, league standards, and legislation). Cross-national evaluations specifically around women's roles in business began occurring during the 1970's and 1980's (Karamessini and Rubery, 2014). Measuring, monitoring, and evaluating factors like DEI helps provide a key source of information around potential barriers certain minority groups face in settings within society (HMRC, 2010).

Attempts made to achieve gender equity in areas such as sport must follow a series of processes to successfully accomplish the breaking down of barriers. Larkin et al. (1993) highlight one step, which includes committing organisational goals to achieving gender equity, while following mechanisms to collect data with aims of using analysis to compare transformations from initial starting points. Following this, a strategic action plan is developed and implemented to help contribute to successful completion, following regular monitoring tools (Larkin et al., 1993). However, through the works of de Jonge (2015), it is important to keep in mind with institutional theory the cultural factors that could make it difficult to observe and measure DEI in varying settings. Following theory-based evaluation, this study will examine the assumptions underlying the causal chain of DEI efforts to determine if initiatives, programmes, and or schemes are making adequate impact (White, 2009).

3.7. Chapter 3 Summary

Throughout this chapter, literature focused around diversity in business and football structures were explored, which has helped shape the design and implementation of the current investigation. Acknowledging this is a cross-national study, literature surrounding globalisation of the sport of football occurred, while also including the organisational structures in which the sport is overseen in each participating country. With diversity literature becoming ever more prevalent after the summer of the 2020 BLM protests, publications around how the sport of football has historically dealt with these matters were discussed. Additionally, recognising the need to support more DEI within the sporting landscape, efforts like affirmative action were described and analysed regarding their

impacts on the industry as a whole, including club policies, league initiatives, and legislation. There is an established inconsistency pertaining to how individuals have benefited from these policies. This inconsistency relates to the evaluation of these policies' effectiveness through the understandings of employees themselves. The following chapter will outline the methodology and research design of this study.

4. Research Design and Methodology

4.1. Introduction

This chapter depicts the methodology for this empirical study. The start of this chapter will focus around the research paradigms used, followed by the strategies and timelines. As indicated previously, this research employs a sequential, explanatory mixed-method design with two primary research phases. Each research phase is elaborated in-depth and followed by the research ethical considerations, as well as an overview of the data analysis procedure. An estimated 272 professional football clubs from England, Scotland, Canada, and the US fit within the parameters of being either professional or semi-professional, and were targeted as participants for this research. This study aimed to be inclusive, following suggestions that women's football teams need to be additionally incorporated in future research. Thus, clubs within structures such as the English FA Women's Super League (FAWSL) and US's National Women's Soccer League (NWSL) were considered in the target population. A survey worked as an initial form of data collection (Phase One) and further semi-structured interviews were conducted from volunteers who participated in the survey (Phase Two).

4.2. General Discussion on Possible Research Positions

Research paradigms are used to address the philosophical dimensions of social sciences within both quantitative and qualitative approaches (Wahyuni, 2012). A paradigm is considered a general philosophical orientation about the world, while also keeping in mind the aims and objectives of investigation that a researcher brings to a study (Creswell, 2014). Philosophical orientation is the basic set of beliefs that guide an action. Each paradigm differs with regard to its epistemological and ontological assumptions, and this has various implications on ways data is collected and interpreted (Gratton and Jones, 2010). One key goal of related research is to specifically define the philosophical approach to be taken by researchers, which consists of both quantitative and qualitative methodologies. Quantitative purists typically believe that observations should be treated in the same fashion that physical scientists treat physical phenomena, contending that observers are separate from the entities that are under observation (Johnson and

Onwuegbuzie, 2016). Qualitative researchers, however, reject the quantitative concept of positivism, and also are known to prefer to stay away from the detached and passive style of quantitative research writing, favouring detailed and thick (empathic) description that is written directly and slightly informally (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2016). The general distinction between these two approaches is that quantitative researchers employ methods of objective data measurement, while qualitative researchers tend to rely more on subjective interpretations. The more detailed differences between quantitative and qualitative research approaches are based on the epistemological foundations of each research approach (Bryman and Bell, 2015).

Within research paradigms are researchers' ontological and epistemological assumptions, which can be compared to the 'footings' of a house (Grix, 2004). Ontology is "a concept concerned with the existence of, and relationship between different aspects of society, such as social actors, cultural norms and social structures" (Jupp, 2006:2). Ontology serves as the starting point of all research, which is followed by researchers' epistemological and methodological positions (Grix, 2016). Blaikie (2007) shares that ontological assumptions underpin all social theories, and thus methodological positions do so as well; researchers can make different claims about what exists in their domains. Examples of ontological positions are those within the concepts of 'objectivism' and 'constructivism' (Grix, 2016). Additionally, researchers' ontological assumptions are concerned with the nature of reality, and consist of both positivists who believe in an objective social reality, and interpretivists who believe social reality is subjective because it is socially constructed (Collis and Hussey, 2009).

Our epistemological assumption is concerned with what we as researchers accept as valid knowledge, and the relationship we have with what is being researched (Collis and Hussey, 2009). Positions within epistemology are linked to those in ontology. However, the former is often incorrectly seen as simply a part of the latter (Grix, 2016). It is indeed important to have clear and accurate knowledge of these concepts because this leads researchers to develop an understanding of the interrelationship of key components of research (including methodology and methods), avoids confusion when conducting debates regarding theory, and encourages researchers to recognise others' positions,

leading them to better defending their own stances (Grix, 2004). Although this study is not within the field of political science, and resides within business management, looking at how research positions have been discussed in the former field can help researchers gain an accurate knowledge of the concepts under consideration. In line with this, it is worth noting that traditional political science inconsistently employs critical analyses of epistemologies, methodologies, and methods (Maruska, 2010). There have been different positions introduced throughout the history of politics that are linked with both epistemology and ontology, and apply to other fields relevant in this thesis. The paradigms researchers can operate from are positivism, pragmaticism, interpretivism, critical social science, post modernism, or a combination of these (Cunningham and Sagas, 2008). According to Bryman and Bell (2015), the two most commonly identified approaches are positivism and interpretivism.

The choice of either positivism or interpretivism has historically had a significant impact on the role of the researcher. The term 'positivism' was introduced by Auguste Comte (1842), and was defined as the circular dependence relating to theory and evidence that can be applied in both social fields and natural ones (Comte, 1842). Later, Carson et al. (2001:5) expanded on Comte's definition of 'positivism' research as that which "concentrates on description and explanation where thought is governed by explicitly stated theories and hypotheses". Within positivism, the underlying approach involves testing theoretical concepts, and then drawing appropriate conclusions. According to Comte (1842), positivism is an ambitious attempt to synthesise all conflicting philosophies through a new philosophy of history capable of explaining human experience as a function of the development of the human (Given, 2008). Interpretivist research emerged as a response to criticisms of positivism, and its proponents believe that there are multiple realities of truth which can lead researchers to look for the complexity of multiple views (Creswell, 2014). Interpretivist research also encourages knowledge to be attained through building on existing ideas and theories (Creswell, 2014).

As this doctoral research will be investigating practices which foster gender inequitable practices in the sport workplace, it is important to recognise the various assumptions that have been documented in previous studies. It can be argued that methodology is

gendered, as quantitative methods traditionally have been associated with words such as positivism, scientific, objectivity, statistics, and masculinity, where, in contrast, qualitative methods have been associated with interpretivism, non-scientific, subjectivity, and femininity (Oakley, 1998). In addition to calls for increased theoretical rigor, gender and sport researchers have also been challenged to embrace varied methodological approaches (Cunningham and Fink, 2006; Cunningham and Sagas, 2008).

4.3. Research Positions on Gender and Sport

According to Cunningham and Sagas (2008), gender equity researchers in sport management should appreciate different constructions of meanings, since much of the research regarding gender equity in sport has been focused on marketing and consumer behaviour, which is non-theoretical in nature. With several elements of the sport management industry being traditionally considered male-prevalent, progress in gender equity is hindered by the social constructions of femininity and masculinity, thus causing a slower progression toward ideal gender equity in the sport industry (European Commission of Sport, 2014). There have been previous qualitative research studies directed toward investigating the comparative experiences of men, women, and non-binary individuals in various roles within the sport sector. Qualitative research in sport management has attempted to expose problems, issues, phenomena, or situations related to gender inequitable practices, while investigating the context or settings of participants and creating an agenda for reform (Andrew et al., 2011). Related research publications include presentations and analyses of data related to gender and firm performance in public and national governing body settings. There additionally has been information around women's career experiences, questioning how these can be improved in order to lead to greater opportunities for women and non-binary individuals to attain positions of authority (Gomez-Gonzalez et al., 2018; Hartzell and Dixon, 2019). Successfully achieving this would then lead to greater diversity within industry management.

In many of the previous studies relating to gender and sport, researchers have taken a constructivist ontological assumption and an interpretivist epistemological assumption.

This is because sport and gender researchers are critical of positivism, as they believe social scientists have a focus fundamentally different from those of natural scientists (Bryman and Bell, 2015). Many of these studies have aimed to investigate the social circumstances that cause inequitable practices or barriers in the sport industry, but these studies' results may not be viewed objectively by observers. Interpretivism has allowed for a more accurate understanding of human nature, compared to positivism (Creswell, 2014). A concept which has been previously addressed by both constructivist ontological and interpretivist epistemological assumptions is 'feminism', which "is concerned with asymmetrical power relationships including hierarchical power relationships in the research process and the relationship between researcher and researched" (Wambui, 2013:2). As feminism is linked to both the constructivist and interpretivist assumptions, researchers will attempt to experience what they are investigating, typically through qualitative approaches. Feminist research is also viewed as being concerned with issues of broader social change and social justice, and is committed to changing the condition of how women are viewed and treated (Acker et al., 1983; Fonow and Cook, 2005; Wambui, 2013; Oakley, 1998).

Feminist Standpoint Theory (FST) emphasises established knowledge of marginalised individuals, and provides a systematic approach for theorising complexities of contexts, experiences, and perspectives of women (Trauth, 2011; Haraway, 1988). The standpoint of FST can be considered "an organic epistemology, methodology, and social theory that can arise whenever oppressed people gain public voice. The social order looks different from the perspective of our lives and our struggles" (Harding, 2004:3). Gender and sport research has been related to Bourdieu's Theory of Practice (Metcalfe and Woodhams, 2012). Bourdieu's theory has particularly been useful in previous studies revealing practices which foster gender inequitable activities within society. Bourdieu's ontological position within research has a considerable strength compared to knowledge attained outside the dualism of structure, and particularly is beneficial for feminist organisational research because it allows a multi-layered analysis (Piggott et al., 2018; Piggott, 2019). There has been a call for greater use of methodological approaches, such as critical race theory, post-colonial methodologies, and critical management studies, which question

dominant ideologies and practices within the sport management industry (Hoeber and Shaw, 2017; Alvesson and Ashcraft, 2009; Singer, 2005). In addition to the feminist assumption demonstrated in previous work, there are also multiple approaches that have been used to examine women's responses to gendered sport portrayals.

In addition to literature regarding feminism, there are other contemporary methods-based texts that have been shared to encourage higher quality research practices, and that are presented from a variety of epistemologies, including interpretivism, constructionism, and critical inquiry (Crotty, 1998; Hoeber and Shaw, 2017). There are various assumptions needed to create what is known to as the framing paradigm, the cultural congruence model, and the elaboration likelihood model of persuasion, developed in order to examine commentators' influence on spectators' attitudes toward female athletes (Cunningham and Sagas, 2008). These assumptions exposed a shortage of new, different, and interesting epistemological approaches that challenge assumptions about 'good' qualitative research on feminism and other important concepts (Cunningham and Sagas, 2008).

As an over-reliance on any one paradigmatic perspective can skew the manner in which a construct or phenomenon is understood (Cunningham and Sagas, 2008), this doctoral research has been based on additional assumptions regarding feminism in the sport industry. There are several factors to consider before defining both the ontological and epistemological approaches to be taken in related research. An effective research design is critical to the success of any research project. For this doctoral research to investigate the effectiveness of gender equity policies implemented in sport management workplaces, it is important to understand established interpretivist assumptions, and also to consider future research recommendations that have been proposed. It is crucial to consider that scholars have previously conducted research investigating related topics. According to Burton (2015), researchers must consider history from both positivistic and post-positivistic approaches, and acknowledge the use of both quantitative and qualitative methodologies.

4.4. Considering Human Resources Through the Lens of Institutional Theory

As sociology (largely relevant to the points discussed in the previous subsection) is one distinct field which has made a constant contribution to institutionalism (Lee, 2011), it has also been researched in organisational studies. As Bourdieu's conceptualisation can be perceived as a 'broad use to theories', it can additionally be understood and / or linked with the rapid growth of multilevel theory and research in management, particularly in the field of human resource management (HRM) and strategic human resource management (SHRM), which has lagged in regard to scholarship, especially within sport management (Molloy et al., 2010; Peccei and Van De Voorde, 2019). SHRM, in both theory and practice, encompasses a multidisciplinary field concerned around managing work and people, and involves high-commitment management strategies (Bratton and Gold, 2017). With SHRM, the institutional paradigm has considerable gaps "between planned organisational goals and what actually happens in practice because it considers the social constructionist view where external forces may influence the creation of practices that become legitimised" (Lee, 2011:69). These gaps fall between HR initiatives and policies specifically tailored towards increased diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) delivered in clubs with areas of weakness (Alvesson and Ashcraft, 2009; Lee, 2011). Subsequently, Kaufman (2001) suggests that most SHRM scholars would agree that SHRM values employees of an organisation as a valuable asset, which an organisation must utilise effectively through a synergistic set of HR practices to gain a competitive edge over their competitors.

From the literature reviewed, this thesis draws on findings that have addressed traditional business management theories such as equity theory, systems management theory, and contingency management theory. There are considerable key issues around institutional theory, with varying perspectives leading to disagreement from theoretical definitions and empirical measurement tools, while also receiving critique from scholars who "believe that the empirical evidence is still lacking in rigour to support SHRM core fundamentals", leaving a gap between HR policies and practitioners (Lee, 2011:70). According to de Jonge (2015), utilising institutional theory through cross-cultural scholarship and legal transplant provides insight on how and why resistance to regulatory change occurs, which

helps develop SHRM. Hence, institutional theory will be the main framework utilised in this study.

Acknowledging the diverse multidisciplinary background of SHRM, it is important in this study to comprehend it from both a sociological and business theoretical framework, as the issues stemming from societal issues in the sociological domain are being addressed in professional business spaces in which SHRM departments are implementing such management theories and practices. With the sport industry having an increased turnover of employees, especially with women and members of minority groups leaving (Evans and Pfister, 2020), it is crucial to utilise SHRM literature to address these issues as its focus. Within SHRM, implementation of diversity efforts is considered an under-researched area, and has mostly occurred through qualitative methods to determine if practices are 'superficial' or 'substantive' (Yang and Konrad, 2011). Thus, following Aktouf's (1996) poles of 'strategic management', this study set off to explore how DEI efforts fit into this structure, and to see if it was being perceived similarly by staff of various genders in varying roles and departments.

4.5. Methodological Choice

As this doctorate research will be investigating gender inequitable practices in the sport workplace, it is important to recognise methods that have been documented in previous studies. Exploring gender in sport has occurred more often through qualitative processes, because these can add frameworks of methodologies that can spur future related studies, which may have the potential to be transferable for use in other disciplines. This also allows researchers to explore meaning(s) behind both participant actions and decisions, which have led participants to choose different paths in the sport industry. Qualitative research is considered an approach to scientific inquiry, allowing researchers to explore participant experiences in personal, social, and professional contexts to gain greater understanding of various influencing factors (Gelling, 2014). Grix (2010) indicates that qualitative research has been described as involving an in-depth investigation of knowledge through participant observation, interviews, archival or other document

analysis, or ethnographic studies. Qualitative data gathering options vary typically with the sampling approaches researchers choose to take.

Within the realm of sport business research, qualitative research is often conducted as a case study design, and uses semi-structured interviews as the primary means of data collection (Hoeber and Shaw, 2017). This specific research aims to extend off Hoeber and Shaw's (2017) recommendations for the use of more contemporary qualitative research approaches within sport management. Conventional techniques around qualitative research include verbal, print, and electronic forms, and responses/data can be obtained from narrative responses, open-ended survey questions, interviews, focus groups, observations, or materials like articles, books, or manuals (Kondracki et al., 2002; Hsieh and Shannon, 2005). Moreover, this technique allows researchers to examine factors like individual perspectives to form collective understandings around the impacts of cultures and actions, for a more in-depth review of multilevel conceptual, measurement, and analytical issues, expanding on prior exploratory research (Dixon and Bruening, 2005). Exploratory studies have worked as initial benchmarks for establishing gender inequitable practices in sport, with now a need to investigate from an explanatory lens to further expand on understanding the attitudes and perceptions sport managers feel towards responses to discrimination (Forsyth et al., 2019).

Consistent with qualitative research approaches, much of the previous academic work around the relationship between gender and sport has taken a constructivist ontological and an interpretivist epistemological assumption. These assumptions were followed in this thesis through a mixed-methods approach based on the recommendations of previous related studies (Shaw and Penney, 2003; Burton, 2015; Valenti et al., 2018). In disciplines like sport sciences, sport management, and the sociology of sport, mixed-methods and data triangulation techniques are being implemented more regularly (Valenti et al., 2018).

Mixed-method research in sport is a design that serves to guide methodological steps taken throughout the process of gathering, managing, and analysing information in any study through both qualitative and quantitative (QUAL and QUAN) approaches (Camerino

et al., 2012). Researchers who employ mixed-methods approaches are considered to have a pragmatist paradigm (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009). A researcher's methodological approach must be underpinned and reflect specific ontological and epistemological assumptions, while representing a choice of approach and research methods (Grix, 2016). In relation to the topic of gender equity in sport, Valenti et al. (2018) consider these approaches and methodologies capable of leading to the creation of new themes in economic and management disciplines, and suggest similar projects should employ quantitative or mixed-methods approaches.

Mixed-methods have been defined by authors such as Tashakkori and Teddlie (2009) and Creswell (2003) as a procedure for collecting, analysing, and 'mixing' or integrating both quantitative and qualitative data at some stage of the research process within a single study for the purpose of gaining a better understanding of the research problem (Ivankova et al., 2006). Extending on this definition, Shannon-Baker (2016:139) highlights mixed-methods as research that is a type of inquiry that is philosophically grounded, where an intentional mixture of both qualitative and quantitative approaches occurs, and "can take place in the philosophical or theoretical framework(s), methods of data collection and analysis, overall research design, and/or discussion of research conclusions." Mixed-methods enable researchers to not rely solely on quantitative methods, for which the issues in terms of underlying assumptions and their application to gender studies have already been highlighted earlier in this chapter. Indeed, with the implementation of qualitative data collection tools, such as observations and interviews, there have emerged concerns about the reliability and validity of the obtained data (Birkinshaw and Gibson, 2004). It is also important to note that qualitative research approaches are not essentially interpretivist, and a researcher can take a variety of epistemological approaches to the collection of qualitative data (a researcher can collect qualitative data and analyse it from a positivist approach) (Crotty, 1998; Hoeber and Shaw, 2017). Thus, mixed-methods approaches are justifiable based on various philosophical assumptions.

Previous research on gender and sport (e.g. Shaw and Penney, 2003) has been based on both the interpretivist paradigm and feminist ontological and epistemological assumptions in order to explore and analyse, in-depth, the different experiences and realities of both female and male leaders of sport within two context-specific settings. This makes the combination of constructivist, interpretivist, and pragmatist positions appropriate to the present study, allowing a critical ontological assumption and an interpretivist epistemological assumption. In doing so, mixed-methods have attempted to build on previous research, which has called for more future emphasis on theory and theoretical development in diversity research (Cunningham and Fink, 2006; Cunningham and Sagas, 2008).

Although there are varying definitions of mixed-methods research, a common consensus has been made from by scholars that mixed-methods designs are to be considered unique and have their own methodological dimensions (Plano Clark and Ivankova, 2016). It is important to recognise the value of mixed-methods research, as it provides a more complete picture of a phenomenon (such as discrimination) under study than is possible using a single method (Mertens, 2012).

Much effort has been made to learn about the inequitable practices many women face in the sport workplace, especially through qualitative approaches. With social phenomena such as gender inequitable practices in the workplace, discourse analysis approaches have been utilised to focus on language, and how it has produced/reproduced hegemonic masculinity and power in society. As discourse analysis is characterised by multidisciplinary variation, and originates from several disciplines, it has been used in a wide range of studies, including a mixed-methods approach (Cheek, 2004). As this study will investigate the impacts that sport policies, funding incentives, organisational initiatives, and employment legislation have on gender equity, a discourse analysis involves more than just analysing written texts (such as laws/policies), but also allows to focus around resource allocations that are influenced (Cheek, 2004; Hannan, 2007). Researchers who use discourse analysis can find themselves in a position where data collection methods can be a mixture of techniques allowing for more diverse findings in various disciplines ranging from humanities and social sciences, education, sociology,

cognitive psychology, and communication (Cheek, 2004). Thus, a discourse analysis leaves room for a mixed-methods approach. Additionally, a discourse analysis will allow this specific research to take secondary data sources (such as international policies and laws) and themes to produce a form of measurement to compare to primary data sources (such as interviews or focus groups). Therefore, following the work of both Piano Clark and Ivankova (2016), choosing the appropriate design and strategy is crucial for methodological considerations within mixed-methods research. This is due to the nature of the study guiding researchers' decisions around analysing and integrating quantitative and qualitative data to support answering the research questions posed.

4.6. Research Strategy

During the first 12-months of this research (October 2018 – September 2019), most time was spent reading around the subjects of gender, diversity, equity, and inclusion in sport. Following the direction of researchers like Laura Burton, Elizabeth Pike, Sally Shaw, Nefertiti Walker, and George Cunningham, diversity in sport management became the focus point, as minimal attention had been given to comparing different countries' efforts to promote gender equity. Initial reading material around the subject began with The Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sport (TIDES) of the University of Central Florida (UCF) with their Gender and Racial Report Cards for the six prominent professional leagues (NFL, NBA, WNBA, NHL, MLB, MLS) in the United States. The reports assess the racial and gender makeup of players, coaches, and employees through a grading scale reflecting submitted demographic information (TIDES, 2020). Originating in the early 2000's, these reports follow quantitative measures through measuring census-style information, thus forming a baseline understanding. Exploring this further however leads to room for development, additionally, to gain narrative insight as well as individual attitudes and beliefs to specific policies, practices, and schemes. Thus, this study sought to explore the most appropriate ways to extend off reports like TIDES while implementing data collection tools used by previous authors through both the quantitative and qualitative methods.

Outside the North American sport domain, particularly within the European Union (EU) and the United Kingdom (UK), the topic of gender equity in sport has been highlighted not only by Elizabeth Pike, but also researchers like Stacey Pope, Gertrud Pfister, and Leanne Norman. Initial starting points for reading began with understanding EU and UK affirmative action efforts such as the 'Equality Standard Framework', particularly within The English Football League (EFL) and English Premier League (EPL). Compared to TIDES, The Equality Standard Framework does not have a clear, direct link to academic assumption, and historically has been constructed by individuals within practitioners' roles. When combining understanding on both TIDES Report Cards and The Equality Standard, a decision to proceed with mixed-methods became necessary.

With a previous academic and professional background in sport management, the first 12 months of time were also spent gaining familiarity with subjects in sociology, as the origins of gender in sport have historically been linked to theoretical frameworks such as 'Feminism' and 'Gendered-ways Theory'. With sociological theoretical links in sport and business management, it is crucial to highlight how models, such as institutional theory, have been researched in the business and sport domain. In policy and evaluation research, it is suggested that a valuable starting point for integration of mixed-methods occurs with the "development or fleshing out of a theory of action or conceptual model for the policy or intervention" (Burch and Heinrich, 2016:3). Following this guidance, institutional theory was confirmed early on as the key driver, due to previous studies in the sport management industry, implicating the perceived effectiveness towards understanding DEI.

This thesis seeks to be needs-based, as well as academically justifiable, and an additional element for the reading year was taking time to connect and learn from industry leading practitioners. In addition to gaining insight from industry partners, the research team similarly connected with academics who have explored the topic of gender in sport. We conducted a pilot survey, gaining insight from 35 academics. The responses in the survey confirmed what the literature had suggested; to utilise a mixed-methodological approach.

With sequential mixed designs answering explanatory questions chronologically in pre-specified order (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009), the research strategy of this study followed the Quan → Qual format. An explanatory sequential Quan → Qual design allows researchers to implement a quantitative and qualitative strand that follows a sequence with using follow-up qualitative data to elaborate, explain, or confirm initial quantitative results (Plano Clark and Ivankova, 2016). This can be seen in Figure 4.1 below.

Figure 4.1 Explanatory Research Design (Source: Plano Clark and Ivankova, 2016:3)
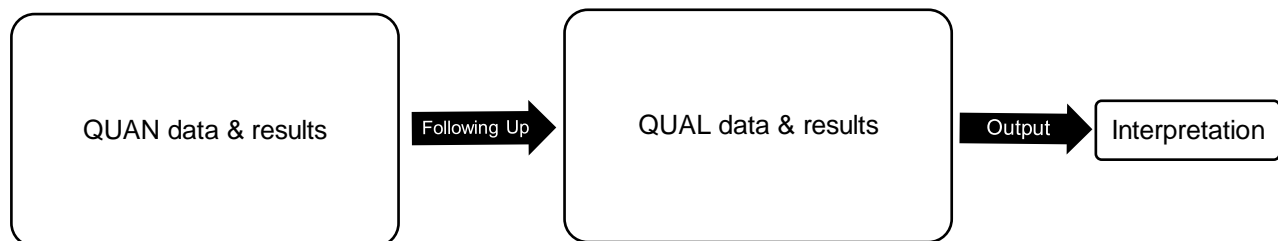
Explanatory designs have data collected in two consecutive phases, and can occur through two forms. The first option connects QUAN and QUAL through selecting participants for the second phase from initial QUAN findings, thus constructing the QUAL phase after an initial analysis from QUAN; the second option more simply integrates QUAN and QUAL results from outcomes, having no need for an initial analysis to build Phase Two (Ivankova et al., 2006). For this empirical study, the first option was chosen. A crucial element of an explanatory study is the criteria used for purposeful sampling, which involves integration at the methods level, serving as a bridge for the two phases, also referred to as 'connecting' (McCrudden and Sparks, 2018). This will be further highlighted in the findings section of this thesis. Sampling for this study occurred through categorising the population into 'stratas' (relevant divisions in clubs). The rationale for choosing one of these sample approaches depends on the research question and the chosen style of data analysis and interpretation (Marshall and Rossman, 2006). Given that sampling is directly related to unit of analysis, there are rival explanations for cross-national/cultural differences, especially at the individual level (e.g., basic demographics such as gender and age) as well as statistically significant cross-cultural differences that can be spuriously attributed to nation and/or culture because relationships could be observed at a different level of analysis (Usunier, 2011).

4.6.1. Research Phases

In this study, through following an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design (Quan → Qual), initial participant perspectives towards implemented DEI efforts in their workspaces have been examined, while also following up with tools to gain a more detailed narrative. It also allowed researcher to explore whether perspectives varied based on both individuals identified gender, and the domestic country where they were located. For a multistage, mixed-methods study, it is often considered difficult to comprehend without visual representations of the steps necessary; thus a graphical figure helps the researcher visualise their research path (Ivankova et al., 2006). A visual representation of the process followed for the research phases can be found in Figure 4.2 below.

Figure 4.2 Multistage Mixed-Methods Study Outline (Source: Ivankova et al., 2006:9)
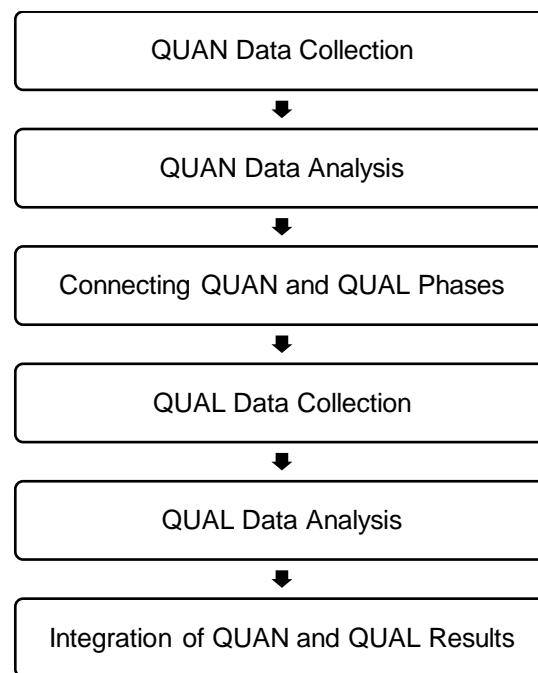
A critical aspect for successful engagement of mixed-methods research is understanding the logic for designs and the decisions (Plano Clark and Ivankova, 2016). With two distinct approaches to mixed-methods designs (exploratory and explanatory), this study follows typology-based, as it respects common methodological characteristics and procedural features, providing a variety of paths that have been chosen to accomplish the goals of

the study to allow researchers to adapt to the specific purposes (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009; Plano Clark and Ivankova, 2016). Once these paths were established, and research questions confirmed, a series of hypotheses was produced (Table 4.1). For RQ1, the hypotheses proposed the notion there would be significant differences in the perspectives between men and women due to previous studies indicating how often men perceive efforts as 'doing equity'. Additionally, for RQ1, the research team estimated there would be differences between countries, as some nations had specific DEI pieces of legislation. Regarding RQ2, hypotheses were also around significant differences between men and women in regard to awareness of DEI. The research team believed women would be more aware, with expectantly using resources to progress their careers. Also, for RQ2, the research team estimated that the nations with DEI legislation would have significant differences compared to countries that did not around specific types of efforts like funding and initiatives.

Table 4.1 Hypotheses Drafted for Each Research Question

RQ1 Hypotheses
1. There are significant differences in the perspectives between males and females around gender equity efforts, with females perceiving more efforts are required.
2. There are significant differences between England, Scotland, the United States, and Canada. The UK is projected to have the highest levels of satisfaction, as well as consistency between males and females. This is due to having specific tools like The Equality Standard.
3. Female and male participants from Scotland and England will perceive gender equity efforts more positively compared to females and males from the US and Canada as they utilise The Equality Standard. Females in Scotland and England will be able to identify tools and resources more clearly compared to those in US and Canada where they are not existent.
4. Those with non-majority identities (people with underrepresented ethnic backgrounds and LGBTQ+) will perceive gender equity efforts as a starting point but will express lower levels of engagement with activities as they are only typically built for white, straight women.

RQ2 Hypotheses
1. There are significant differences between males and females around the awareness of DEI efforts, with females having a better awareness.
2. There are significant differences between males and females around the appropriateness of DEI efforts, with males being more in agreement that they are appropriate than females.
3. There are significant differences between countries, with the US having the largest disparity between female and male participants regarding legislation and funding.
4. Females and males from Scotland and England will be more aware about the policies, funding incentives, organisational initiatives, and legislation around gender equity utilised as they have had them in place for greater than 10 years. Females and males in the US and Canada will be less aware due to no specific professional sport form of affirmative action.
5. Appropriateness of efforts will be confirmed by males from all countries however, females in Scotland and England will express higher levels of appropriateness compared to females in the US and Canada due to more historical efforts.
6. Those with non-majority identities (people with underrepresented ethnic backgrounds and LGBTQ+) will be very aware of efforts as they are geared to support individuals from non-majority backgrounds, however appropriateness will be found significantly lower in comparison to those with majority identities.

RQ3 Hypotheses
1. Best practices will vary by gender, with females indicating specific examples more frequently.
2. Responsibility will vary country by country, with England and Scotland having more focus on coordinators while the US and Canada it will fall under Human Resources (HR).
3. Scottish females and males as well as English females and males will both believe their workplace has a best approach in line with The Equality Standard. Female and male participants from the US and Canada will think the best approach involves using HR teams to drive efforts.
4. Those with non-majority identities (people with underrepresented ethnic backgrounds and LGBTQ+) will believe utilising policies, funding incentives, organisational initiatives and legislation is the best practice only if it includes all identities. They additionally will believe responsibility should fall on club ownership.

Discussed earlier in section 4.1, through constructivist, interpretivist, and pragmatist positions to this study, an explanatory sequential mixed-methods study design (Quan → Qual) has been validated. As this study is following a transformative, mixed-methods approach, it also follows Hodgkin's (2008) efforts to examine the differences between men and women in terms of their social capital through an initial quantitative survey (of both binary genders). After Phase One, it was followed by qualitative data collection through interviews investigating their processes of interacting with the community, allowing for a broadened understanding of differences between men and women (Mertens, 2012). The following subsections will highlight more in-depth the data collection methods utilised and the efforts made. It is important to highlight that there was not a dominant phase, meaning both quantitative and qualitative data were given the same value within interpretation.

4.6.1.1. Phase One: Online Self-Administered Survey

The online self-administered survey used the data collection software Qualtrics. A survey, also referred to as a questionnaire, is considered a technique of data collection in which participants are asked to respond to sets of questions in a predetermined order (deVaus, 2002). The purpose of this research phase was to evaluate RQ1 (how employees perceive gender equity efforts, and whether perceptions vary cross-nationally) and RQ2 (how aware employees within football clubs are of policies, funding incentives, organisational initiatives, and legislation around gender equity and whether they consider them appropriate). The survey also served as a tool to open discussions for RQ3, which was geared toward investigating what employees thought was the best approach to achieve gender equity, and who would be responsible for implementing, measuring, and monitoring it. Strengths of questionnaires include that "they are useful for measuring attitudes and eliciting other content; can be performed inexpensively and have a quick turnaround", while their weaknesses involve having to be kept short in order to keep participants' focus, which can lead to incomplete data and low response rates (Johnson et al., 2007:306). Phase Two was planned to explore perceptions more in-depth through qualitative data collection. Phase One of data collection followed the Bryman and Bell (2015) process of quantitative research which can be found in Figure 4.3.

Figure 4.3 Process of Quantitative Research (Source: Bryman and Bell, 2015:437)

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┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│        1. Elaborate theory          │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
                  ↓
┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│        2. Devise hypothesis         │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
                  ↓
┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│      3. Select research design      │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
                  ↓
┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│     4. Devise measure of concepts   │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
                  ↓
┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│      5. Select research site(s)     │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
                  ↓
┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│  6. Select research subjects/respondents │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
                  ↓
┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│   7. Administer research instruments │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
                  ↓
┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│          8. Process data            │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
                  ↓
┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│    9. Develop findings/conclusions  │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
                  ↓
┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│   10. Write up findings/conclusions │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
```
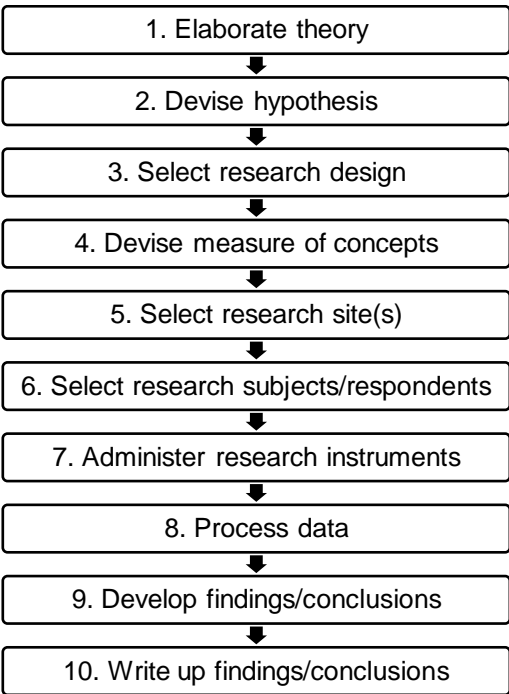
Rosette and Tost (2010) share that future research must consider gender bias may not be present in senior management positions, and may only exist at the lower and middle management levels. Thus, there is a call for research to specifically investigate the experiences lower and middle management employees face when working towards senior management positions within sport. This study followed these recommendations, and specifically investigated individuals in non-leadership roles. As there has been a lack of reliable, accessible, and comprehensive surveys of the situation of women and gender in sport, this survey was constructed to help clarify varying perspectives, and evaluate the situation in different countries (Hartmann et al., 2002). Surveys around women in sport have evolved since Acosta and Carpenter's (2004) work on unconscious discrimination in the selection hiring process for women in athletics. From the work of MacCharles and Melton (2019) the initial rationale of focusing on gender equity between men and women stemmed from a low percentage (less than 5%) of those with other non-majority identities (LGBT+, disability, age) across the sports industry. However, it is acknowledged that these non-majority identities may still be interesting to study. Besides, they can represent an additional identity on the top of man or woman (e.g., homosexual), meaning that they do not contradict the initial idea of focusing on men and women. For these reasons, the

survey was not restricted to respondents defining themselves as man or woman, and considering that they do not represent a non-majority identity (e.g. considering that they are heterosexual). Nevertheless, the numbers of respondents representing different non-majority identities were eventually too low to derive meaningful and significant results for each of them. This led the researcher to put responses from those with non-majority identities (i.e., ethnic minority individuals, identifying as non-binary, etc) to into broader categories in the different specific analyses conducted.

More recently, through Valenti's (2019) work, a mixed-methods design occurred through a quantitative survey equipped to address questions around what forms and profiles of club organisation in European women's football were occurring, and was supported by qualitative interviews contributing to the answer around how men's football clubs support the integration of a women's football section. Following the work of de Jonge (2015), a conceptual framework was utilised to analyse survey responses by recognising that attitudes towards gender diversity and organisational change generally are formed by a range of forces, including individual, cultural, and institutional. This can be found in Figure 4.4.

Figure 4.4 Conceptual Framework to Analyse Survey Responses (Source: de Jonge, 2015:4)
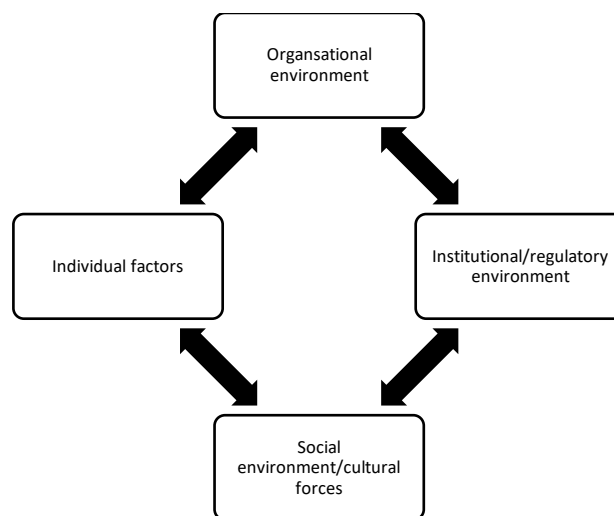
Mixed-method approaches facilitated sampling procedures. This initially occurred through club HR and DEI personnel. Target participants were individuals (of all genders) who were

employed in full-time positions within entry or middle management roles in a semi or professional football club in one of the selected countries (England, Scotland, Canada, and the US). Due to COVID-19 however, efforts had to be moved to use networking tools, such as LinkedIn, with access of participants becoming even more limited. Similarly to Valenti (2019:10), "the quantitative findings (i.e. survey) were used to screen potential participants in respect of follow-up interviewing in the second stage of data collection".

Focusing on participant gender and country identity, the quantitative analysis was tailored to further evaluate which types of efforts participants identified more with (polices, incentives, initiatives, or legislation). Additionally, through descriptive analysis, a better understanding of the demographic breakdown cross-nationally of individuals in these roles was achieved. Although focusing on gender, this study incorporated intersectional theory, evaluating other characteristics such as race, sexuality, and age. Initial hypotheses from the literature review suggested a hegemonic reproductive nature of a white, heterosexual man being most prevalent, thus suggesting the findings in this research would support the works of Burton (2015) and Norman and Rankin-Wright (2018).

The research design of this study was based on survey results addressing the research question at hand. To understand aspects that cannot be considered directly measurable (i.e., gendered styles), Pallant (2016) suggests involving the use of scales that have been designed to 'operationalise' attributes. During preparation of the questionnaire, a decision to rely on closed questions was made so that a numerical format of analysis could occur. The formation of research questions was based on the homologous reproduction theory, which conceptualises the processes of exclusion based on social characteristics (gender in this study), and sustainability of hegemonic practices (Greenhill et al., 2009). Specifically, Knoppers (1987) was the first theorist to apply this model to the business organisation sector with three key constructs: opportunity, power, and proportion. Basing this study on these previous researchers' theories, the questions addressed were geared to understand how participants of different genders perceived attempts to address hegemonic practices, investigating whether different-gendered participants interact with policies and practices differently (Greenhill et al., 2009). It additionally aimed to

understand whether different-gendered participants in football workplaces acknowledged organisational change in policies and practices addressing equity. Built on Burton's (2015) definition of 'homologous reproduction', the study investigates whether different-gendered participants give appropriate powers to those with demographics similar to themselves (i.e., education). As participants were asked to confirm their sex, the options of 'male', 'female', 'non-binary', and 'prefer to self-describe as' were used following the works of Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009). Indicated earlier, there is a need to clearly distinguish between sex and gender, thus selecting these phrases allowed the research team to clearly identify variances between the sexes. Comparing the results through the process of triangulation allows for a conceptualisation to occur regarding determining whether hypotheses are accurate or not.

The selection of sampling methods and determination of sample size is extremely important to conduct a well informed study. Without correct execution, it may fail to detect important effects or associations, or may estimate those impacts or associations too imprecisely if incorrectly done (Singh and Masuku, 20014). The recruitment of participants for phase one involved snowball sampling. Snowball sampling occurred through utilising email exchanges with HR leads within football clubs, as well as messaging applicable participants via LinkedIn. The researcher started initial conversations through providing a one-page information sheet on the study. HR contacts who agreed to have their club(s) participate circulated the survey link across their organisation. Individuals found via LinkedIn were directly messaged by the researcher and were provided a high-level explanation on the aims of the study. Once interest of participating was confirmed, the researcher replied further with the survey URL link.

All surveys were answered independently by the participants through the distribution of a URL link provided by Qualtrics. Closed-ended questions on the survey used the 5-point Likert scale. During analysis of closed-ended questions, the gender indicators (referring to the quantitative indicators based on sex disaggregated statistical data) allowed researchers to differentiate results from both gendered participants (Demetriades, 2007). Using Qualtrics for this study displayed no obvious limitations, and all data and analyses were saved using the university provided cloud-based storage system (OneDrive). The

construction of questions for this study followed Foddy (1994) through considering the order and flow of the questions, with the aim of a questionnaire layout being logical and easy to follow. Figure 4.5 represents Foddy's (1994) framework.

Figure 4.5 Order and Flow of Interview Questions (Source: Foddy, 1994:104)
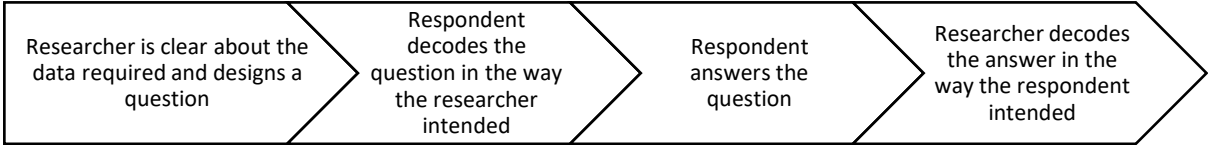
Initial questions in the survey required individuals to indicate the country they were based out of and their perspectives on the male prevalence of the football industry. Following this, questions using Likert-scale grading asked participants to respond with their levels of agreement to statements made around how gender, barriers, resources, and legislation impact their workplaces. Examples where participants were asked to indicate levels of agreement included: Both males and females are treated equitably within my workplace; I believe the language in this legislation is appropriate for my workplace; I believe organisational initiatives have impacted gender equity in my workplace. The full questionnaire can be found in Appendix 3. As there were 488 participants, this study followed Saunders et al. (2019) sample size for different populations at 95% level depictions, confirming we were successful to meet the 5% margin of error (population estimated between 31,000 and 50,000). Saunders et al. (2019) margin of error table can be found below in Figure 4.6. Results were coded through Microsoft Excel, and then imported and analysed using the statistical software tool SPSS.

Figure 4.6. Margin of Error Source (Saunders et al., 2019:607)

MARGIN OF ERROR				
Population	*5%*	*3%*	*2%*	*1%*
50	44	48	49	50
100	79	91	66	99
150	108	132	141	148
200	132	168	185	196
250	151	203	226	244
300	168	234	267	291
400	196	291	434	384
500	217	340	414	475
750	254	440	571	696
1 000	278	516	706	906
2 000	322	696	1091	1655
5 000	357	879	1622	3288
10 000	370	964	1936	4899
100 000	383	1056	2345	8762
1 000 000	384	1066	2395	9513
10 000 000	**384**	**1067**	**2400**	**9595**

4.6.1.2.   Phase Two: Semi-Structured Interviews

After the implementation of the questionnaire, a qualitative form of data collection occurred through a series of semi-structured interviews. Supporting questionnaires, semi-structured interviews are often used in mixed-methods studies to "generate confirmatory results despite differences in methods of data collection, analysis, and interpretation, and are seen as having differed and possibly complementary strengths and weaknesses" (Harris and Brown, 2010:1). Interviews as the second strand in mixed-methods allow researchers to interpret the two sets of results together, so that the qualitative findings can provide better understanding of the initial quantitative results (Plano Clark and Ivankova, 2016). Convenience sampling wherein participants were selected based on their own availability and interest (with no control by the investigator) was followed. This occurred with participants in phase one inputting their email address in question 19 of the survey, volunteering time to contribute to a virtual interview. Using convenience/self-selection sampling in this study allowed the research team to obtain an adequate range of participation for working towards answering the tentative hypotheses made (Galloway, 2005). Similar to every sampling approach, convenience/self-selection faces limitations as it is likely to engage with those with strong opinions about the issue and may not be

representative of the whole population. As an attempt to diminish this limitation around self-selection, all the individuals invited to participate varied in terms of demographic characteristics, allowing for any forms of bias to be reduced and "undone" as Olsen (2011) indicates. A visual diagram of research activities can be found in Figure 4.7 as it follows Mayoh et al.'s (2012) procedural research activities.

Figure 4.7 Diagram of Procedural Research Activities (Source: Mayoh et al., 2012:21)
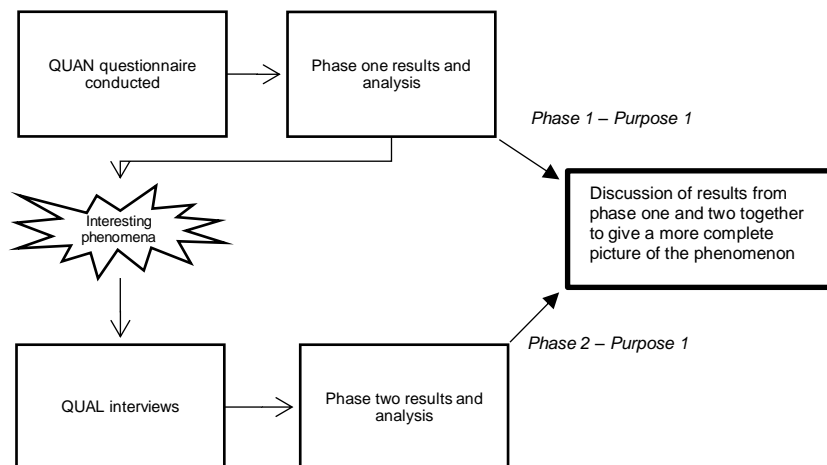
Through Ivankova et al. (2006) 'interview protocol development', this study developed questions derived from initial quantitative results. This was due to the nature of the second phase being geared to explore, elaborate, and expand on the first, quantitative, phase of the study (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009). Participants from this were recruited through the survey, and gave permission to be contacted for continued contribution. Originally planned as focus groups, interviews were put in-place due to COVID-19 travel restrictions. 45 respondents in phase one indicated interest in participating in Phase Two, and email invitations were sent to confirm interest. Once ethical consent forms were signed and returned, interviews began occurring. This study successfully completed 14 interviews through the digital communication platform, Zoom.

Following the suggestions of Ahllin (2019:4), semi-structured interviews should "include a set number of survey questions that will be asked of all respondents while also incorporating opportunities for more detailed inquiry into topics that arise during researcher–respondent discussions." Interviews allow researchers and participants to

engage in dialogue during real time, and give room for flexibility and unplanned topics to arise (Pietkiewicz and Smith, 2012). An interview guide was constructed using Magnusson and Marecek's (2015) suggestions that semi-structured interviews require topics to be predetermined, but leaving room for additional questions to be formed. Follow up questions should follow two formats: general follow-ups and focused follow-ups (Magnusson and Marecek, 2015).

As virtual interviews are considered a relatively new setting for data collection, the validity of it has been supported by authors to be just as legitimate as face-to-face (Deakin and Wakefield, 2014). There were no obvious limitations to using Zoom in this study. Interviews were recorded and transcribed using the software NVivo 12 (Richards, 1999; Bazeley, 2013). Similarly, to Phase One, data was saved on a cloud-based storage device to avoid issues concerning data loss or corruption. Interviews started out with questions gathering demographic information, such as occupation and educational background, as these were not collected within the survey. Magnusson and Marecek's (2015) share it is wise to place sensitive topics late in the interview guide to avoid any personal distress for the respondent. Following initial questions around demographics and upbringings, participants were asked to share personal perspectives on what DEI looks like in both their workplace and the sport industry as a whole. Continuing on, questions focused on how their specific clubs utilised DEI initiatives and if they were ever monitored and evaluated publicly. The final area of questioning focused on participants' professional aims and objectives to see what resources they valued to help support them progress within their organisation, and how confident they were with having access.

4.6.2. Research Ethical Consideration

Saunders et al. (2019:815) define research ethics as "the appropriateness of your behaviour in relation to the rights of those who become the subject of or are affected by your work." This study followed the Saunders et al. (2019) as well as incorporating Byrne (2016) to determine whether the research was ethical; explained key ethical concepts, such as informed consent and anonymity; and highlighted processes needed for gaining ethical approval to conduct research. The confidentially of identification of respondents

has been ensured by the researcher through the use of pseudonyms. All engagement with Phases One and Two were through voluntary participation.

In both phases, respondents were given aliases that would protect the identity of both them and their employer. Through Participant Information Sheets (Appendix 1), respondents were made aware in both phases of the aims of the initial survey and interview. Key topics highlighted within the packets included discussions around the focus on their attitudes and beliefs in regard to gender equity, policies, and schemes implemented in workplaces; their personal experiences around training and development; and the amount of support they felt was needed to succeed. This was constructed on Bryman and Bell's (2015) suggestions to avoid deception of respondents, an ethical issue in social research. During Phase One, participants gave consent through selecting a 'yes or no' option on the first page of the survey. At this point, respondents were made aware all participation would remain anonymous and confidential as their contribution would be grouped together with others from the country they indicated they were based out of. During Phase Two, respondents were asked to complete ethical consent forms prior to interviews which asked for permission around the researcher recording audio for later transcription (Appendix 2). Similarly, to Phase One, respondents were made aware they would remain anonymous. No participant or club names are presented in the thesis. Additionally, for privacy and safeguarding, all personal information and other information was securely stored on Manchester Metropolitan University cloud-drive for data protection requirements. Manchester Metropolitan University provided ethical approval for this research study. Participants were made aware that they could withdraw at any time.

4.7. Data Analysis

With transformative methodological assumptions, there are implications for every aspect of research methods, from the development of a focus for the study, to data analysis and interpretation, and use of the findings (Mertens, 2012). Linking data (also referred to as data analysis) involves qualitative and quantitative analysis to occur through processes of treating each data set with the techniques usually used with that data; for example qualitative techniques such as thematic analysis are used for qualitative data, and

quantitative techniques such as statistical tests are used to analyse quantitative data (Sandelowski, 2000). Highlighted earlier in this thesis, triangulation of data analysis has occurred. Triangulation involves attempting "to confirm inferences made from the findings of several research methods and approaches" (Smith, 2006:465). The purpose of triangulation is to grasp a fuller understanding around why individuals respond the way they do, while also inferring similarly on interviews or observations as they did on the initial quantitative measure of a target phenomenon (Sandelowski, 2000).

Quantitative analysis is the analysis of numeric data using a variety of statistical techniques (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009). As there are several ways of categorising quantitative data analysis strategies, it is important to highlight what has been used in this study, and why. Three distinctions among these techniques must be differentiated (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009): descriptive versus inferential statistics; univariate versus multivariate statistics; and parametric versus nonparametric statistics. Prior to more extensive tests, descriptive statistics allow researchers to summarise the sets of data that constitute the sample of interest (Andrew et al., 2011), which in this study are basic demographic questions. Once those were completed, the research team made decisions on tests around the variables being measured. The second major differentiation for quantitative analysis is between univariate and multivariate procedures, where univariate statistics involve linking only one variable, where multivariate links two or more sets of variables (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009). For this study, both techniques are used, and will be highlighted more in-depth in the following sections. Lastly, a third important differentiation is made between parametric and nonparametric statistics. This study used parametric tests, which are used with numerical (interval and ratio) data, and are considered more powerful, and must assume that the data cases are normally distributed populations (Saunders et al., 2019). It may be argued that because the survey conducted in the present research used a 5-point Likert-scale based on ordinal data, nonparametric tests should have been used. However, parametric tests can be used with ordinal data, and are generally even more robust than nonparametric tests when analysing such data (Norman, 2010). In addition, the samples and data used in the present research enable the use of parametric tests as developed in subsection 4.7.1.

Compared to quantitative analysis, qualitative analysis uses verbal descriptions and explanations rather than statistical analysis (Hammersley, 1992). The purpose of engaging with qualitative analysis is generating textual data for analysis while trying to understand meanings, relationships, and patterns of participants. Most qualitative analyses involve generating emergent themes evolving from the study of specific pieces of information. This refers to thematic analysis, developed further in subsection 4.7.2.

4.7.1. Phase One Analysis

SPSS was the software used for statistical analysis of this study. The results from Qualtrics were produced as an Excel sheet, so an import of data into SPSS needed to occur. Once all data was properly inputted, an essential screening and cleaning occurred to correct any mistakes prior to continuation. Coding of data values in variable view had to occur to give a numeric value to the responses (Pallant, 2016). An example of a coded question was "My gender impacts my role in my organisation": '1=Strongly Disagree; 2=Somewhat Disagree; 3= Neither Agree Nor Disagree; 4=Somewhat Agree; 5= Strongly Agree'. Additionally, for respondent gender, country, sexuality, age, and ethnic identification, a code system was implemented, as each participant ticked off the category that represented what they identified as. For gender, coding for females was number 1, for males number 2, number 3 for individuals identified as others, and for individuals identified as prefer not to say, number 4. From there, a preliminary analysis occurred through evaluating descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) to test for any assumptions. As the aim of the study was to compare different-gendered participants' responses to questions, comparing means was the most adequate form of measurement, although the choice of a t-test and one-way ANOVA comes from a series of considerations.

Both nominal and ordinal data typically are suggested to be measured using a non-parametric technique, however it is common to analyse ordinal data using parametric tests, such as the t-test and one-way ANOVA. For example, Pedro Cosme Vieria (2016) indicates that the use of a t-test is valid to compare groups, even when the variable is measured using a Likert scale, and the population does not have a normal distribution.

This is accepted when sufficient sample sizes are demonstrated, and the t-tests are robust enough to depart from normality. Additionally, Lubke and Muthen (2004) shared that it is possible to find true parameter values in analysis with Likert-scale data, if assumptions about skewness in the number of categories are met. According to Tabachnick and Fidell (2013), the acceptable range for skewness and kurtosis is +1.5 and above -1.5. More generally, using a parametric test for ordinal data is considered to be adequate when the ordinal data meet all of the assumptions of the parametric test. The level of appropriateness is based on the condition of having a proper sampling distribution (n>15); there are at least five levels to the ordinal scale; there are no extreme scores; and the variance of the two samples being compared is approximately equal (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2013).

Levene's Test for Equality of Variances then occurred. To verify assumption, Levene's test was used to investigate whether samples had equal variances (Levene, 1960). For results where questions were >.05, the use of a parametric statistical analysis was supported. Parametric tests are based on the assumption that the data is normally distributed, which was demonstrated during Levene's Test for Equality of Variances. In the case of this study, as Likert-scale data can be more adequately tested looking at the mean results, a parametric statistical analysis can be supported. As the questionnaire results were used to compute mean scores for individual participant responses, the mean score has been used as an index of the overall observation of managerial styles between genders for each question. To verify the hypothesis regarding gender impacting managerial styles in the sport management workplace, a series of closed questions were worded and tested using independent sample t-tests surrounding managerial styles. This statistical analysis was chosen because it will allow researchers to determine whether there is a significant difference between the means of males' and females' responses towards managerial styles in the sport management workplace.

4.7.2. Phase Two Analysis

Phase Two of this study involved qualitative data from semi-structured in-depth interviews conducted with individuals who voluntarily put themselves forward during Phase One. 14

interviews occurred via the communications tool Zoom, and after initial transcription, they were uploaded to NVivo 12 to facilitate a thematic analysis. Thematic analysis occurs through processes of coding in which researchers attach conceptual labels to the data and start to link them with relationships to theories. Examples of thematic analysis include annotated transcripts, identifying common themes, and counting/highlighting key phrases/words/incidents. This is geared to support investigation into the impact, limitations, constraints, and challenges of individuals and DEI in sport workplaces. Themes additionally can also be built from smaller codes (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Two methods used in thematic analysis are similarity and contrast principles. In addition, Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009) highlight three qualitative analysis strategies: categorical; contextualising (holistic); and data displays*.

From the research questions posed, several themes were identified prior to data analysis from the literature review. Established as three priori themes, the following starting points were used for coding: Perspectives of Gender Equity, Employee Awareness, and Responsibility for Best Practices with DEI. From there, additional categories were found, including areas like the glass ceiling barrier, varying forms of affirmative action, workplace discrimination, and intersectional identities. Given the time spent reading around the topic, new codes emerged when reading the transcripts such as 'gender roles' and 'holistic representation'. Following Charmaz (2002) process of coding, there were two steps followed once all transcripts were uploaded. Initial analytic codes were established from reading transcripts, and were based on the research questions. It was then followed by synthesising and conceptualising codes and creating themes (Charmaz, 2002). NVivo 12 was used to store and organise this data for use when drawing comparisons between identified categories. There were 47 initial codes determined during initial analysis, which were scaled down to 12 for final analysis. Discussion of analysis will be further explained in Chapter 7.

4.8. Chapter 4 Summary

This chapter presented the research position chosen in the thesis, as well as what previous scholars have based philosophical assumptions on. Additionally, an outline of

the research methods and analysis tools utilised for both Phases One and Two were discussed, highlighting how the survey and interview responses from employees of semi and professional football clubs in relation to their perspectives around the impacts DEI initiatives have on gender equity. Using stratified purposeful sampling allowed the research team to identify qualified participants. This technique has been justified to "ensure that certain cases varying on preselected parameters are included" (Sandelowski, 2000:250), which in this study are those who hold entry or middle-management roles within football clubs. The data collected employed approaches leading to engagement through reading and reflective writing within the coding and interpretation processes.

The trustworthiness of the current study was evaluated on standards of credibility, dependability, and transferability. Later in Chapter 7, a greater discussion around triangulation will occur, serving to produce the responses to the research questions for this empirical study, and will confirm whether hypotheses are considered correct or not

5. Research Phase One Data Analysis

5.1. Introduction

This chapter presents an analysis of the data from Phase One of the empirical study. During this phase, participants were asked to complete a self-administered online questionnaire. Contributors were individual employees within both semi and professional football clubs holding what they considered as an entry or middle management role from England, Scotland, Canada, or the United States. The purpose of this phase was to investigate the attitudes and beliefs around diversity and inclusion initiatives impacting gender equity in football management workplaces. A Likert-type scale survey instrument was used as collection of employees' perceptions regarding the areas of DEI in the football industry. Questions that did not follow Likert-Type were phrased with 'yes' or 'no' choices. The chapter will begin with an overview of the analysis of the quantitative data collected from 89 football clubs (38 England, 6 Scotland, 7 Canada and 38 US), totalling 488 participants. The overview of the analysis will include the procedures and a description of the demographic characteristics of those employees participating in the survey. The end of this chapter concludes with a brief summary of key findings, as they relate to the research questions.

5.2. General Description of Data

Initial screening of data occurred through running descriptive analysis of questions around participant demographics (location, gender, race, sexuality, and age). As gender is the main identity being investigated, it is important to also highlight the other backgrounds following the suggestions of Palmer and Masters (2010), Knoppers (2015), and Rankin-Wright et al. (2019) that work needs to be done in sport through intersectional theory. Given the low representation of individuals who self-identify as non-binary or prefer to describe themselves as other (9 in total), representation under 20 was removed, as they do not meet the minimum set out by Teddlie and Taskakkori (2009) for sample justification. Therefore, this study only investigates individuals with binary identities with identifying as either 'female' or 'male' (Pfister and Radtke, 2009). However, the low

representation of gender diverse identities does leave room for further inquiry, which will be explained more in-depth later in this study.

The complete survey can be found in Appendices 3, 4, and 5. Again through following the suggestions of Teddlie and Taskakkori (2009), the use of statistical analysis tools (such as SPSS) enables researchers to code for protected characteristics (identities) using an ordinal measure. For questions around employee attitudes and beliefs, a Likert-scale option was formulated following the work of Demetriades (2007). Through analysis, data about protected characteristics were given nominal values, as they are considered measurable variables that don't vary based on order (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009). The coding stuck with binary models of a number '1' for females and for number '2' for males. This study was open to individuals of all protected background identities, and included 488 employees, with the majority identifying they were located and working in England (Table 5.1).

Table 5.1 Descriptive Statistics from Participants

Independent Variable		n (%)
Country	England	241 (49.4%)
	Scotland	22 (4.5%)
	Canada	38 (7.8%)
	US	187 (38.3%)
	Total	**488 (100%)**
Gender	Female	140 (28.7%)
	Male	215 (44.1%)
	Non-Binary	2 (0.4%)
	Prefer to self-describe as	7 (1.4%)
	Did not disclose	124 (25.4%)
	Total	**488 (100%)**
Race	White	298 (61%)
	Black or African American	14 (2.9%
	Asian	6 (1.2%)
	Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	1 (0.2%)
	Other	38 (7.8%)
	Prefer not to say	7 (1.4%)
	Did not disclose	124 (25.4%)
	Total	**488 (100%)**
Sexuality	Heterosexual	326 (66.8%)
	Homosexual	12 (2.5%)
	Bisexual	10 (2.0%)
	Prefer not to say	15 (3.1%)
	Did not disclose	125 (25.6%)
	Total	**488 (100%)**
Age	18-24	83 (17%)
	25-34	203 (41.6%)
	35-44	45 (9.2%)
	45 or older	28 (5.7%)
	Prefer not to say	4 (0.8%)
	Did not disclose	125 (25.6%)
	Total	**488 (100%)**

Previous demographic work in Europe showed that, in 2019, the sport industry consisted of 54% being self-identified as male (Eurostat, 2020). The Eurostat study also indicated that 35% of these workers were aged 15–29, thus meaning that this doctoral study had a fair representation of populations. Additionally, the sample in this study in terms of gender had a sample of 28.7% participants identifying as female, and 44.1% identifying as male, which reconfirms fair representation. As shown in Table 5.2, 61% were white, reflecting the hegemonic nature of the industry (Lapchick, 1996; Allison, 2016; Clarkson et al., 2019). To follow the suggestions from Norman and Rankin-Wright (2018), future research needs to be directed toward adding more evidence around minority groups and intersectionality of identities. To further understand levels of experience, demographic

questions around sexuality, race, and age have been accounted for as additional identities to be explored in this chapter.

5.3. Data Analysis Presentation and Interpretation of Results

There were two key statistical tests used during Phase One of this study. As shared in the previous chapter, the questions constructed in the online survey followed the suggestions of Willet (2018) for a t-test and one-way ANOVA due to both nominal and ordinal data typically being measured using a non-parametric technique. This created a goal of looking at the mean results from the Likert-scales versus utilising median scores to address gaps between responses. The level of appropriateness used is based on the condition of having a proper sampling distribution (n>15); there are at least 5 levels to the ordinal scale; there are no extreme scores, and the variance of the two samples being compared is approximately equal (Willett, 2018).

Four subcategory themes were constructed for analysis of the survey. As the goal of the quantitative phase is to identify the potential predictive power of selected variables to lead to Phase Two (Ivankova et al., 2006), these subcategories were developed acknowledging the key areas of the overall research questions, including gender impacting experiences, barriers perceived, access to resources, and perspectives around legislation. The first theme focused on individual participants reflecting on their gender identity and its role in their workplace. The four questions reviewed areas around comparing males and females, as well as their impacts on success. The second subcategory included two questions which focused on how participants believed barriers around promotion, or the pay gap, occurred in their workplaces. The third subcategory catered around access to resources and progression with the six questions alluding to ideas around how training, leadership staff, organisational and funding initiatives, have impacted gender equity. The final subcategory investigated attitudes around the legislation their workplaces follow. To observe this, four questions were directed to see if participants believe their employers visibly follow and or go beyond the mandatory policies, while gaining perspective on if they are to be considered appropriate toward making an impact. Although this process typically occurs in QUAL studies, it was possible

to merge data during analysis by 'qualitising quantitative findings', creating narrative descriptions based on distribution scores, which allowed for analysing using respective quantitative methods to produce more substantiated study results (Plano Clark and Ivankova, 2016).

5.3.1. Gender as the Independent Variable

Gender, as the main identity for this study, has been investigated through sport management in various areas such as national governing bodies and intercollegiate athletics (Acosta and Carpenter, 2004; Stafford, 2004; Piggott et al., 2018). With an identified gap addressed around gender in the elite, commercial side of football management, investigating it independently is worth doing, as it has not been done prior. Additionally, limited work has been done cross-nationally comparing practices addressing inequity in sport. As some demographics may not correspond from one country to another such as occupation, education, and socioeconomic status (Usunier, 2011), following the dimensions of diversity model, the demographics included for this study are generally outside the individual's control, including gender, age, sexual orientation, and ethnicity, which arguably are consistent among Western cultures (Gardenswartz and Rowe, 2003).

Focusing on gender as the independent variable, the first subcategory investigated individual perspectives on gender as a feature within organisations. Statistically significant differences were found in three out of the four questions. All questions were analysed through running an independent-samples t-test. The questions allowed for participants to display levels of agreement on if they believed the football industry is considered male-dominated (Q2); their individual gender impacts their role (Q3_1), if females and males are equally treated (Q3_5), and if they perceive gender impacts their chance of earning a promotion within the workplace (Q8_1). Significant results were found in questions Q3_1, Q3_5, and Q8_1.

Starting with Q3_1, results revealed that scores for females and males were significantly different as displayed in Table 5.2, which suggested that females are more in agreement that their gender impacts their role within football organisations compared to males. Question Q3_5 revealed that scores for females and males were significantly different,

suggesting males are more in agreement that both males and females are treated equitably within their workplaces. For Q8_1, results revealed that the scores for females and males were significantly different, suggesting females are more in agreement that their gender has impacted their chances of earning a promotion within their workplaces compared to men. There were no statistically significant findings around the notion the football industry is considered male-dominated, with both genders displaying similar scores and highly agreeing with the statement. However, there is a slightly higher mean for females' level of agreement. Results are visually shown below in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2 Attitudes Towards Gender Impacting Role Across Gender

Number	Question	Females	Males	t	p-value (1-tailed)
Q2	The football industry is a male-dominated industry	1.19 (0.40)	1.15 (0.35)	1.16	0.125
Q3_1	Gender impacts role in organisation	3.03 (1.32)	2.41 (1.23)	4.49	0.000
Q3_5	Both males and females are treated equitably within the workplace	3.51 (1.41)	4.34 (0.94)	-6.15	0.000
Q8_1	Gender has impacted the chances of earning a promotion within the workplace	2.48 (1.20)	2.13 (1.07)	2.66	0.004

Notes: for females and males, the values displayed are the means and, in brackets, the standard deviations; t and p-values for independent sample t-tests.

The second category of questions focused around individuals' attitudes and beliefs towards perceived barriers. Shown in Table 5.3, statistically significant differences were found in both tests. All questions were analysed through running an independent-samples t-test. The following statements were included for participants to display levels of agreement focused on viewpoints that gender worked as a barrier toward promotion (Q3_2) and also as a barrier regarding the pay gap (Q3_3).

For Q3_2, results revealed that scores for females and males were significantly different, suggesting females are more in agreement that individuals' genders' create barriers around promotion in individual workplaces compared to males. This is displayed in Table 5.3 below. Q3_3 results revealed that scores for females and males were significantly different, and suggested that females are more in agreement that individuals' genders'

create barriers around the pay gap in individual workplaces organisations compared to males.

Table 5.3 Barriers Across Gender

Number	Question	Females	Males	t	p-value (1-tailed)
Q3_2	There are barriers around promotion within the workplace	2.93 (1.36)	2.51 (1.30)	2.87	0.002
Q3_3	There are barriers around the pay gap within the workplace	3.07 (1.26)	2.47 (1.16)	4.57	0.000

Notes: for females and males, the values displayed are the means and, in brackets, the standard deviations; t and p-values for independent sample t-tests.

The third category focused around perspectives on access to resources and opportunities to progress. Shown in Table 5.4, two out of the six tests found statistically significant differences between genders. All questions were analysed through running an independent-samples t-test. The following statements were included for participants to display levels of agreement around training and leadership opportunities being equability offered (Q3_4), feelings towards adequate resources from leadership staff (Q3_6), the ability to progress quickly due to the factors like gender equity initiatives (Q7_1), sport policies (Q10_1), funding incentives (Q10_2), and organisational initiatives (Q10_3). Questions Q3_6 and Q7_1 showed significant differences. Q3_6 results revealed that the scores for females and males were significantly different as shown in Table 5.4, suggesting that males are more in agreement that they feel they have the resources from leadership staff to progress in comparison to females. In Q7_1, results revealed that the scores for females and males were significantly different, suggesting that males are more in agreement that individuals can progress quickly if they work hard as a consequence of the gender equity initiatives than females again to be found in Table 5.4. There were no significant differences around perspectives on training and leadership opportunities being equitably offered, or on beliefs toward sport policies, funding incentives, or organisational initiatives impacting gender equity within individuals' workplaces.

Table 5.4 Access to Resources and Progression Across Gender

Number	Question	Females	Males	t	p-value (1-tailed)
Q3_4	There are training and leadership opportunities equitably offered in the workplace	3.63 (1.24)	3.75 (1.14)	-.975	0.165
Q3_6	I have the resources from leadership staff to progress equitably to peers in my workplace	3..66 (1.26)	4.04 (0.94)	-3.09	0.001
Q7_1	I can progress quickly if I work hard in my workplace due to the gender equity initiatives, schemes, and or quotas my employer follows	3.42 (1.16)	3.72 (0.93)	-2.45	0.008
Q10_1	Sport policies have impacted gender equity in the workplace	3.08 (0.97)	3.07 (0.98)	.039	0.485
Q10_2	Funding incentives have impacted gender equity in the workplace	2.82 (1.01)	2.90 (0.93)	-.728	0.234
Q10_3	Organisational initiatives have impacted gender equity in the workplace	2.99 (1.10)	3.07 (1.04)	-.690	0.250

Notes: for females and males, the values displayed are the means and, in brackets, the standard deviations; t and p-values for independent sample t-tests.

The last category focused on perspectives towards legislation impacts on gender equity within individual workplaces. Based on the country participants indicated in Q1, a quote from their legislation around gender was used to gain perceptions. Shown in Table 5.5, three out of the four questions had statistically significant findings. All questions were analysed through running an independent-samples t-test. The following statements were included for participants to display levels of agreement around legislation being visibly followed (Q6_1), appropriate language used in legislation (Q6_2), workplaces going beyond domestic legislation (Q6_3), and legislation impacting gender equity within workplaces (Q10_4). Questions that showed statistical significance were Q6_1, Q6_2, and Q6_3. For Q6_1, results revealed that the scores for females and males were significantly different, suggesting that males are more in agreement that legislation is being visibly followed in their workplace compared to females, showcased in Table 5.5. Question Q6_2 revealed that the scores for females and males were significantly different, suggesting that males are more in agreement that the language used with domestic legislation was appropriate in individual workplaces compared to females.

Finally, for question Q6_3 the results revealed that the scores for females and males were significantly different, suggesting males are more in agreement that their workplaces go beyond expectations of legislation in comparison to females. There were no significant differences around perspectives on gender, and beliefs toward employment legislation impacting gender equity within individuals' workplaces. All results for these questions can be found below again in Table 5.5.

Table 5.5 Legislation Perspectives Across Gender

Number	Question	Females	Males	t	p-value (1-tailed)
Q6_1	Legislation is visibly followed in the workplace	4.16 (0.97)	4.39 (0.87)	-2.19	0.013
Q6_2	The language in legislation is appropriate for the workplace	3.90 (1.00)	4.15 (0.97)	-2.26	0.013
Q6_3	The workplace goes beyond the expectations of legislation	3.39 (1.15)	3.73 (1.06)	-2.716	0.000
Q10_4	Employment legislation has impacted gender equity in the workplace	3.04 (1.07)	3.14 (1.05)	-.814	0.000

Notes: for females and males, the values displayed are the means and, in brackets, the standard deviations; t and p-values for independent sample t-tests.

5.3.2. National Identity as the Independent Variable

Argued by Usunier (2011), it is also justifiable to look at national identity as a demographic when researching impact. Thus, investigating national identity as the independent variable occurred to support triangulation later in the study, as it is geared toward providing cross-national insights. Similar to the previous section of this chapter, the four subcategory themes are used to compare national identity. The first subcategory investigated includes the attitudes around gender impacting individuals' roles within organisations, utilising a one-way ANOVA (Table 5.6). There were no significant differences around perspectives on areas of agreement with football as being 'male dominated' (Q2), gender impacting roles (Q3_1), females and males being treated equitable (Q3_5), and gender impacting earning promotion (Q8_1).

Table 5.6 Attitudes Towards Gender Impacting Role Across Countries

Number	Question	England	Canada	US	Scotland	F	p-value
Q2	The football industry is a male-dominated industry	1.16 (0.37)	1.13 (0.34)	1.16 (0.37)	1.05 (0.21)	0.77	0.512
Q3_1	Gender impacts role in organisation	2.55 (1.26)	2.79 (1.15)	2.63 (1.37)	2.59 (1.30)	0.38	0.766
Q3_5	Both males and females are treated equitably within the workplace	4.00 (1.18)	4.18 (1.06)	4.04 (1.23)	4.00 (1.45)	0.23	0.873
Q8_1	Gender has impacted the chances of earning a promotion within the workplace	2.30 (1.14)	2.37 (1.25)	2.29 (1.12)	1.84 (1.34)	1.00	0.391

Notes: for the different countries, the values displayed are the means and, in brackets, the standard deviations; F and p-values for one-way ANOVAs.

The second category dealt with participants' perceptions of their countries' perspectives around gender as a barrier. A one-way ANOVA was conducted for all questions again (Table 5.7). There were no significant differences around perspectives on gender and the barriers around promotion (Q3_2) or the pay gap (Q3_3) within workplaces between countries.

Table 5.7 Barriers Across Countries

Number	Question	England	Canada	US	Scotland	F	p-value
Q3_2	There are barriers around promotion within the workplace	2.69 (1.30)	2.82 (1.47)	2.61 (1.31)	2.86 (1.40)	0.43	0.735
Q3_3	There are barriers around the pay gap within the workplace	2.76 (1.22)	2.70 (1.36)	2.65 (1.23)	2.33 (1.56)	0.90	0.447

Notes: for the different countries, the values displayed are the means and, in brackets, the standard deviations; F and p-values for one-way ANOVAs.

The results for the third category with countries as the independent variable varied with statistically significant findings. Shown in Table 5.8, a one-way ANOVA was conducted to review perspectives around access to resources and progression. Questions that showed statistical significance were Q7_1 (belief that they can progress quickly if they work hard in the workplace due to gender equity initiatives, schemes, and / or quotas the

employer follow, Q10_1 (belief that sport policies have impacted gender equity in workplace), and Q10_2 (belief that funding incentives have impacted gender equity in workplace. For Q7_1, results showed a statistically significant difference between groups as demonstrated by the one-way ANOVA, depicted in Table 5.8. Post hoc analysis using Tukey's HSD suggests that, compared to participants from England, participants from the US have significantly higher mean levels of agreement (p = .004[2]). Additionally, for Q10_1, results showed a statistically significant difference between groups as demonstrated by the one-way ANOVA. Post hoc analysis using Tukey's HSD suggests that, compared to participants who identified as being in England, participants who identified as being in the US do not have significantly lower mean levels of agreement (p = .122). Also shown in Table 5.8, for Q10_2, results showed a statistically significant difference between groups as demonstrated by the one-way ANOVA. Tukey post hoc test showed that, compared to participants from England, participants from the US have significantly lower mean levels of agreement (p = .032). There was not a significant difference around training and leadership opportunities (Q3_4), feelings towards adequate resources from leadership staff to progress equitably (Q3_6), and organisational initiatives impacting gender equity within individuals' workplaces (Q7_1). Main findings suggested that there are differences to be found between countries, with England respondents showing higher levels of agreement for both policies and funding incentives compared to other DEI approaches.

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[2] This is the result of a two-tailed test here. The initial expectation was that England would have a higher level of agreement than US but the finding provides an opposite direction. Applying a one-tailed test here would mean that the direction hypothesised would have been changed afterwards to fit the finding, contrary to appropriate scientific practice. It must be acknowledged that applying a one or two-tailed test here does not really change the result, since the difference is significant at the 1% level (p < .01) in both cases.

Table 5.8 Resources and Progression Across Countries

Number	Question	England	Canada	US	Scotland	F	p-value
Q3_4	There are training and leadership opportunities equitably offered in the workplace	3.68 (1.11)	3.79 (1.27)	3.80 (1.20)	3.57 (1.12)	0.52	0.666
Q3_6	I have the resources from leadership staff to progress equitably to peers in my workplace	3.81 (1.06)	3.74 (1.21)	4.03 (1.10)	4.00 (1.02)	1.70	0.166
Q7_1	I can progress quickly if I work hard in my workplace due to the gender equity initiatives, schemes, and or quotas my employer follows	3.44 (1.03)	3.38 (1.10)	3.82 (0.99)	3.53 (1.28)	4.26	0.006
Q10_1	Sport policies have impacted gender equity in the workplace	3.16 (0.96)	3.26 (0.90)	2.96 (0.98)	2.72 (1.07)	2.28	0.079
Q10_2	Funding incentives have impacted gender equity in the workplace	2.99 (0.93)	3.00 (0.92)	2.73 (0.95)	2.50 (1.15)	3.12	0.026
Q10_3	Organisational initiatives have impacted gender equity in the workplace	3.10 (1.00)	3.15 (1.06)	2.98 (1.10)	2.61 (1.15)	1.44	0.232

Notes: for the different countries, the values displayed are the means and, in brackets, the standard deviations; F and p-values for one-way ANOVAs.

The last category that compared national identity as the independent variable was legislation perspectives. As shown in Table 5.9, a one-way ANOVA was conducted to review perspectives around access to resources and progression. Questions that showed statistical significance were Q6_1 (belief that legislation is visibly followed in workplace), Q6_2 (belief that language in this legislation is appropriate for workplace), and Q6_3 (belief that workplace goes beyond the expectations of legislation). For Q6_1, results showed a statistically significant difference between groups as demonstrated by the one-way ANOVA displayed in Table 5.9. A Tukey post hoc test showed that, compared to participants from England, participants from the US have significantly higher mean levels

of agreement (p = .007). Additionally, for Q6_2, results showed a statistically significant difference between groups as demonstrated by the one-way ANOVA. Tukey post hoc test showed that, compared to participants from England, participants from the US have significantly higher mean levels of agreement (p = .000). Also, for Q6_3, results showed a statistically significant difference between groups at the 10% level, as demonstrated by the one-way ANOVA which also is displayed in Table 5.9. A Tukey post hoc test showed that, compared to participants from England, participants from the US have significantly higher mean levels of agreement at the 10% level (p = .071). There was not a significant difference around beliefs toward employment legislation impacting gender equity within individuals' workplaces.

Table 5.9 Legislation Perspectives Across Countries

Number	Question	England	Canada	US	Scotland	F	p-value
Q6_1	Legislation is visibly followed in the workplace	4.17 (0.97)	4.29 (0.76)	4.49 (0.78)	4.29 (1.11)	3.51	0.015
Q6_2	The language in legislation is appropriate for the workplace	3.86 (0.97)	4.18 (0.72)	4.37 (0.91)	3.89 (0.07)	8.51	0.000
Q6_3	The workplace goes beyond the expectations of legislation	3.47 (1.01)	3.46 (1.14)	3.78 (1.12)	3.63 (1.50)	2.36	0.071
Q10_4	Employment legislation has impacted gender equity in the workplace	3.23 (1.07)	3.00 (0.92)	3.01 (1.04)	2.72 (1.18)	1.99	0.116

Notes: for the different countries, the values displayed are the means and, in brackets, the standard deviations; F and p-values for one-way ANOVAs.

5.3.3. Combined Gender and National Identities as the Independent Variable

When conducting cross-national research, it is suggested to analyse variables independently prior to combining them to get an understanding of where initial differences may vary (Karlsson, 2019). Following this suggestion, the previous subsections of this chapter have investigated the variables of gender and national identity individually. To combine them, we gave each combined variable a new code: 1 = England Female, 2 = Canada Female, 3 = US Female, 4 = Scotland Female, 5 = England Male, 6 = Canada Male, 7 = US Male, and 8 = Scotland Male. Through a series of one-way ANOVAs and

post hoc tests, it was possible to more specifically understand where the levels of agreement were varying.

When looking at the attitudes of gender as an impacting factor, the process of combining the characteristics allowed researchers to explore where perspectives lay to see if females or males from specific countries were significantly more or less likely to agree with statements. In questions Q3_1 (gender impacts role in organisation), Q3_5 (both males and females are treated equitably within their workplace), and Q8_1 (I believe my gender has impacted the chances of earning a promotion within my workplace), significant differences between groups were found in Table 5.10.

Table 5.10 Attitudes Towards Gender Impacting Role Across Gender and Countries

Question	England Females	England Males	Canada Females	Canada Males	US Females	US Males	Scotland Females	Scotland Males	F	p-value
Q2 The football industry is a male-dominated industry	1.23 (0.42)	1.15 (0.36)	1.13 (0.35)	1.11 (0.32)	1.17 (0.38)	1.18 (0.38)	1.20 (0.45)	1.00 (0.00)	.758	0.623
Q3_1 Gender impacts role in organisation	2.89 (1.27)	2.31 (1.18)	3.50 (1.07)	2.58 (1.12)	3.10 (1.36)	2.49 (1.32)	3.20 (2.05)	2.31 (1.18)	3.36	0.002
Q3_5 Both males and females are treated equitably within the workplace	3.58 (1.35)	4.32 (0.98)	3.25 (1.49)	4.47 (0.61)	3.52 (1.45)	4.33 (0.92)	3.00 (1.87)	4.38 (1.19)	6.55	0.000
Q8_1 Gender has impacted the chances of earning a promotion within the workplace	2.64 (1.16)	2.04 (1.02)	3.00 (1.41)	2.11 (1.10)	2.13 (1.09)	2.39 (1.10)	3.20 (1.64)	1.38 (0.87)	4.19	0.000

Notes: for the different 'country genders', the values displayed are the means and, in brackets, the standard deviations; F and p-values for one-way ANOVAs.

For Q3_1, results of the one-way ANOVA revealed significant differences ($F_{(5, 330)}$ = 4.38, p = .002). A Tukey post hoc test showed, that compared to participants who identified as English or American males, participants who identified as English or American females had significantly higher mean levels, indicating more agreement around their gender having an impact on their roles. For question Q3_5, when applying a one-way ANOVA, the significance of the Levene's test was less than .05, and the larger group variance was more than six times that of the smaller group variance, meaning that a non-parametric test had to be applied. The results of a Kruskal-Wallis test suggested

there is a significant difference between the attitudes and believes between participants' gender and countries ($X^2_{(2)}$ = 31.23, p = .000). Post hoc pairwise comparisons suggested that, compared to English females (mean rank = 144.4), both English males (mean rank = 199.7), and US males (mean rank = 198.8) had significantly lower levels of agreement (p = .004 and p = .007, respectively). Similarly to English females, American females (mean rank = 145.1) had significantly lower levels of agreement to both English and American males (p = .007 and p = .011, respectively), showcasing that females from these two countries are in less agreement that males and females are treated equitably within their workplaces. The results for Q8_1 showed a significant difference. A Tukey post hoc test showed that Scottish males compared to English Females (p = .005), Canadian Females (p = .025), and Scottish females (p = .037), as well as American males (p = .049) had significantly lower scores. Similarly, English males had lower scores compared to English females, showing a significantly different level of agreement (p = .009). Thus, this reconfirmed females (especially from the United Kingdom) believe their gender has impacted their roles with chances of earning a promotion.

Through running one-way ANOVAs, similarly for questions Q3_2 (there are barriers around promotion within their workplace), and Q3_3 (there are barriers around the pay gap within their workplace), and by combining gender and national identity to become one independent variable, the following results were found in Table 5.11. For question Q3_2, there was not a significant difference. For Q3_3, however, results did show a statistically significant difference between groups. A Tukey post hoc test showed that English females compared to English, American, and Canadian males, had higher levels of agreement. Similarly, Canadian females also had higher levels of agreement than Scottish males. Thus, this indicated, females from these countries are more in agreement than males that there are barriers around pay in their workplace.

Table 5.11 Barriers Across Gender and Countries

Question	England Females	England Males	Canada Females	Canada Males	US Females	US Males	Scotland Females	Scotland Males	F	p-value
Q3_2 There are barriers around promotion within the workplace	2.80 (1.32)	2.56 (1.29)	3.25 (1.49)	2.68 (1.46)	2.98 (1.40)	2.40 (1.26)	3.40 (1.52)	2.62 (1.45)	1.61	0.131
Q3_3 There are barriers around the pay gap within the workplace	3.12 (1.21)	2.46 (1.09)	3.71 (0.76)	2.47 (1.47)	2.92 (1.30)	2.55 (1.16)	3.40 (1.82)	1.92 (1.19)	4.05	0.000

Notes: for the different 'country genders', the values displayed are the means and, in brackets, the standard deviations; F and p-values for one-way ANOVAs.

Regarding access to resources and progression, the three questions Q3_6 (I have the resources from leadership staff to progress equitably to my peers in my workplace), Q7_1 (I can progress quickly if I work hard in the workplace due to the gender equity initiatives, schemes, and or quotas my employer follows), and Q10_2 (funding incentives have impacted gender equity in the workplace) came back as significant when combining the initial variables of gender and national identity (Table 5.12). For Q3_6, when applying a one-way ANOVA, the significance of the Levene's test was less than .05, and the larger group variance was more than six times that of the smaller group variance, meaning that a non-parametric test had to be applied. The results of a Kruskal-Wallis test suggested there is a significant difference between the attitudes and beliefs between participants' gender and country ($X^2_{(2)}$ = 15.48, p = .030). Post hoc pairwise comparisons suggest that Canadian females (mean rank = 99.70) compared to American males (mean rank = 204.9) have a significantly lower level of agreement (p = .049), meaning Canadian females compared to American males are less likely to agree they have the resources from leadership staff to progress equitably to peers in their workplace.

Q7_1 results from a one-way ANOVA showed significant results as shown in Table 5.12. A Tukey post hoc test showed differences between various groups. Examples included English females (mean = 3.17, SD = 1.18) compared to English males (mean = 3.63, SD = .874) with a significantly different level of agreement, highlighting that females have lower levels of agreement towards the idea they can progress quickly if they work hard in their workplaces due to the gender equity initiatives, schemes, and / or quotas their employer follows (p = .043). Additionally, Canadian females and English females (respectively p = .030 and p = .005) both had significantly lower scores compared to

American females. For question Q10_2, one-way ANOVA indicated varying perspectives around financial incentives as shown in Table 5.12. Results from the Tukey post hoc test indicated that Scottish males are significantly less in agreement compared to Scottish females ($p = .048$), English males ($p = .008$), and Canadian males ($p = .034$) that they believe funding incentives have impacted gender equity in their workplaces.

Table 5.12 Access to Resources and Progression Across Gender and Countries

Question	England Females	England Males	Canada Females	Canada Males	US Females	US Males	Scotland Females	Scotland Males	F	p-value
Q3_4 There are training and leadership opportunities equitably offered in the workplace	3.65 (1.16)	3.70 (1.12)	3.57 (1.81)	3.79 (1.13)	3.57 (1.30)	3.83 (1.19)	4.00 (1.00)	3.62 (1.04)	.339	0.936
Q3_6 I have the resources from leadership staff to progress equitably to peers in the workplace	3.65 (1.22)	3.95 (0.90)	2.75 (1.49)	3.95 (1.03)	3.72 (1.27)	4.20 (0.94)	4.40 (0.94)	3.85 (1.21)	3.18	0.003
Q7_1 I can progress quickly if I work hard in my workplace due to the gender equity initiatives, schemes, and or quotas my employer follows	3.17 (1.18)	3.63 (0.87)	2.57 (1.27)	3.68 (0.89)	3.86 (0.94)	3.89 (0.92)	3.33 (1.53)	3.46 (1.27)	4.36	0.000
Q10_1 Sport policies have impacted gender equity in the workplace	3.12 (0.99)	3.21 (0.95)	3.00 (1.07)	3.37 (0.83)	3.08 (0.95)	2.91 (1.00)	2.60 (0.89)	2.77 (1.17)	1.25	0.274
Q10_2 Funding incentives have impacted gender equity in the workplace	2.88 (1.03)	3.08 (0.87)	2.63 (1.30)	3.16 (0.68)	2.72 (0.95)	2.76 (0.96)	3.60 (0.89)	2.08 (0.95)	3.16	0.003
Q10_3 Organisational initiatives have impacted gender equity in their workplace	3.06 (1.11)	3.14 (0.95)	2.75 (1.17)	3.32 (1.00)	2.93 (1.06)	3.02 (1.13)	3.00 (1.58)	2.46 (0.97)	1.02	0.414

Notes: for the different 'country genders', the values displayed are the means and, in brackets, the standard deviations; F and p-values for one-way ANOVAs.

Regarding the last subcategory, the majority of questions in this theme around legislation unveiled significant differences when combining gender and national identify (Table 5.13). These included questions Q6_1 (legislation is visibly followed in the workplace), Q6_2 (the language in this legislation is appropriate for the workplace), and Q6_3 (the workplace goes beyond the expectations of legislation). For all questions, a one-way ANOVA was conducted. Q6_1 results revealed significant differences. Post hoc analysis using Tukey's HSD showed English females having significantly lower levels of agreement to both American females ($p = .044$) and American males ($p = .010$) around the beliefs that legislation is visibly followed in their workplaces.

Table 5.13 Legislation Perspectives Across Gender and Countries

Questions	England Females	England Males	Canada Females	Canada Males	US Females	US Males	Scotland Females	Scotland Males	F	p-value
Q6_1 Legislation is visibly followed in the workplace	3.94 (1.05)	4.34 (0.88)	3.83 (0.98)	4.38 (0.72)	4.45 (0.80)	4.48 (0.81)	4.25 (0.96)	4.18 (1.25)	2.46	0.018
Q6_2 The language in legislation is appropriate for the workplace	3.76 (0.90)	3.91 (1.01)	3.83 (0.75)	4.31 (0.70)	4.23 (0.97)	4.39 (0.91)	2.40 (1.34)	4.38 (0.96)	5.45	0.000
Q6_3 The workplace goes beyond the expectations of legislation	3.18 (1.08)	3.68 (0.93)	3.67 (0.82)	3.50 (1.21)	3.74 (1.15)	3.77 (1.16)	2.20 (1.30)	4.08 (1.26)	3.47	0.001
Q10_4 Employment legislation has impacted gender equity in the workplace	3.17 (1.08)	3.27 (1.09)	2.75 (1.17)	3.11 (0.81)	2.95 (1.02)	3.07 (1.04)	3.00 (1.58)	2.62 (1.04)	1.11	0.358

Notes: for the different 'country genders', the values displayed are the means and, in brackets, the standard deviations; F and p-values for one-way ANOVAs.

Results for Q6_2 revealed significant differences. The Tukey post hoc test indicated that Scotland females are significantly less in agreement compared to both English females ($p = .045$) and English males ($p = .014$), American females ($p = .001$), Canadian males ($p = .002$), and Scottish males ($p = .002$). Additionally, English females and males (respectively $p = .003$ and $p = .024$) were less in agreement with American males that they believe the language in legislation is appropriate for their workplaces. Question Q6_3 also revealed significant differences between groups, which can also be found in Table 5.13. Tukey post hoc test indicated that English females are less likely to agree compared to English males ($p = .076$) and American males ($p = .028$). Scottish females additionally

are less likely to support this statement compared to English males (p = .059), American females (p = .052), American males (p = .037), and Scottish males (p = .024) around the notion they believe their workplaces go beyond expectation of legislation.

5.3.4. Additional Demographic Tests as Independent Variables

As indicated in Chapters 2 and 3, the research also aimed to explore intersectional backgrounds. This is due to the observed flaws around affirmative action (like The Equality Act of 2010) as it often creates single 'dimension silos' for the nine protected characteristics (Rankin-Wright et al., 2019). From responses, it was observed that those who come from different non-majority backgrounds represented too low numbers to derive meaningful and significant results for each of them. Although there were such low numbers of non-majority identities who participated, Walker and Melton (2015) argue researchers have a responsibility to showcase more narratives that are found in sport management workplaces so a baseline understanding and further calls for research can be made. Based on their argument, responses were collected and will be depicted in this section, based on different non-majority backgrounds being grouped into broader categories (e.g., ethnic minority individuals for non-white individuals), to highlight ethnicity, sexuality, and age as independent variables from both t-tests (ethnicity and sexuality) as well as one-way ANOVA (age) outputs due to the responsibility to showcase more narratives. As gender and national identity were the main indicators for this study, future work needs to be done to combine other protected characteristics for insights. At the end of Chapter 7, a further discussion around these topics will be made.

Regarding ethnicity, only 12% of the participant population came from non-white backgrounds. When combining gender and ethnicity to incorporate intersectional identities, the description 'ethnic minority' was used following the work of Kilvington (2019) and previous studies pertaining to DEI and football. Following the same four subcategories from the previous three sections of this chapter, gender as a barrier showed varying levels of significance. Regarding the first question with the statement 'the soccer industry is a male-dominated industry', white participants showed less levels of agreement, where ethnic minority identities were more likely to agree, which can be

shown in Table 5.14. Additionally, when evaluating gender impacting individuals' roles, results showed white participants were more likely to agree compared to those from ethnic minority backgrounds that their gender impacts their roles. There were no significant differences around males and females being treated equally in the workplace, nor around the belief gender has impacted their chances of earning a promotion.

Table 5.14 Ethnicity as the Independent Dependent Variable

Questions	White Individuals	Ethnic Minority Individuals	t	p-value (1-tailed)
Q2 The football industry is a male-dominated industry	1.18 (0.38)	1.09 (0.28)	2.08	0.02
Q3_1 Gender impacts role in organisation	2.68 (1.31)	2.37 (1.30)	1.68	0.05
Q3_5 Both males and females are treated equitably within the workplace.	4.00 (4.17)	4.17 (1.19)	-.964	0.17
Q8_1 Gender has impacted the chances of earning a promotion within the workplace	2.28 (1.14)	2.22 (1.08)	.389	0.35
Q3_2 There are barriers around promotion within the workplace	2.66 (1.32)	2.64 (1.45)	.089	0.47
Q3_3 There are barriers around the pay gap within the workplace	2.68 (1.22)	2.75 (1.31)	-.372	0.36
Q3_4 There are training and leadership opportunities equitably offered in the workplace	3.70 (1.16)	3.76 (1.28)	-.372	0.36
Q3_6 I have the resources from leadership staff to progress equitably to peers in the workplace	3.88 (1.10)	4.05 (1.07)	-1.12	0.13
Q7_1 I can progress quickly if I work hard in my workplace due to the gender equity initiatives, schemes, and or quotas my employer follows	3.56 (1.03)	3.83 (1.04)	-1.76	0.40
Q10_1 Sport policies have impacted	3.07 (0.93)	3.07 (1.20)	.016	0.50

gender equity in the workplace				
Q10_2 Funding incentives have impacted gender equity in the workplace	2.85 (0.94)	2.92 (1.07)	-.482	0.32
Q10_3 Organisational initiatives have impacted gender equity in the workplace	3.04 (1.05)	2.97 (1.17)	.488	0.31
Q6_1 Legislation is visibly followed in the workplace	4.27 (0.92)	4.45 (0.90)	-1.39	0.08
Q6_2 The language in legislation is appropriate for the workplace	4.01 (0.99)	4.27 (0.99)	-1.79	0.04
Q6_3 The workplace goes beyond the expectations of legislation	3.58 (1.10)	3.73 (1.19)	-.919	0.18
Q10_4 Employment legislation has impacted gender equity in the workplace	3.13 (1.05)	2.92 (1.12)	1.43	0.08

Notes: for white and ethnic minority individuals, the values displayed are the means and, in brackets, the standard deviations; t and p-values for independent sample t-tests.

For barriers as the subcategory regarding promotions, or the gender pay gap, once more with Q3_2 (barriers around promotion within their workplace) and Q3_3 (barriers around the pay gap within their workplace), there were no significant differences found. Subcategory three, regarding access to resources, also showed no significant differences with training or leadership. Additionally, there were no significant differences around sport policies, funding incentives, or organisational initiatives impacting gender equity. Where there were variances were around the belief that employees can progress quickly due to working hard combined with gender equity initiatives, schemes, and / or quotas being followed. Results revealed that the scores for white participants and ethnic minority participants were significantly different. This shows ethnic minority participants were more likely to agree they can progress quickly if they work hard in their workplace due to the gender equity initiatives, schemes, and / or quotas their employers follow. Regarding legislation as the final subcategory, there were no significant differences found for ethnicity and gender.

Sexuality has become a more recent area of sport management research through the work of MacCharles and Melton (2019). In the present study, results found only 4.5% of the population identified as non-heterosexual. The title of those from non-heterosexual identities is referred to as LGBTQ+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning, plus) based on Cech and Rothwell (2020) use in previous studies. Subcategory one found gender impacting with only one significant difference. From Q3_5, when asked if males and females are treated equitably within the workplace, results displayed scores for heterosexual participants and LGBTQ+ identifying individuals were significantly different, as shown in Table 5.15. This shows heterosexual participants were in higher levels of agreement that males and females are treated equitably within their workplace. Similarly to ethnicity in the previous section, there were no significant differences around barriers.

For subcategory three, there were a few instances where significant differences were found. These included training and leadership opportunities being equitably offered in the workplace. The results showed that the scores for heterosexual individuals and LGBTQ+ identifying participants were significantly different, also shown in Table 5.15. This means heterosexual participants were more in agreement that they perceive training and leadership opportunities are equitably offered in their workplaces. Also with this subcategory, the belief of funding incentives impacting gender equity in the workplace revealed that heterosexual participants and LGBTQ+ participants were significantly different. This shows LGBTQ+ participants are more in agreement as they believe funding incentives have impacted gender equity in their workplaces.

Table 5.15 Sexuality as the Independent Dependent Variable

Questions	Heterosexual Individuals	LGBTQ+ Individuals	t	p-value (1-tailed)
Q2 The football industry is a male-dominated industry	4.33 (.870)	3.71 (1.38)	2.00	0.002
Q3_1 Gender impacts role in organisation	4.07 (.982)	3.71 (1.19)	1.60	0.056
Q3_5 Both males and females are treated equitably within the workplace.	3.60 (1.09)	3.43 (1.33)	.684	0.247
Q8_1 Gender has impacted the chances of earning a promotion within the workplace	3.14 (1.06)	2.82 (1.01)	1.40	0.084
Q3_2 There are barriers around promotion within the workplace	2.63 (1.33)	2.73 (1.45)	-.323	0.374
Q3_3 There are barriers around the pay gap within the workplace	2.67 (1.22)	2.64 (1.30)	.139	0.889
Q3_4 There are training and leadership opportunities equitably offered in the workplace	3.75 (1.18)	3.27 (1.12)	1.84	0.034
Q3_6 I have the resources from leadership staff to progress equitably to peers in the workplace	3.91 (1.09)	3.77 (1.19)	.574	0.283
Q7_1 I can progress quickly if I work hard in my workplace due to the gender equity initiatives, schemes, and or quotas my employer follows	3.60 (1.02)	3.65 (1.27)	-.199	0.422
Q10_1 Sport policies have impacted gender equity in the workplace	3.10 (.963)	2.86 (1.04)	1.11	0.133
Q10_2 Funding incentives have impacted gender equity in the workplace	2.83 (.958)	3.36 (.848)	-2.55	0.006
Q10_3 Organisational initiatives have impacted gender	3.04 (1.07)	3.05 (.844)	-.010	0.461

equity in the workplace				
Q6_1 Legislation is visibly followed in the workplace	4.33 (.869)	3.71 (1.38)	2.00	0.029
Q6_2 The language in legislation is appropriate for the workplace	4.07 (.982)	3.71 (1.19)	1.60	0.056
Q6_3 The workplace goes beyond the expectations of legislation	3.60 (1.09)	3.43 (1.33)	.684	0.247
Q10_4 Employment legislation has impacted gender equity in the workplace	3.14 (1.06)	2.82 (1.01)	1.40	0.054

Notes: for heterosexual and LGBTQ+ individuals, the values displayed are the means and, in brackets, the standard deviations; t and p-values for independent sample t-tests.

In subcategory four, there were no significant differences around employment legislation impacting gender equity in the workplace. Where there was a significant difference was with Q6_1 in the belief that legislation is visibly followed in the workplace. The results showed in Table 5.14 that the scores for heterosexual participants and LGBTQ+ participants were significantly different. This means heterosexual participants were in higher levels of agreement that they believe legislation is visibly followed in their workplaces.

Participants' ages for the majority were between 18-34 years old. 15% of participants fell out of this category being aged 35+. As there were multiple age categories, with justifiable representation throughout, a series of one-way ANOVAs occurred (Table 5.16). The first subcategory around gender as an impacting factor found no significant variances. However, in barriers for subcategory two, there were differences between those aged 18-24 and 35-44, in that there were different levels of agreement that there were barriers around the pay gap within their workplaces.

Table 5.16 Age as the Independent Dependent Variable

Questions	18-24	25-34	35-44	45 or older	Prefer not to say	F	p-value
Q2 The football industry is a male-dominated industry	1.21 (.408)	1.16 (.368)	1.11 (.318)	1.18 (.390)	1.00 (.000)	.717	0.581
Q3_1 Gender impacts role in organisation	2.52 (1.33)	2.61 (1.31)	2.98 (1.23)	2.50 (1.23)	1.67 (1.16)	1.44	0.219
Q3_5 Both males and females are treated equitably within the workplace.	4.19 (1.17)	4.06 (1.19)	3.76 (1.35)	3.96 (1.14)	2.75 (1.50)	2.14	0.075
Q8_1 Gender has impacted the chances of earning a promotion within the workplace	2.13 (1.14)	2.29 (1.12)	2.57 (1.19)	2.04 (.980)	3.25 (.957)	2.16	0.073
Q3_2 There are barriers around promotion within the workplace	2.53 (1.27)	2.67 (1.36)	2.73 (1.41)	2.82 (1.28)	2.75 (1.50)	.337	0.853
Q3_3 There are barriers around the pay gap within the workplace	2.40 (1.50)	2.68 (1.25)	3.07 (1.29)	2.81 (1.00)	3.75 (1.26)	.337	0.015
Q3_4 There are training and leadership opportunities equitably offered in the workplace	3.66 (1.18)	3.86 (1.10)	3.51 (1.33)	3.33 (1.27)	3.00 (.816)	2.27	0.061
Q3_6 I have the resources from leadership staff to progress equitably to peers in the workplace	4.06 (.922)	3.99 (1.05)	3.60 (1.16)	3.43 (1.35)	2.50 (1.00)	4.71	0.001
Q7_1 I can progress quickly if I work hard in my workplace due to the gender equity initiatives, schemes, and or quotas my employer follows	3.83 (.986)	3.64 (1.02)	3.29 (1.11)	3.22 (.934)	3.25 (.500)	3.17	0.014
Q10_1 Sport policies have impacted gender	3.02 (1.04)	3.03 (1.01)	3.13 (.842)	3.36 (.780)	2.75 (.500)	.872	0.481

equity in the workplace						
Q10_2 Funding incentives have impacted gender equity in the workplace	2.82 (.980)	2.83 (.980)	2.80 (.944)	3.29 (.810)	3.00 (.000)	1.55	0.190
Q10_3 Organisational initiatives have impacted gender equity in the workplace	2.94 (.907)	3.05 (1.10)	3.02 (1.14)	3.29 (1.01)	2.75 (.500)	.653	0.625
Q6_1 Legislation is visibly followed in the workplace	4.26 (1.03)	4.39 (.832)	4.14 (.889)	4.04 (1.08)	4.50 (1.00)	1.41	0.230
Q6_2 The language in legislation is appropriate for the workplace	4.26 (.959)	4.10 (.965)	3.70 (.978)	3.69 (1.16)	4.00 (.816)	3.21	0.013
Q6_3 The workplace goes beyond the expectations of legislation	3.69 (1.13)	3.63 (1.11)	3.41 (.972)	3.38 (1.20)	3.50 (1.00)	.751	0.558
Q10_4 Employment legislation has impacted gender equity in the workplace	3.11 (1.03)	3.11 (1.08)	2.93 (1.07)	3.26 (.984)	2.75 (.500)	.550	0.699

Notes: for the different age groups, the values displayed are the means and, in brackets, the standard deviations; F and p-values for one-way ANOVAs.

The third subcategory also had two questions with significant differences. Q3_6 (resources from leadership staff to progress equitably to peers in the workplace) results showed a variance between groups as demonstrated by the one-way ANOVA, shown in Table 5.16. Post hoc analysis using Tukey's HSD showed participants aged between 18-24 compared to participants aged 45 or older, and those who prefer not to say, had higher levels of agreement (respectively $p = .029$ and $p = .019$). Additionally, those aged between 25-34 had significantly higher scores compared to those aged 45 or older ($p = .078$) and to those who preferred not to say ($p = .050$). This suggests participants aged over 45 feel they do not have the resources from leadership staff to progress equitably compared to peers in their workplaces. Additionally, Q7_1 (I can progress quickly if I work hard in their workplace due to the gender equity initiatives, schemes, and or quotas my employer follows) results showed a statistically significant difference between groups as

demonstrated by the one-way ANOVA, which can also be found in Table 5.16. Post hoc analysis using Tukey's HSD showed participants aged between 18-24 compared to participants aged between 35-44, and aged 45 or older had significantly higher scores (p = .040 and p = .056 respectively), indicating younger participants are in more agreement they believe they can progress quickly if they work hard in their workplaces due to the gender equity initiatives, schemes, and / or quotas their employers follow.

In the last subcategory regarding legislation, there was only one instance of significant difference. Q6_2 (the language in legislation is appropriate for the workplace) results showed a statistically significant difference between groups as demonstrated by the one-way ANOVA in Table 5.16. Post hoc analysis using Tukey's HSD showed participants aged between 18-24, compared to participants aged between 35-44 (p = .025), and aged 45 or older (p = .084), had higher levels of agreement around believing the language in legislation is appropriate for their workplaces.

5.4. Chapter 5 Summary

This chapter has presented the results and analysis from Phase One of this study from utilising the quantitative data generated from the online survey. A series of independent t-tests and one-way ANOVAs were used to analyse the perceptions around identities to see if there were significant differences in terms of sport policies, funding, and initiatives making an impact, as well as if there are any links to be made cross-nationally. This allowed the research team to address both RQ1 (within football clubs, how are employees perceiving gender equity efforts, and does this vary cross-nationally?) and RQ2 (how aware are employees within football clubs of policies, funding incentives, organisational initiatives, and legislation around gender equity, and do they consider them appropriate?). From the four subcategory themes, key findings indicated that there are disparities between female and male participants, as well as differences between countries, around the impact of DEI efforts. Additionally, there were disparities in relation to the intersectional identities found. The key results regarding intersectional identities include those who identify as an ethnic minority member, and they believe gender equity initiatives are working to allow them to progress in their own careers. Additionally, older

participants varied to the majority with indicating they do not feel efforts are adequate. In Chapter 6, Phase Two will occur through analysis of coding and theming from the 14 interviews conducted.

6. Research Phase Two Data Analysis

6.1. Introduction

Chapter 6 outlines the data analysis from Phase Two of the study in which 14 interviews were conducted. Interviews took place via the communication software Zoom. From Zoom, they were recorded and transcribed verbatim. In total, there were 109,137 words of typed interview transcripts. The purpose of qualitative data analysis within a mixed-method design is to cross-check or 'triangulate' results that may have been initially found, working supplementarily, to confirm answers to the research questions posed (Demetriades, 2007). All interview data were analysed through NVivo 12, following procedures of a thematic analysis. To conduct a thematic analysis, one must systematically identify, organise, and offer insight into the established patterns (and / or themes) across the data set (Braun et al., 2019). At the end of analysis for Phase Two, data saturation occurred, with information repeating itself (Sparkes, 2014). With prior topics being initially established from the research questions in this study, analysis of themes and codes occurred through following Teddlie and Tashakkori's (2009) approach to sequential mixed-method and thematic analysis. Initial analysis began through defining two themes for each prior topic. This chapter provides specific details around the analysis of Phase Two.

6.2. Interview Sample Profile

Table 6.1 provides an outline of the demographics for interview participants who agreed to contribute to Phase Two of the study. An initial goal of conducting at least 8 interviews was set, with accounting for half males and half females. The total sample for these semi-structured interviews consisted of 14 employees, surpassing the initial minimum target. Highlighted in Chapter 4, participants were purposively sampled after agreeing during Phase One to similarly engage further with the study during Phase Two. From the sample, an attempt was made to get a fair representation of both genders. This was considered successful, as the sample consisted of 6 females and 8 males. To continue a cross-national comparison, an attempt was made to represent at least one male and one female from each country involved. This was not successfully met; however, this can be justified

as the total goal for interviews was overachieved. It is acknowledged that equal representation was not met with participants from all four countries, and is considered a limitation discussed later in Chapter 8 of this thesis. However, as a way to mitigate the non-equal representation, results from Phase One's quantitative results can supplement the non-equal representation, as there is greater balanced demonstration. There were only two age groups involved in Phase Two, with groups ages 18 – 24 and 25 – 34 equalling each a total of 14 participants. Most participants identified as being white (*n*=9). The additional races that were recognised included Black or African American *(n*=3) and Other (*n*=2).

Table 6.1 Interview Participant Demographics

Females				
Identifier	**Country**	**Age**	**Race**	**Sexuality**
Female 1	England	18 - 24	Black or African American	Heterosexual
Female 2	USA	18 - 24	White	Heterosexual
Female 3	USA	25 - 34	White	Heterosexual
Female 4	USA	25 - 34	White	Bisexual
Female 5	USA	18 - 24	White	Heterosexual
Female 6	USA	18 - 24	White	Bisexual
Males				
Identifier	**Country**	**Age**	**Race**	**Sexuality**
Male 1	Canada	25 - 34	White	Heterosexual
Male 2	Canada	18 - 24	White	Heterosexual
Male 3	England	18 - 24	White	Heterosexual
Male 4	England	25 - 34	White	Heterosexual
Male 5	USA	25 - 34	Other	Heterosexual
Male 6	USA	25 - 34	Other	Heterosexual
Male 7	USA	25 - 34	Black or African American	Heterosexual
Male 8	USA	18 - 24	Black or African American	Heterosexual

To evaluate the variation of effectiveness for DEI initiatives, it is also important to highlight the roles and departments participants are employed in. Table 6.2 is a visual representation from information shared during initial introductions occurring at the beginning of the semi-structured interviews. The most common roles of participants were in both sales and marketing. A majority of participants (*n*=12) came from leagues in the top tiers within their domestic football structures. Two others came from the second tiers of the professional game. A total of 4 participants came from clubs with both a men's and women's senior squad. Additionally, there was one participant working directly for a women's only team within the NWSL.

Table 6.2 Participants Roles and League Affiliations

Identifier	Role	League
Female 1	Female Engagement Coordinator	English Premier League & FA Women's Super League
Female 2	Insight Sales Representative	Major League Soccer
Female 3	Manager Sponsorship Fulfilment	Major League Soccer & National Women's Soccer League
Female 4	Manager Broadcast & Production	Major League Soccer
Female 5	Sales Associate	United Soccer League
Female 6	Sales Account Executive	National Women's Soccer League
Male 1	Accounting Executive Sales	Major League Soccer
Male 2	Marketing and Media Coordinator	Major League Soccer
Male 3	Marketing Assistant	English Premier League
Male 4	Partnership Manager	English Premier League
Male 5	Multimedia Production	Major League Soccer & National Women's Soccer League
Male 6	Communications Manager	Major League Soccer & National Women's Soccer League
Male 7	Community Relations Coordinator	Major League Soccer
Male 8	Operations Assistant	United Soccer League

6.3. General Description of Data

Following processes that occurred in Phase One, an initial form of data screening occurred to help organise themes and codes from the transcripts. An interview topic guide was used during the semi-structured interviews (Appendix 4) to ensure that the researchers' questions were consistent with the associated study aims. In total, the interview consisted of eight questions, with five being utilised for this study. The three questions not used focused around interviewees' current employers and positions they work in, how diversity was taught to them, and what professional aspirations (promotions and raises) they aspire to see in their careers. A breakdown of each interview question utilised for this study in relation to the research questions can be found below in Table 6.3.

Table 6.3 Research and Interview Questions Outline

RQ1: Within football clubs, how are employees perceiving gender equity efforts, and does this vary cross-nationally?	*Q3(a):* What does diversity, inclusion, and gender equity look like in the sport industry from your perspective as an employee? *Q3(b):* How do you feel the sport of football specifically handles it? *Q4(a):* How do you feel your workplace handles diversity, inclusion, and gender equity? *Q4(b)* How do you think it's being viewed by other colleagues?
RQ2: How aware are employees within football clubs of policies, funding incentives, organisational initiatives, and legislation around gender equity, and do they consider them appropriate?	*Q6(a):* What do you think is the best approach to diversity, inclusion, and gender equity in football workplaces? *Q6(b):* Should it be compliance based?
RQ3: What do employees think is the best approach to achieve gender equity, and who is responsible for implementing, measuring, and monitoring it?	*Q7(a):* Whose responsibility do you feel it is to promote diversity, inclusion, and gender equity through your workplace and the football industry? and why? *Q7(b)* How do governing bodies (such as leagues) or domestic governments come into play with these? *Q7(c)* Do you believe the football industry needs its own set of policies and laws? If so, what does this look like? *Q8(a):* Is diversity, inclusion and gender equity monitored or measured in your workplace? *Q8(b):* Do you believe there are any best practices to this?

Supporting the initial findings in RQ1, questions three and four were incorporated in the analysis to further elaborate on perspectives around gender equity in workplaces. While for RQ2, question six from the interview was used to contribute to initial findings established in Phase One, which gained insight around appropriateness of current activities towards gender equity. For RQ3, as this was not explored in Phase One, questions seven and eight from the interview were analysed to gain input to see if employees were aware of a best practice towards implementing and measuring gender equity. All these activities helped determine if there were any links that could be made cross-nationally. A form of deductive coding enabled the research team to follow Marshall and Rossman (2006)'s suggestions of using predefined themes established earlier in the study from Phase One.

Three prior topics were established from the research questions, and allowed what had previously been identified as confirming the first cut of understanding this phenomenon

(Ryan and Bernard, 2016). The prior topics included: perspectives of gender equity, employee awareness, and responsibility for best practice with DEI. Following the practices of both open and axial coding, each prior topic was given an additional two themes. This similarly had been done in works by authors such as Penney (2003), Sibson (2010), and Valenti (2019). The focus with the first prior topic was geared to understandings employees' perspectives around DEI. The two themes discovered were around 'Gender Roles' and 'Room for Improvement'. Priori topic two had a focus around the awareness and appropriateness to DEI efforts. The themes given were 'Promoting DEI' and 'Influencing Factors'. Lastly, Priori Topic Three catered to understanding perceived responsibility with diversity. The two themes were 'Accepted Practices' and 'Obligations'.

6.4. Stage Two Data Analysis Presentation and Interpretation of Results

Following Creswell's (2003) process to analyse qualitative data, transcripts were prepared, organised, and explored through various rounds of coding. This also occurred while developing ideas to thematically map, interpret, and report findings. Coding for this study occurred through the contextualising (holistic) strategy described by Teddlie and Taskakkori (2009). During the initial read through of transcripts, a set of open substantive codes were established. This allowed the team to sequence and organise the data to confirm identification of codes, which emerged with meanings around how the participants communicated their lived experiences with DEI in their workplaces.

After codes were originally constructed, processes similar to Shaw and Penney (2003), were followed through the use of coding techniques to organise data into manageable themes, contributing to answering the research questions. More specifically, after initial codes were established, axial coding occurred. This involved relating data together to reveal emerging themes, and organise them into themes and codes, creating linkages between the data (Allen, 2017). As qualitative research often receives criticism around bias, quality-assurance strategies were implemented, such as a review of codes by several members of the research team (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

The anonymity of respondents for this study was ensured prior to interviews. Therefore, labels have been used to replace the names of individuals with just their preferred genders and geographic locations. Table 6.4 showcases all priori topics, themes, and codes discussed in this chapter.

Table 6.4 Research Questions and Theme Outlines

RQ1: Within football clubs, how are employees perceiving gender equity efforts, and does this vary cross-nationally?	
Priori Topic 1	Employee Perspectives Around Gender Equity
Main Theme 1	Gender Roles
Code 1	Consciousness
Code 2	Gender Prevalence
Main Theme 2	Room for Improvements
Code 1	Proposed Consistencies
Code 2	Holistic Representation
RQ2: How aware are employees within football clubs of policies, funding incentives, organisational initiatives, and legislation around gender equity, and do they consider them appropriate?	
Priori Topic 2	Employee Awareness and Appropriateness
Main Theme 1	Promoting DEI
Code 1	Acknowledging Efforts
Code 2	Tools Used
Main Theme 2	Influencing Factors
Code 1	Established Priorities
Code 2	Proactive Versus Reactiveness
RQ3: **What do employees think is the best approach to achieve gender equity, and who is responsible for implementing, measuring, and monitoring it?**	
Priori Topic 3	Responsibility for Best Practice with DEI
Main Theme 1	Accepted Practices
Code 1	Compliance
Code 2	Reporting Transparency
Main Theme 2	Obligations
Code 1	Internal
Code 2	External

6.4.1. Priori Topic 1: Employee Perspectives Around Gender Equity

Table 6.5 provides an overview of Priori Topic 1, with two main themes, and the individual codes derived from them for analysis.

Table 6.5 Priori Topic 1 Outline

Priori Topic 1: Employee Perspectives Around Gender Equity	**Theme 1:** Gender Roles	**Codes:** 1. Consciousness 2. Gender Prevalence
	Theme 2: Room for Improvements	**Codes:** 1. Proposed Consistencies 2. Holistic Representation

As each research question was given an initial priori topic early in development of the study, RQ1 focuses on employee perspectives around gender equity activities within specific workplaces. The two themes for Priori Topic 1 that emerged included 'Gender Roles' and 'Room for Improvements'. For 'Gender Roles', this was built from a majority of interviewees commenting on gender prevalence in certain departments within their organisations. Additionally, surrounding roles, female participants also commented on the behaviours they find themselves following due to settings they are in throughout their workplaces. The established codes for 'Gender Roles' included 'Consciousness' and 'Gender Prevalence'. For the second theme, 'Room for Improvements', an additional two codes emerged around 'Proposed Consistencies' and 'Holistic Representation'. All interview participants referred to the idea that there is a great deal of work still needing to be done around dismantling gender discrimination. This sparked an extended conversation on interviewee input about the ways that could be used to resolve any DEI issues. The remainder of this chapter explains each of these themes and their allocated codes.

6.4.1.1.   Gender Roles (Theme 1)

To gain participants' perspectives regarding RQ1, initial interview questions were tailored to understand what DEI looks like, and how employees feel their workplaces promotes the subject. With gender roles being one of the most frequent factors mentioned, especially by females, it early on was established as main theme. It then was sub-divided into a further two codes: 'Consciousness' and 'Gender Prevalence'.

6.4.1.1.1.   Gender Roles: Code 1 Consciousness

Consciousness, as defined by Weisberg (2014:2), is "whatever causes verbal reports about how we feel, and focuses on a set of puzzling 'thought experiments' where steps lead us to philosophical worries to zero on an issue." Emerging as a secondary code, consciousness in this study had varying meanings for the two genders involved. Particularly for female participants, consciousness was observed when individuals shared the lived experiences in varying settings within their workplaces. Many females spoke on how their behaviours were forced to change as a result of their gender in workplace

settings. Female participants, also in numerous instances, indicated they had to "be aware" and "up-to-date" as a means to prove themselves as equally knowledgeable in comparison to their male counterparts. Acknowledging these altered behaviours, there was no direct blame towards males. In this regard, one female participant indicated:

"I think most males don't have a problem with women doing the same job as them anymore, I just think it is the little subconscious things." (Female 5, USA)

Through thematic analysis, a consensus was found between females that they all were aware of how gender impacts them in their workplaces differently. This opened room for exploration to understand why consciousness was a reoccurring barrier. This is not new for many women in sport business, as it has been previously researched by authors such as Shaw and Hoeber (2003) as well as Coleman (2019). This previous research has showcased how women in sport often feel obligated to wear clothes that suit more for attractiveness rather than comfort. Thus, the findings from this code confirm this as an ongoing gender inequitable area. Continuing on from the quote above, this participant went on to highlight expectations females have with being mindful of males in the workplace, varying from players to front office officials:

"being a girl left alone in a tent next to a concession stand where guys are drinking and they come and talk to you, you are having to bring that to my boss that I can't be seen standing there alone because that is not something that they process in their head as being an issue because they are not females… subconsciously they don't recognise that there might be, like you are not getting the same as them, you don't have the same advantage because they don't have that perspective." (Female 5, USA)

Indicating these subconsciously, "little" areas that are shared to not be experienced by male colleagues create considered disadvantages for female employees. Although consciousness for female participants focused on behaviours, males depicted this code differently, by highlighting why they perceive these phenomena to be an ongoing concern. Additionally, they spoke around how they believe they can use their roles as a source for change. When discussing reasons behind football issues with gender inequity, one participant spoke holistically and said:

"It's not surprising to me because when you think about it, who is represented when you think about soccer? It is like any sport. It is really all male. I don't think it is any surprise really that we suddenly look at the workforce." (Male 2, Canada)

Once initial explanations were made from male participants around how and why gender discrimination occurred, some individuals went further with describing how they see change. Every male interviewed alluded to the notion that everyone has a role, and the only individuals they have direct control over are themselves. Speaking around being part of a wider solution, a Canadian male participant shared:

"When I look around my department I see a lot of people who look like me and I can absolutely embrace change to make that a different scenario and I think at the same time it can only help us as a company." (Male 1, Canada)

Although a majority of female participants highlighted the attributes around needing to be aware of their gender in certain settings, one female interviewee described how her workplace was breaking these norms. The example she spoke around was her actual hiring, and where the club is making a conscious effort towards improving DEI internally:

"I got the job because they did need a female seller on their team, because the team was all male before I got there and kind of needing a female to round out that group really brought that." (Female 5, USA)

6.4.1.1.2. Gender Roles: Code 2 Gender Prevalence

With an agreement from all participants that their workplaces have not fully 100% achieved gender equity, interviewees explained where they believe the most common factors around inequity were to occur. Questions around the demographics of workplaces guided participants to shed light on the varying breakdowns throughout different departments. A code around gender prevalence was found, confirming studies conducted by Welford (2011) and Burton (2015), indicating that females often are found holding non-revenue and non-decision-making roles within sport organisations. All participants agreed that within their workplaces, there were teams that were more heavily populated by members of one gender versus the other. Initially highlighting females across the whole of their organisations, one individual stated:

"Sales is really just guys, I'll be honest. I could use probably one hand to count the number of females in the office compared to guys. It's a really small number of females in the workplace." (Male 8, USA)

Given the low representation of females holistically throughout the industry, some participants went further into detail explaining from the top-down where particular gender prevalence was especially significant. This was found around those holding leadership positions. One example of a statement included:

"I think your traditional team is a cliché way of saying things because you have guys on the Sales side and women on the Fulfilment side. The three of us on the Fulfilment side, not only are we females but we are all white and from an athlete background and we are very similar to one another and maybe that is why we were all hired because we are very similar." (Female 2, USA)

Confirming these gender prevalent areas within sport organisations, interviewees discussed how hindering the lack of representation can be detrimental to achieving gender equity. When discussing where female representation was in their teams, one respondent shared how there is a track missing toward women for the leadership pipeline:

"[females] are in the communication sector, not like the la la stuff but the stuff that necessarily doesn't position them to go on and be a general manager or go on to be a president or CEO in a club at equal or less level." (Female 4, USA)

Through acknowledging females are not always getting opportunities to engage and develop in ways to get themselves on a leadership pathway, an observation was made around the reproductive nature of the sport industry. Although all participants agreed there were areas within their organisations that were more prevalent, a few participants shared where their team was successful with enforcing and delivering diversity:

"small amount of women in that footballing side of things whether it is coaches, physios, academy staff but it was quite male dominated when you get to the training centre, but the operations team when you get to the training centre is diverse as well as at the stadium." (Male 4, England)

6.4.1.2. Room for Improvements (Theme 2)

Made visible in theme 1, all participants acknowledged an ongoing concern with gender inequitable practices occurring throughout the industry, with some specifically referencing

their own workplaces. Many participants enthusiastically shared how they perceive resolutions to occur going forward for gender equity in the sport industry. Following the format of semi-structured interviews, this allowed the questions to be stretched for uninterrupted discourse. This allowed the research team to explore in more detail the situations and events that need to transpire to foster DEI (Piggott, 2016). With various forms of insight and feedback for the future, theme two's focus around 'Room for Improvements' similarly followed the pattern of sub-dividing into two secondary codes: 'Proposed Consistencies' and 'Holistic Representation'.

6.4.1.2.1.   Room for Improvements: Code 1 Proposed Consistencies

Recognising the need to address gender discrimination within the football workplace, participants shed light on where activities should proactively occur, from utilising resources such as learning materials, as well as redefining the workplace culture. A majority of interviewees highlighted there was a lack of effort to address DEI topics prominently prior to the 2020 BLM protests following the death of George Floyd. Common examples of practice were through organisational initiatives and policies. However, the actual effectiveness of them was put into question. As workplace culture is not considered gender neutral, but rather as spaces with deeply embedded notions of gender, where men are privileged, and women are disadvantaged (Williams et al., 2012), many participants felt discrimination was prevalent in their own workplaces, and needed to be addressed from the top-down. Understanding that gender-inclusive workplace cultures create a positive social climate for people of all identities, and can be cultivated through practices such as increasing the representation of women and non-binary people in leadership, feedback was given around what organisational changes were necessary (Kang and Kaplan, 2019). This is illustrated by Male 7 in the quote below.

"policies and procedures are great but they need to fit other things that needs changed in the organisation in order to fully address the lack of people of colour in the office and the lack of women as well." (Male 7, USA)

Putting further into question the actual impacts and efficiencies of DEI practices, participants highlighted a need to "build frameworks", as it can be considered easy to say employers want to make change, however actual implementation of change is another

factor, with timelines and accountability. A few participants shared how their employers had introduced DEI early in their times with the clubs, through activities in orientation and all-staff training. Although these efforts are considered progressive in comparison to clubs that do not address these subjects regularly, participants suggested a greater call to action from all employers:

"It's always educated from the beginning, but it's not educated in the fact that it's continuous. It's not like they are continuing to go into their management and go into their leadership people quarterly or even biannually to say, hey, make sure you are not using this language, make sure you're not doing this. I've noticed from an employee perspective and from my leadership team, while they are great guys and great leaders, we all almost think we are so great at it that it is not an issue that affects us." (Female 4, USA)

Continuing on from the quote around how leadership staff often find themselves believing that current efforts are appropriate, many participants employed under these managers made comments around being concerned their teams do not see room for development. This was a concern, as participants believed it was due to the nature of lack of experience with forms of discrimination themselves. Many shared their leadership teams followed the hegemonic reproductive nature of the industry, and suggested a need to gain stronger narratives from marginalised groups in society more frequently:

"I think we decide what we think people want in terms of equality and diversity and what we think people need to hear, and see and be able to do and we don't necessarily ask enough. I think we would be better to speak to the people who are affected by these issues and then make decisions more upon those opinions." (Male 3, England)

6.4.1.2.2.   Room for Improvements: Code 2 Holistic Representation

The slogan 'if she can't see it, she can't be it' has been especially prevalent through marketing campaigns to promote women and girls in sport. Supporting this idea, many participants emphasised the significance around a need of action to push for female leader visibility holistically throughout their workplaces. Holistic representation occurs when all business, sporting, and organisational activities are equally embodied with representation of all genders, ranging from front-office staff, paid players, access to resources, involvement with major decision-making, and media outputs (Burton, 2015). Female participants shared that the digital content around their workplaces typically did

not represent their personal identities. There were some statements where individuals spoke around how their marketing teams promote diversity through social media for fan groups. However, this was not necessarily prevalent internally within the organisations. When discussing where representation was being missed, and where it should be introduced in the future, interviewees stressed that it was through more female players and executives in all workplace settings, ranging from the physical board room, to actual stadium billboard signage:

"there is more that you can do. More adverts involving females than males. More roles for females…More adverts and posters around the stadium with females on it." (Female 1, England)

With these suggested examples of representation through advertisements, some participants highlighted other sports which have pioneered changes in these areas, in which football could replicate and follow. Continuing on from Burton (2015), theories around holistic representation and arguments around roles outside of the front office were shared. The idea of using female leaders who work on the football operations side was suggested, as the ideal starting point for decision-making promotions, in which these leaders could continue to challenge industry norms.

"I think soccer and basketball have been leading the way and the WNBA has been great for women's sports overall and the fact that there are more female coaches now in the NBA and there should be more female coaches in the football industry whether it is in the Premier League or MLS or CPL [Canadian Premier League]*, there just needs to be more support given and more opportunities given to female athletes and female leaders."* (Male 1, Canada)

One of the most common examples around how gender equity has been addressed was through participants sharing how football clubs have committed to efforts, through 'a one club, one team' mentality, with bringing a women's senior squad under the club umbrella. Participants valued these activities, as it was not just internal 'talk' around commitment within the front-office setting, but instead acknowledged the women's side of the professional game, having a great deal of opportunity in the future. It has been argued that demonstrating unity can naturally help the industry evolve to become more diverse according to some of the participants:

"when NWSL teams are attached to their MLS counterpart, I think that is one of the bigger things they can do to handle those issues, to show unity like how Portland has done and how they kind of market everything together and things like that. Portland will put football Thorns players on the same poster as Timbers players or have a Timbers player in a Thorns jersey[3]. Those kinds of things show most unity overall and it's the best way to make a cohesive organisation." (Female 5, USA)

Priori Topic 1's main findings about employee perspectives around gender equity are summarised in Table 6.6.

Table 6.6 Priori Topic 1 Main Findings

• Theme 1's 'Gender Roles' was built from a majority of interviewees commenting on the gender prevalence in certain departments within the organisation.   • Many female participants commented on the behaviours they follow due to certain settings they are based in throughout their workplace.   • All participants alluded to the idea that there is a great deal of work needed to be done around dismantled gender discrimination, and sparked conversation on input of ways to resolve these issues.

6.4.2. Priori Topic 2: Employee Awareness and Appropriateness

Table 6.7 provides an overview of Priori Topic 2, with two main themes, and the individual codes derived from them for analysis.

Table 6.7 Priori Topic 2 Outline

Priori Topic 2: Awareness and Appropriateness	**Theme 1:** Promoting DEI	**Codes:** 1. Acknowledging Efforts 2. Tools Used
	Theme 2: Influencing Factors	**Codes:** 1. Established Priorities 2. Proactive Versus Reactiveness

The priori topic developed for RQ2 focuses on employee awareness and appropriateness towards gender equity efforts in workplaces. During Phase One, initial findings suggested a differing perspective around the effectiveness of practices aiming at achieving gender equity. From the questionnaire analysis, a majority of male participants believed they could progress equally from factors like workplace initiatives, as well as domestic legislation. The opposite was found however for female participants, as the majority believed current practices were not impactful, and needed revision. Through the semi-

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[3] In the city of Portland there are two professional football teams that compete. The Portland Thorns are affiliates in the National Women's Soccer Team, while the Portland Timbers are a part of Major League Soccer. Both the Portland Thorns and Timbers are owned by Merritt Paulson and compete at Providence Park.

structured interviews, Priori Topic 2 was established to advance the understanding of what levels of awareness employees have about specific DEI organisational efforts, and why there was such a variance between genders and countries.

Following the format from the previous section, two primary themes emerged from the interviews. These main themes included 'Promoting DEI' and 'Influencing Factors'. For 'Promoting DEI', this was built from several examples participants shared, ranging from physical campaigns to organisational resources. Codes were established, including 'Acknowledging Efforts' and 'Tools Used'. The second main theme focused around 'Influencing Factors', which was constructed based on examples shared during interviews. In some instances, participants highlighted the factors that were causing shifts to challenge discriminative practices. Additional codes that were addressed included 'Established Priorities' and 'Proactive Versus Reactiveness'. The topics for theme two will be highlighted further in the sections below.

6.4.2.1. Promoting DEI (Theme 1)

Exploring the perspectives of awareness and appropriateness through Priori Topic 2 began with the first main theme of 'Promoting DEI'. The statements participants made around how they viewed DEI being implemented were addressed to help gain an understanding as to why males responded more positively in the initial phase. To confirm and further investigate participants' awareness, 'Promoting DEI' became apparent through discussions, as participants specifically shared that they felt a greater need to promote the awareness of DEI in their workplaces. Additionally, conversations around future development were also made apparent. Varying between genders and countries, the theme was divided into codes: 'Acknowledging Efforts' and 'Tools Used'.

6.4.2.1.1. Promoting DEI: Code 1 Acknowledging Efforts

From results in Phase One of this study, a confirmation was made that the majority of participants were aware of some forms of DEI efforts in their workplaces. Also confirmed is the notion that male participants are in higher levels of agreement that the tools in place are working and appropriate, which is a significantly different perspective from their

female counterparts. Through Phase Two's semi-structured interviews, an objective to further explore why participants' perspectives varied by gender was explored. Additionally, as there were several variances between nations in Phase One, a further attempt to investigate why participants from certain countries may believe their systems are effective compared to others was also explored. Focusing initially on acknowledgments made broadly about DEI, there were confirmations from male participants on attentiveness of activities within their organisations. When asked if things could be better offered in their workplaces, one participant indicated:

"No, I think they do a good job already just on my perspective and my experience. It seems, like I said, it is definitely part of the culture at these clubs, so probably a bigger part than a lot of things. So, no, so far I think they have been doing well." (Male 5, USA)

Similarly, in another interview, another US male participant expounded on this notion, indicating that the current DEI systems operating in his club workplaces are effective, and should be considered a form of 'best practice'. The participant shared that if there were issues within his workplace, he trusted the leadership staff to have addressed concerns from the top-down:

"It works! I'm sure if there was an issue I'm sure, whether it be the president or whoever would be the best person for that, would address it, but it hasn't got to that point so I've never really thought about it." (Male 6, USA)

Comparably in England, both male participants commented on how effective their clubs' DEI practices were. English males acknowledged the specific campaigns and programmes that they had seen or been a part of during their time with the club. Through referencing the work of staff within their teams in-charge of all DEI efforts, comments were made around strategic plans and department objectives. Both English male participants at some point within their interviews alluded to recognising the 'Equality Standard' as their club engaged with it. When describing efforts, one unique element a participant highlighted was how using objectives was monitored, and used to support his ongoing successes:

"I think all of our employees are very aware of diversity, equality and inclusion. We ran a massive campaign built around our slogan… Our general manager along with our quality partnerships manager and one of our operations executives, put together a plan every year and along with our community sports trust team implement that plan. Every department is included on that plan… there will be a number of objectives that are set each year and we need to boost this… each department will have a set of objectives that they need to implement in order to support the cause." (Male 3, England)

When asking female participants to clarify their thoughts acknowledging DEI efforts, there was considerably less enthusiasm regarding confirming effectiveness. Discussing her club's efforts within the English structure, Female 1 shared how resources were more frequently individual and virtual, thus not being fully engrained into dialogues with colleagues and stakeholders. She suggested this could be considered counterproductive at times, and how it has become more of a mainstream tick-box activity:

"It's an email reminder. We never really have conversation about it unless it gets brought up. It's just email reminders really I think they could do it more regularly. We could post more on Twitter about everything." (Female 1, England)

Female participants in the US also discussed virtual elements with companywide emails around DEI. When highlighting issues through virtual exchanges, many shared how their companies were missing tangible results. It was found between participants that due to the 2020 BLM protests, efforts became more prevalent. Interviewees discussed the plans that were aimed at creating change for more direct and impactful DEI progression. Within her own workplace, Female 4 shared that:

"I obviously just responded to all of those emails and I know a lot of other people responded and because there was a huge response they were like, ok let's get a group together and actually have more formal conversations rather than just floating in email land and have no central consensus… that's what motivated them to actually create something. You got an invite automatically if you took part of the conversation and then they opened it up... It's all companywide. Anyone can be part of it." (Female 4, USA)

The single participant working for an NWSL affiliate shared her perspectives on leadership, and the need for them listen more frequently to minority groups, and to further establish pipelines to help aid dismantling societal discrimination. Compared to other participants, Female 6 also spoke on how leaders need to take time to learn from the staff

below them about aiming to develop contingency plans. She indicated that currently this process is not in place. To resolve this for current and future practices, she shared:

"As long as you are bringing in people who live their life in that way and live their life in a thoughtful way not just about themselves but about minority communities. I think it is going to cause a culture shift and making sure that those voices are being heard within the organisation and not just silenced because they are too young or it is not their way." (Female 6, USA)

6.4.2.1.2.   Promoting DEI: Code 2 Tools Used

After participants shared their initial acknowledgements of DEI approaches, many extended discussions through highlighting the resources and tools they thought would be effective. There was an even split of responses around workplaces that currently have efforts in place, and others that are in need. Examples of already in-place efforts were described most frequently by males, thus echoing findings from Phase One of the study. The main types of tools used for these systems in place were around education and training. The two English male interviewees highlighted how the tools used were geared for a holistic club approach, meaning every department was expected to be involved in some capacity. They also shared that these included external stakeholders, such as partners, where they were asked to commit to the "same level" of respect at the forefront of the relationship. When sharing what these levels of effort looked like, one participant shared:

"I think campaigns like in general sport I think are the main focus… We run internal courses, training courses, … an inclusion and diversity charter and every time we got a new club partner they would have to sign up to it as well to say we respect your standards and we want to be on the same level." (Male 4, England)

With these types of tools, varying between campaigns and educational courses, the participant above did note how he believed there is room for development, especially around measuring and monitoring effectiveness. He reiterated the significance of this so that the industry can regulate and evaluate DEI efforts to make sure "everything is correct". Additionally, this same participant brought up further options to best support promoting DEI. These suggestions included more frequent open forums, as well as assessments, to make sure club officials are doing all that they can to dismantle

discrimination. Also referencing the 'Equality Standard', this is especially important, as the participant understood what current activities the English Premier League had in place. He shared that the 'Equality Standard' just merely scratches the surface, and needs revision. The other English male interviewed reiterated the importance of measuring and monitoring DEI, and spoke on how his club had used a third-party agency to review data around DEI. Uniquely however, the participant shared that the purposes of these activities were not necessarily to just promote DEI for the purpose of inclusion, but rather working more as a business strategy to help increase their relationships with consumers:

"they do a report every year and they look at what people think about clubs. When you look at inclusion being family orientated those sorts of characteristics that aren't seen as nice, almost coming up very high in a lot of those." (Male 3, England)

When referring to DEI tools used within the US football structure, many participants referred to special events, or season-long campaigns. Compared to England, the other countries did not have a resource like the 'Equality Standard', nor were they aware of how the English leagues operated around DEI. A few participants also highlighted that the US leagues have not discussed approaches with clubs, and have left teams to handle these subjects individually. For the clubs who had proactively been engaging with DEI, participants shared the importance of both an internal and external awareness of the industry. During Female 2's interview, she spoke on her employer running a series of book clubs for employees. She shared the objective of this was to get employees from all different departments to speak to one another. While the books' subjects varied to help guide professional development, she shared this strategy was effective in more ways than one. The participant also highlighted how she externally develops mission-driven relationships with partners, so they do not repeat the hegemonic patterns within the sport sector:

"constantly talking to executives from other companies and those companies are also dealing with the same sort of issues going on and not only with the pandemic but with societal issues and the stances that they are taking and one of the things that comes to mind … so just educating our own organisation." (Female 2, USA)

Although no specific tools were shared during the two Canadian interviews, both participants reiterated a need for new and evolving educational resources. Describing what could be considered similar to the resources in England, both shared concerns over organisational biases and the gender pay gap. There were similar levels of understanding about areas like gender quotas to address equity. However, when sharing how this could be done, Male 2 expounded further by acknowledging a need for a more permanent and accessible tool, such as a landing page on official employee servers. This idea, however, seemed unclear to the participant about how and where it would operate, additionally putting a responsibility from a top-down approach, with putting senior leaders in charge:

"I am not sure where that would live, if it is on our website or if it was on something else, just highlighting issues but also providing a chance for employees to give feedback if they see representational issues or they would like to see something else spoken out on and they could actually say something. Then senior management can read it and actually get the sense that that is something that is important to the staff." (Male 2, Canada)

6.4.2.2. Influencing Factors (Theme 2)

The second topic thematically addressed highlighted how the workplace had been shaped, which was defined as 'Influencing Factors'. The two codes confirmed for this theme included 'Established Priorities' and 'Proactive Versus Reactiveness'. These were considered important, as they shed light on how employees thought organisational priorities impact chances of DEI. Additionally, it allowed the researcher to observe if interviewees genuinely believed their workspaces were regularly addressing these areas appropriately or not. These two codes were labelled within 'Influencing Factors' due to the nature in which participants spoke on how practices shaped their workplaces. Mutual agreements were also recorded between participants about the argument that historically sport workplaces have not always made DEI a priority, many sharing how they have seen a real surge in attention in 2020 / second half of 2020.

6.4.2.2.1. Influencing Factors: Code 1 Established Priorities

Discussions around the fast, competitive nature of sport came up in some interviews. Turning a profit was ranked the highest priority by most individuals, meaning areas like corporate social responsibility (CSR) and DEI naturally were not organisational focuses.

Explaining why this is a reality, an idea around consumers' demands being less around DEI and more around winning was suggested. Adding to the idea that sport operates in a fast-paced environment, one female participant shared her experiences as:

"Since I've started I'm always saying I am running after train that is going a million miles a minute, so I think sometimes it is a little bit lost and I think now more than ever this topic is extremely important to discuss…I think everyone is trying to learn through this but it is definitely something that we can improve on." (Female 2, USA)

The nature of the business of sport has been referenced by Byon and Zhang (2019:291), indicating it has a "demand for well-trained personnel who possess specialized knowledge and are responsible for operating sport programs […] within a highly competitive market environment" as it is considered intangible, ephemeral, experiential, subjective, heterogeneous, inconsistent, unpredictable, and dramatic. From the interviewees' statement above, a confirmation to theory is also found that DEI within sport is not (and has not become) a priority. In one instance, when directly describing awareness of DEI, a participant shared he believed it was "passive", and became easy to forget, especially with campaigns and initiatives, as employees already have their own sets of goals or targets for the year. All participants acknowledged COVID-19 had impacted their workplaces and roles. Relating to the research question at hand, some spoke on how the pausing due to the global pandemic worked as a reflecting point for the industry, putting a more prioritised focus on DEI:

"we are very busy with day-to-day stuff …. I would say just within the past few months, normally as a company we are just go, go, go… We have live events that we do for concerts and whatnot and so there are always business priorities that need to be attended to and there isn't always... but not the priority to stop and reflect and try to understand how we can change for the better. When things are going well it is easy to say let's not fix what's not broken but I think through this pandemic or the Black Live Matter movement there has been renewed interest in." (Male 1, Canada)

Recognising from the quote above, this individual believed the sport industry tends to not "fix things" if not deemed broken, which supplementarily contributes to findings in Phase One that many male employees are aware of issues, but due to the revenue driven nature, priorities get lost in translation. This had left many marginalised groups to fall behind. Although a majority of participants believed there was a great need for improvement, and

that DEI was not adequately prioritised, one participant stood out, highlighting how he perceived these conversations as not being necessary anymore, alluding to the idea things would naturally change:

"I don't really know for sure because I don't know they'd work completely but just based on my perspective... just right off my head because I feel like, just in my experience, I haven't seen those things affect somebody's ability and therefore it doesn't make sense to me why somebody would hire somebody, maybe there are specific instances or places that may be..., but in my experience it seems like, I wouldn't say they are necessary in ways anymore or that I can think right this moment." (Male 5, USA)

6.4.2.2.2.   Influencing Factors: Code 2 Proactive Versus Reactiveness

While confirming priorities within their workplaces, participants also discussed the types of DEI practices their employers followed. Few spoke around activities that had been occurring for greater than 12 months, while the majority highlighted a drastic shift towards supporting DEI over the past 6-8 months at the time of the interviews (mid-2020). Acknowledging this, a theme was confirmed around observing the proactive and reactive nature of these topics within the industry. With leagues like the EPL applying systems like the 'Equality Standard' for 5+ years, it was expected that English interviewees would mutually understand and agree that the settings that they work out of have been considerably proactive. Although not all nine protected characteristics have equally been addressed throughout interviews, all English participants noted how gender equity has been at the forefront of their DEI efforts:

"I think obviously there are directives from the governing bodies in terms of the FA and Premier League and there are standards we need to meet which push us to be proactive on these things." (Male 3, England)

Proactiveness, however, was not commonly found as a theme for both Canada and the US. Interviewees who spoke on any proactive activities highlighted how their employer hosted events around 'women in sport' or had recognised task forces whose roles were made to address topics around DEI prior to the summer of 2020. Those who came from workplaces which delayed discussions around DEI shared how these conversations were not coming up prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, with the sport industry being forced to halt, it allowed clubs the opportunity to take a step back from normal business

operations. With the industry at a standstill, while the world tried to recover from the pandemic, many shared their individual reflections of how things should have been done prior to 2020:

"So it is important at time like this and we shouldn't have to wait until there is a larger movement to react. We should be a little bit more proactive in our approach. I think the awareness is there but the actual action of it is lacking a little bit in the proactive approach." (Male 1, Canada)

Reactive measures to gender in sport and business have been linked with the 2018 'Times Up' revamped movement that brought many cases of sexual discrimination to the forefront. Given all participants are in entry and middle management roles, with the average duration of employment between 1-2 years, it was hard to determine the impacts of reactiveness around the subject, as many would have not been employed in their current roles during the time of the 2017 demonstration. However, with the prominence of the 2020 BLM protests, in addition to the pandemic during interview times, reactiveness around racism was addressed throughout a majority of interviews. Various individuals spoke on how they felt their workplaces approached the subject, and how the world (not just in sport) was being forced more than ever to readdress these subject areas. With many throwing their hands in the air, acknowledging their workplaces had nothing in place prior to these occurrences, reactive story examples were told:

"The black lives matter stuff was definitely reactive for sure… hopefully in the future we can keep that in mind and become more proactive to a movement rather than reactive because I think proactive is what is going to change the environment and change the narrative because it just becomes part of the culture rather than a moment or a statement." (Female 6, USA)

Priori Topic 2 main findings about awareness and appropriateness are summarised in Table 6.8.

Table 6.8 Priori Topic 2 Main Findings

• The two main themes found were around 'Promoting DEI' as well as 'Influencing Factors'. • For Theme 1 'Promoting DEI' this was established through organising statements of how participants shared DEI was addressed and implemented within their workplaces. • With Phase One showing a majority of male participants expressing high levels of agreement, narratives from interviews further highlighted the specifics of how and why these occur and are considered appropriate. • Established Priorities' and 'Proactive Versus Reactiveness' were considered important with evaluating the appropriateness to DEI as it shed light as to why employees agree or not with what currently is in place.

6.4.3. Priori Topic 3: Responsibility for Best Practice with DEI

Table 6.9 provides an overview of Priori Topic 3, with two main themes, and the individual codes derived from them for analysis.

Table 6.9 Priori Topic 3 Outline

Priori Topic 3: Responsibility For Best Practice With DEI	Theme 1: Accepted practices	Codes: 1. Compliance 2. Reporting Transparency
	Theme 2: Obligations	Codes: 1. Internal 2. External

The final priori topic established was geared towards understanding perspectives around who holds responsibility for leading and overseeing DEI within workplaces. It additionally addressed what can be defined as 'best practices' within the industry. As there was data collection, or analysis, from Phase One for this priori topic, a total of three interview questions were dedicated to RQ3. This theme came last, as it became a reflection point at the end of interviews for participants to share their suggestions around necessary actions needed for the future. Establishing responsibility also allowed the research team to prepare recommendations from this thesis more adequately (varying from governing bodies to club ownership). The two themes constructed were 'Accepted Practices' and 'Obligations'. Through describing how DEI should be occurring within the industry, all participants highlighted what they would consider feasible. The most common suggestion focused on the need to minimise conflict, while making great forms of impact. 'Obligations' as the second theme became apparent when emphasising responsibility, and how it

should either be directed at institutions like leagues, or more internally within club leadership teams.

6.4.3.1. Accepted Practices (Theme 1)

With societal norms imposing role determinations for individuals around relationships and positional power (Shannon et al., 2019), changes were deemed essential around how the industry 'does gender'. Nonetheless, common discussions around barriers to change were addressed, highlighting the need to use tools and resources considered acceptable in workplace environments, such as football clubs. The accepted practices, which were thematically identified, revolved around mandatory, compliancy-based approaches. To support compliance-based methods, there was also a call for more transparency of reporting and distributing results. Within countries like England, where compliancy and reporting transparency have been occurring through the 'Equality Standard', positive arguments were made with agreements this is considered an appropriate starting point. However, in countries where there is less structure around DEI, a call for more action was made. Later during the discussion chapter of this thesis, these results will be compared to Phase One's findings in countries like England having such established protocols in place, however not being fully perceived as the whole solution.

6.4.3.1.1. Accepted Practices: Code 1 Compliance

Compliancy requires individuals to follow rules through policy, legislation, and or standards that are regularly monitored by governing institutions. The sport industry is no stranger to compliance, as it is ingrained in various areas. Examples include features like player salary caps, athlete bans on compensation, and governing body regulations of the game (such as the introduction of video replays). Within the area of DEI in football, there are no direct set of standards on how these practices should occur. Within each structure, governing bodies are required to abide by the domestic and / or international legislation, policies, and guidelines that are made apparent. With England's 'Equality Standard' as an example, organisations like The FA, The EFL, and The English Premier League follow the legal structure outlined in The Equality Act of 2010. When speaking about the 'Equality Standard', English participants shared how the practices towards DEI were not engrained

in mandatory league wide exercises, but instead varied club-to-club. When asked if this style works better compared to institutionalised, grounded guidelines, participants weighed the pros and the cons, speaking on how the leniency allows clubs to address specific issues they would like to prioritise. However, they also acknowledge the gaps in which their clubs do not currently touch on. To make sure in the future all areas within DEI are covered, one participant spoke on how a compulsory element was needed, as not all clubs are actively engaged:

"I think it should me mandatory… It should be mandatory then compared to optional... If it's optional people won't do it because they don't feel they have to and won't want to do it. They'd be like…, they don't need to do it or be educated on it." (Female 1, England)

Expanding further on the quote above around how this could become required, another English participant spoke on introducing penalties, as it has helped try to create a more balanced industry in other topics, such as financial fair play (FFP). When violations of compliancy occur, forms of punishment are enforced from regulations, such as FIFA, UEFA, or The FA. In one example a participant shared:

"I think in football, well and in sports typically there are penalties dished out for a lot of different things. Financial fair play for example within football if you don't comply, you know, like Man City have not been financially fair so they are going to get kicked out of Europe[4]. Chelsea have transfer bans and they are going to have this much money deducted from their income… not necessarily doing the wrong thing but it is not doing the right thing and maybe that is where the penalty system for all the other financial and branding exercises could move into the more good causes." (Male 3, England)

Across the Atlantic Ocean, both the US and Canadian participants correspondingly agreed with the concept of a need for a mandatory form of compliance. Similar arguments were made around penalty systems, and or consequences for clubs not fulfilling DEI policies. Adding onto the concept of punishments like financial fair play, one Canadian participant spoke around how new technological advancements in sport have been introduced, and can help support these areas as well:

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[4] The interview with Male Participant 3, England took place before the final decision in July 2020 that Manchester City FC would eventually not be banned from participation in European competitions.

"We've developed an infrastructure for sports to scout and measure data and performance on the field just as well, so they cannot do the same for men and women in our companies and organisations? I don't think there's an excuse why we shouldn't be doing it." (Male 1, Canada)

Continuing on with the idea that there is room to introduce and enforce new regulations around DEI, previously established attempts were also commented on, such as the NFL's Rooney Rule, and how they could similarly be introduced in the workforce to grow a larger pipeline of internal candidates. Those who were weary of these issues indicated they would only get resolved when more attention to DEI issues was made. If not, discrimination would continue to be prolonged, which reproduces the hegemonic nature of the industry:

"think some kind of legislation would be beneficial. I think as you see with any social justice or any social policy you can't just leave it up to people to just do it themselves. It may move a lot slower than you want it to or it may not actually get addressed. One good example is the Rooney Rule… You hate to make it seem like it is almost forced that people have to hire people of colour and people have to have certain policies and procedures but at the same time it has been decades …hopefully we can get to a point where legislation will not be needed to address all these issues." (Male 7, USA)

It was also highlighted in Chapter 3 how gender equity legislation has impacted American sport since the 1970s with the introduction of Title IX within collegiate sport. As it only directly impacts publicly funded institutions (such as universities and schools), professional and elite commercial sport has been minimally debated in this regard. In relation to the discussions around how DEI could legally be introduced through a compliance-based structure, some participants expounded on the idea of how Title IX could be introduced further into the commercial, professional side of football:

"I think if there was some sort of Title IX for the workplace that could be beneficial in terms of keeping people in check or kind of monitoring what goes on, because I feel there is not a lot around laws, you have to have a woman in the workplace and things like that could really be beneficial. I always feel there is always perspective change no matter what it is. I feel it would say a lot about an organisation based on how easily they take that compliancy, whether it's, oh yes that's no problem or if they fight back on it. I feel that says a lot about that organisation as a whole in the first place." (Female 5, USA)

6.4.3.1.2. Accepted Practices: Code 2 Reporting Transparency

Previous research has shown, that over the past decade, there has been a growing expectancy for public accountability in regard to improving DEI efforts. This has also been referred to as transparency (Joshi, 2013). Within this study, there was an increased call around expectancy and accountability for employers within the professional football industry. This became especially apparent through conversations around how the gender pay gap has been depicted, as well as uncovering the hidden biases around workplace discrimination and hiring exercises. With Priori Topic Three being motivated to understand the perceived 'best practices' towards monitoring and evaluating DEI, a theme around 'Reporting Transparency' was thematically constructed. English participants spoke around how their clubs engage with reporting for the 'Equality Standard'. In one instance, a participant shared how she believed data was collected through tools such as 'Survey Monkey', and spoke around how survey results were eventually made public to the workforce. The two other English participants were able to go further with their understanding around transparency. When discussing the reporting, a participant shared:

"Through reporting we have action points… once we have got action points on how we can promote different causes, every year we produce a report which says how well we did in each area or how well we didn't do it. That then obviously then feeds into the next year in our action points on how we turn our work to improve what we have done... We sort of assess why..." (Male 3, England)

Outside of England, not all participants were able to directly refer to action points around reporting. However, similar practices were suggested to help create an engrained culture, to produce a club 'bible' that everyone would have a responsibility to interpret. When asked around responsibility for surveys, action points, and cultural practices, English participants spoke on the need for decision makers to take or continue taking the lead. Within North America, there were no specific references around how DEI was measured, monitored, or reported. Though these practices were missing, an overarching agreement was found in support of establishing some form of monitoring resource. Support came with participants openly highlighting their lack of expertise on the matter with a lot of "I don't know" statements. Where there was certainty around current systems in place, there

was a consensus that these should only be considered as a building block going forward, and there was much work needing to be done. Additionally, there were statements referencing historically where improvements have been made:

"A lot has changed in 8/9 years so definitely they need more tests to measure and monitor how it is. It's dope to see people like you want to compare diversity and gender through our leagues and sports and stuff, we need more of that." (Male 8, USA)

When describing how a reporting tool could be established, one interviewee spoke around working groups which would allow more celebrations internally to occur, instead of just outwardly with consumers. Timelines were also an area brought up, as there were mixed opinions. Some opted for immediate evaluations of educational courses and training. Others were more future focused, acknowledging that COVID-19 was a unique time, and any data collected could differ from their typical operations. Nonetheless, the agreement was found that a demand for reporting transparency was there so that all stakeholders could modify their practices to better support DEI where necessary:

"I don't know how you would do a quarterly report, it doesn't have to be every quarter but at end of business year you kind of take stock off and it's part of some report that everyone can read." (Female 3, USA)

6.4.3.2.   Obligations (Theme 2)

Enforcement of regulations or reporting was also addressed by interviewees. To effectively understand responsibilities, this theme addresses the obligations perceived by employees within football workplaces. There were three types of stakeholder groups addressed when discussing the obligatory nature of DEI. The first type addressed was interviewees' individual commitments to promoting inclusion. However, as all participants held either an entry or middle management position in their clubs, suggestions around lack of authority were addressed. The two other stakeholder groups holding the most power were internal club representatives, consisting of leadership staff, while the other included external bodies, such as leagues, as well as governments.

6.4.3.2.1.   Obligations: Code 1 Internal

Each participant from interviews spoke around how specific workplaces handle DEI. Participants differentiated how their clubs operate as a single entity in comparison to the leagues they compete in. Interviewees seemed to compare and contrast thoughts around how they perceived their employer to have responsibility versus the governing bodies. Those who spoke more frequently around internal responsibilities additionally varied around which departments they felt were most accountable. Some spoke organisationally, highlighting a holistic approach was necessary to engage all staff from every role and department:

"everyone from the ground staff, the cleaners, through to admin, through to the part-time staff in the superstore, through to the first team manager, the chairman and the players. I think everyone at every club needs to be aware, be proactive and be responsible." (Male 3, England)

Expounding further, one individual spoke directly around companywide efforts being led by the head of human resources (HR) or the club President due to their high level of authority. Using HR as a space to promote DEI however also varied, as some supported this approach. However, those who disagreed indicated putting DEI on HR provides a negative connotation around promotion. With acknowledging COVID-19 being at the forefront of many HR leaders' agendas, there was discussion around how it could get lost in translation with so many additional issues, like the pandemic and furlough schemes occurring. When speaking about specific departments, such as 'Sales and Services', one individual suggested they should receive the guidance from people like the 'Director of Ticketing', as they already receive instructions from them on a day-to-day basis. Key themes around decision makers, especially within the front office, were also addressed. Supporting the notion of 'with power comes responsibility', respondents spoke on how efforts cannot just occur for the sake of saying they do:

"I think it needs to be at the highest level of ownership groups, General Manager and federation level decisions need to be implemented and need to truly not be just checking a box but need to be growing the game." (Female 3, USA)

In addition to the need for a top-down approach, there were also conversations around lower-level individuals needing to play a part. Participants labelled themselves as either 'advocates' or 'allies'. Another defining term was a 'DEI champion'. One participant spoke around this role needing to be done by someone who takes inclusion strategies, and implements them in traditionally hegemonic areas:

"It has got to be up to the individuals who create and set the policies and actually are in positions of decision making so if it is hiring managers making decisions on a job candidate from the C-level executives who are setting the policies for the company, it really falls on them more than it does the people at entry level position like myself but at the same time everyone has a role to play in being an ally and being a champion of change." (Male 1, Canada)

6.4.3.2.2.   Obligations: Code 2 External

In addition to responsibility around internal club stakeholders, extended discussion was made around the governing bodies, leagues, and governments. Conversations around sporting governing bodies particularly focused on institutions like The FA and FIFA. Within the North American interviews, there was little to no mention of governing bodies such as US Soccer or Canada Soccer. English participants, however, highlighted how The FA imposes promotions of DEI with offering opportunities with non-profit groups varying from grassroots to top competitive tiers:

"The FA would advise on what the clubs would do. The FA are the massive branch, so whatever the FA says we would have to replicate it and make it into our own way… We have Kick It Out... They do monthly or every two or three month events… The FA would come as one but the leagues because there are low leagues, high leagues and the highest is the Premier League. So the national league I think should be a standard here and from the leagues then again you can't argue and be like, it's between them and us, they may play higher but still play football." (Female 1, England)

Doing this however was considered a struggle shared by a few participants. The difficulties of compliance in place would come at a price of mainstreaming practices that could lead to varied responses club by club. In one example, an English club located in the South compared to a Northwest, such as Liverpool, one participant shared how factors like fan numbers, varying geographics, and global presence can make an impact. This was argued that potentially it could be very hard for governing bodies to adequately

impose something for all clubs across the country. Other groups with responsibility for implementing DEI were the leagues themselves. One participant went as far as stating "they have the highest level of responsibility" because of the authority around control of what clubs can do with community ties for minority groups across the world. Showing optimism around the subject, one participant considered this as an 'opportunity':

"I think they have a huge opportunity and their platform to make changes within not only the sports industry but soccer... I think the league has a huge responsibility right now to be very careful of what they are allowing clubs to do and not to do and how they are being seen within the community as well because we have a lot of younger eyes, probably on our sport more than other leagues and other teams do, especially in our community, it is really soccer based and driven. I think the league has to realise each team has to approach things a little bit differently because of their city and their market based on things involved and having that little bit of freedom is super important right now." (Female 2, USA)

Restated at the end of this quote is the argument clubs have to approach things sensitively, with keeping in mind the market variances between cities. Another US participant expressed her appreciation around how hard of a job this would be for the league, as it has the whole country as a market, compared to clubs in specific regions. Acknowledging this potential area of concern, one participant spoke on the idea of bringing club representatives together during league conversations to shape how DEI could be more proactively introduced. This was suggested as a way to avoid any clashes between clubs and the league going forward:

"I think something the league should do is to have people from multiple teams, from players to front office workers, be involved in a conversation widely about what we expect the league to be and look like… I am a big fan of committees because I think you are getting people from different places and different ideas, so structuring committees from the teams and different people within those teams having conversations would be a really big step to take, just building a place to talk about it league wide and not expecting the teams to do it." (Female 6, USA)

A last type of stakeholder group that was considered responsible for shaping and enforcing DEI was around domestic governments. Similarly to leagues and governing bodies, legislation was directly asked about during interviews. Compared to the two other groups, however, there was a common theme around unawareness of how domestic legislation comes into play in workplaces. Lacking any specific understanding around how

laws come into play with DEI within sport, participants were still able to shed light around how they perceive they can promote it going forward. Within England, participants were aware of the 'Equality Standard'. However, none of the participants were aware of how it was developed in line with The Equality Act of 2010:

"In terms of the Premier League…I think it is run very individually to government…there is government ruling and they have jurisdiction over the league but the Premier League is a completely different beast... In terms of government…I think some of the things they try to impose or promote come too late. They are not as forward thinking as they could be and they are not as up together with what is being done for example by clubs." (Male 3, England)

Priori Topic 3's main findings about responsibility for best practice with DEI are summarised in Table 6.10.

Table 6.10 Priori Topic 3 Main Findings

- As RQ3 focused on what employees believe is considered a "Best Approach" to gender equity, as well as who should be responsible, three interview questions in Phase Two were dedicated to breaking down specifics.
- Theme One "Accepted Practices" was determined after analysis of interviews, with interviewees speaking on what they consider practical ways to engage with DEI, as well as confirming how it can be monitored for future development.
- Examples of compliance-based approaches varied between domestic laws to specific league policies and objectives.
- Government discussions varied with those in America discussing a benefit of something like a Title IX in professional sport.
- Everyone spoke on the uniqueness of sport compared to governments, referring to sport as "a different beast."
- A majority did not have any knowledge on if/how measurements of DEI were done.
- Participants gave answers around both obligations internal to the club, and externally (through governing bodies like leagues and governments).

6.5. Chapter 6 Summary

This chapter has presented the results from the analysis of the qualitative interview data that has been generated in this study. Using the framework approach, thematic analysis was performed to identify the main overarching themes and associated codes related to the priori topics established prior to analysis, and constructed from the research questions of the study. The three-priori topics included: 'Perspectives of Gender Equity', 'Employee Awareness and Appropriateness', and 'Responsibility for Best Practice with DEI'. Within

each priori topic, two main themes were established following an inductive approach. Within each main theme, secondary codes were constructed. In exploring these themes, codes, and examples of quotes, the perspectives from employees provided a supplementary insight to support answering the three research questions at hand. The next chapter will depict results from both the quantitative and qualitative analyses, and will be integrated with explanations to interpret the findings and provide recommendations going forward.

7. Discussion

7.1. Introduction

Burton (2015) put forward a call for research to better understand how women respond to adversity, and how gender equity is promoted through systems like The Equality Standard and Title IX. To date, little is known around how these types of affirmative actions are perceived in the corporate, private sector of the sport industry, comparably to the not-for-profit sector. Although data and publications regarding gender equity in sport have revolved around areas of participation and coaching, there is an established gap concerning how discrimination is being addressed, measured, and monitored on the elite side of the game. In Chapters 2 and 3, a systematic review of the literature related to DEI and sport was undertaken. This review highlighted that there is a substantial deal of literature related to how gender has socially been constructed, and how it has impacted the sport industry for various stakeholder groups. The literature confirms that, overall, most men are supportive of gender equity, but others still find themselves complicit with the current patriarchal gender order, which can mean their support is only partial (Flood, 2015).

The purpose of this mixed-methods study was to reveal findings related to how employees within professional football clubs perceive the way their employers engage with diversity, inclusion, and gender equity initiatives. Particularly, these findings provided a stronger understanding around how varying identities (i.e., female compared to male) differently engage and recognise the efforts that are currently in place to address discrimination and promote equity. Better understanding of this allows the research team to provide insights for DEI practitioners around the employee perspectives, to see if there is more a positive or negative outlook. When assessing gender equity efforts, theory-based impact evaluation should occur following six key principles, including: mapping out casual chains, understanding context, anticipating heterogeneity, evaluation of impact using a credible counterfactual, rigorous factual analysis, and use of mixed-methods (White, 2009). Throughout this chapter, references to these six key principles will help determine recommendations for the future. This chapter contains discussion and research possibilities to help answer the study's research questions:

RQ1: Within football clubs, how are employees perceiving gender equity efforts, and does this vary cross-nationally?

RQ2: How aware are employees within football clubs of policies, funding incentives, organisational initiatives, and legislation around gender equity, and do they consider them appropriate?

RQ3: What do employees think is the best approach to achieve gender equity, and who is responsible for implementing, measuring, and monitoring it?

Research around institutional theory focuses on the fact that only a low number of qualified women apply for leadership positions due to the environments in which the sport industry operates (Ahn and Cunningham, 2020). As such, little is known about the effectiveness around attempts to promote diversity in professional football workplaces around the globe. It is important to recognise, however, there is not one single theory that can define such significant phenomena, and that they should be viewed from multiple lenses. The main purpose of the present chapter is to integrate and interpret the results from Chapters 5 and 6, while addressing the research questions. Additionally, the main findings will be discussed and compared to previous relevant theories and research. Significant results from the data that will be discussed include varying responses between genders and countries, suspected inadequate previous approaches, and industry leadership responsibilities.

7.2. Answering Research Question 1

In Chapter 3 of this study, the drivers around DEI initiatives in the football industry were outlined. Previous research around DEI efforts in sport indicated the hegemonic, reproductive nature of the industry, which marginalised many individuals with non-majority identities (women) (Burton, 2015; Lapchick, 1996; Cunningham and Sagas, 2008; Gaston et al., 2020). The momentum for DEI can arguably be constructed off recent drivers, such as The Equality Act of 2010 in the United Kingdom. RQ1 aimed to reconfirm previous exploratory work that defined inequitable issues. More specifically, this question reviewed how employees within clubs recognised the gender equity efforts that were put in place based on prior exploratory findings. This allowed the researcher to establish whether male and female employees would have mutual or different perspectives.

Establishing whether there are differences in perspectives between these genders allows researchers to determine if what currently is in place is positively received by employees. This is deemed an important element, as research shows that when this occurs, higher staff retention and increased productivity can be found, thus being a core factor in organisational success (Byrd and Scott, 2014). Additionally, following a cross-national structure, this research question establishes a baseline understanding around how employees within the private, corporate sector of sport compare to the not-for-profit sector in perspectives around their workplaces' commitments to DEI. Four hypotheses were associated with this research question, indicated earlier in Chapter 4:

Table 7.1 Research Question 1 Hypotheses

1. There will be significant differences in the perspectives between males and females around gender equity efforts.
2. There will be significant differences between the countries (England, Scotland, Canada, and the US). England and Scotland are projected to have the most consistent levels between males and females with having specific tools like The Equality Standard.
3. Females and males from England and Scotland will perceive gender equity efforts more positively compared to the US and Canada as they utilise The Equality Standard more frequently. Females in England and Scotland will identify tools and resources more clearly compared to those in US and Canada where they are not existent.
4. Intersectional identities will perceive gender equity efforts as a starting point, but will express lower levels of engagement with activities as they are typically built for white, straight, cis-women.

7.2.1. Ongoing Discrimination

Based on the historical nature of discrimination, it would be naive to assume that equity will be met through natural occurrences. Acker (1998) shares that privilege has been maintained by effective monopolies through production, in which it has to be addressed by intentional, specific forms to dismantle. Forms of affirmative action in corporate sport have only been initiated over the past few years due to movements like #MeToo and Black Lives Matter (BLM). Initial efforts to fight for change started when women placed gender issues on the public agenda (Flood, 2015). As sport entities wish to successfully approach DEI holistically throughout their organisations, Darvin et al. (2018) indicate primary efforts need to include evaluating the climate around internal bias, through forms of auditing and comparison. Following Darvin et al. (2018) suggestions of an audit, the

initial findings through Phase One, indicated that women still perceive their gender to work as a barrier even with systems in place.

The first question posed during Phase One looked to reconfirm the work of Norman and Rankin-Wright (2018) establishing if workplaces are still to be considered 'male-dominated' spaces. The latter are defined by the authors as environments that hinder diversity progression due to "gendered power relations that structured the development opportunities for progression in favour of men" (Norman and Rankin-Wright, 2018:439). The results from this question confirmed male-domination is still the situation. Results additionally showed 'male-domination' is considered an industry wide concern, with all countries demonstrating similar levels of agreement. Although similar responses were found for this first question on the survey, there were several areas where varying perspectives were identified. When determining employees' perceptions around equitable treatment and gender as impacting factors in their role, males were in more agreement that they believed their workplaces were gender equitable. In contrast, females responded they believed their gender did impact their roles, and it was not to be considered equitable.

To further investigate how and why these variances in perspectives could occur, questions were added around career factors like promotions and the gender pay gap. With findings that females are more in agreement that their gender creates barriers around promotion and pay, this gave two examples where they felt their gender impacts their roles most frequently. These findings are consistent with those of White and Brackenridge (1985), Dixon and Bruening (2005), Pfister and Radtke (2009), Adriannse (2016), and Hindman and Walker (2020), who also reported how many males often are unaware of the discriminative nature in which the industry operates. Considered as an ongoing phenomenon, this form of discrimination can be a result of 'tokenistic' approaches, which support Kanter's (1997) perspective on marginality providing "a framework for understanding how female and male athletes in marginalised sports experience blocked mobility or perceptions of limited opportunity" (Skrubbeltrang, 2019:1992). Tokenism has been argued to work as a tick-box approach, which has been

found to align with funding, rather than leading to impactful, cultural change (Piggott et al., 2018).

Following the practice of a sequential mixed-method design, Phase Two questions were constructed to further understand the ways in which discrimination is an ongoing concern, focusing further from the gender pay gap and glass ceiling barrier as referenced by Bermingham-Shaw (2019) and Ahn and Cunningham (2020). During interviews, some female participants brought up instances where they felt they had to be aware of the settings they were in based on their gender. Examples were all described in a negative manner, such as with Female 5 expressing uncomfortable emotions when being the only female in a concession tent. This narrative provided another insight around how and where these ongoing discriminative practices occur for women in the industry. The argument made is that the current gender equity efforts in place cannot be assumed to support all environments nor settings in which employees operate out of, as they are not safe nor inclusive for all. Another narrative following the form of subtle sexism (unnoticed discrimination) included discussion on male colleagues or consumers getting "carried away" through dialect, causing females to often flock to survival strategies, including minimising and normalising sexism (Hindman and Walker, 2020). Survival strategies, also referred to as 'career adaptability' occurs when one copes with developmental tasks such as learning new skills or adjusting to new environments, including gender role stereotyping, which is found in this example (Darvin et al., 2018).

Reconfirming the impact subtle sexism has on the industry, Evans and Pfister (2020) indicate the sport industry has high turnover, as it is not considered as an inclusive environment for all. Although these are considered barriers for women in sport, Female 5 indicated that she did not believe these acts were intentional by male counterparts. From this statement, it can be determined that females perceive gender equity efforts only address clear and visible forms of discrimination (i.e. sexual harassment) and these tools are missing out on the deeper cultural concerns that occur due to unconscious bias and behaviours. Although many women do leave the industry, those who stay often follow social exchange theory, which causes employees to maximise the positives and to minimise the negatives, thus ignoring the larger issues at hand (Greenhill et al.,

2009:232). Supporting these findings, other sport national governing body leaders have also been found in the past to have counterproductive perspectives against the implementation of affirmative action policies. They can come with support of affirmative action in theory, or verbal recognition, however they fail to support it in practice, reconfirming Kanter's (1977) homologous reproduction theory once more (Claringbould and Knoppers, 2007).

Combining these results supports answering hypothesis one for this research question, indicating that men and women do vary with their perspectives towards gender equity efforts. It was found that for women, most believe the efforts in place are just scratching the surface around gender inclusion. For men, opposite views were found, indicating they believe there is equitable treatment occurring between all genders, and barriers are non-existent. It is important however to recognise that gender passivity could be found. This would mean that men are aware these systems are not working, and that they favour continuing the reproductive nature of the industry (Burton, 2015). This would be alarming, as it could be considered counterproductive if not meeting the needs to push for more gender diversity. Without resolving this ongoing discrimination, job satisfaction cannot be achieved, which has led to women leaving their positions within the industry (Chang and Milkman, 2019).

Relating to the third hypothesis for RQ1, the researcher had to reject the thought that females and males from England and Scotland would perceive gender equity efforts more positively, compared to those from the US and Canada, as they utilise The Equality Standard more frequently. This was not the case, and indicated that ongoing discrimination must be still going on in those countries, even with tools and resources (like The Equality Standard) in place.

7.2.2. Universal Difficulty

Discussed earlier in the methods chapter of this thesis, the demographic details collected in Phase One enabled the analysis of perceptions around DEI in football workplaces, including intersectional identities, such as gender, race, sexuality, age, and country of origin to occur. In addition, variables around football affiliates and participant roles were

determined. To address the second part of this research question related to cross-national comparisons, the main findings from the one-way ANOVAs indicated that females statistically varied compared to their male counterparts in the same country, suggesting this is not just a concern for one domestic structure, but could be argued as a universal difficulty.

Being found to occur cross-nationally, women in this study indicated how they believed their gender impacted their roles, compared to male counterparts as stated above. A key example of a finding from the one-way ANOVAs indicated that women from England, compared to the other countries, had a stronger perspective they thought the gender pay gap was still prevalent. This particularly was interesting regarding the first hypothesis for RQ1, as it could have been assumed countries (like England), where specific forms of affirmative action are instituted, would have female participants perceiving less forms of discrimination. However, as English females indicated agreement that this is still a concern, this puts into question the actual impact of resources like The Equality Act of 2010, and The Equality Standard. Additionally, it calls for more work to explore the variances of impact occurring on the non-profit- and private / corporate side of the industry.

When Hancock and Hums (2016) investigated approaches of gender diversity within sport workplaces, they found that much literature focused on women who had broken the glass ceiling and made it to the top. Yet, there has been little work since then understanding those in the pipeline who are impacted by efforts to promote more DEI in the industry. Aiming to fill this gap, and following Adriaanse (2016) suggestions, this study drew on cross-national comparisons around gender equity to see if instances of discrimination occur similarly across the industry, and to observe if there are variances between structures and countries. Returning to the second hypothesis for this research question, the argument that countries within the UK would have more consistent levels of agreement between males and females was ultimately rejected based on the statistically different indications around the gender pay gap for English females. This hypothesis also was formed with the idea that countries like the US would have higher variances between genders, based on the lawsuit occurring between the United States Women's National

Team (USWNT) and United States Soccer Federation (USSF). However, given these findings, there still is a universal indication that discrimination is occurring for women working within football.

7.2.3. Variances Between Phases

Discussed in the last two sections, variances in perspectives were found between both male and female participants around the idea of whether discrimination is ongoing. Flood (2015) indicated that men show both support for, and resistance to gender equity. Previous research demonstrating the contrasting actions towards gender equity was found by Norman (2016) when asking male stakeholders to describe incidents of inequity. Norman (2016) highlighted how there was often dismissive or defensive initial remarks, with a lack of confidence and understanding, as male stakeholders were believing they were already "doing equity". Although already perceiving work is being done, it has been argued that even "well-minded feminist men, can unwillingly reproduce the culture of masculine privilege in sport" (Anderson, 2009:11).

There were no major variances found between females in Phases One or Two, as mutually it was found they believed the gender equity efforts still existed, with them facing barriers and limitations. However, there were differences in findings between males from Phases One and Two. From the survey, there was more agreement amongst males that workplaces are sufficiently offering equitable opportunities to their female counterparts. This supported the argument that they perceive gender equity efforts as effective, directly answering the research question posed. However, during Phase Two, with the eight male interviewees, most participants discussed the need for change regarding how DEI is approached within their own workplaces and the industry. This was considered interesting, as the males who participated were not more in agreement with females during Phase One's survey, and had contrasting views given during Phase Two. This is where the subcategory theme "rooms for development" emerged as thematically apparent. There is no one confirmed reason behind these variances, however status characteristic theory recognises that there is an effect between gender and social

interactions, where participants' responses can vary situation to situation (Wharton, 2012).

Connecting to the research question, this alteration of viewpoint from Phases One to Two does not allow confirmation of an exact stance around the perspective men have towards gender equity efforts. It is acknowledged this is crucial for diversity management, as Noon and Ogbonna (2002:33) emphasise the need to include **"**perspectives and views of majority and dominant groups within organisations (typically male) and those groups who often do not enjoy protection in law" leading to creation of a culture and climate where majority and dominant groups cohesively work together. Illustrating how incumbent male stakeholders can keep control, this occurs by negating affirmative action, through assuming a mindset that there is no need to police gender equity.

7.2.4. Necessary Amendments for the Future

The purpose behind efforts like affirmative action includes the need "to challenge assumptions about merit and prompt a meaningful increase in diversity within certain environments" (Gardiner and Riches, 2016). Evaluation systems theory allows researchers to help assess the sustainability of a project (Helfferich, 2016). Monitoring and evaluation also help to answer questions around 'how well' certain initiatives meet intentions to satisfy the expectations of core stakeholders (Valenti, 2019). With acknowledging the everchanging features around diversity and sport, it is important that tools like initiatives or programmes are adjusted to sufficiently represent the needs of the industry going forward. Supporting these arguments, females specifically indicated in Phase One how gender equity efforts were not sufficiently addressing barriers around promotions and the gender pay gap.

Through using initial findings in Phase One, Phase Two focused on gaining insight around suggested resolutions for the future. With findings in Phase One indicating males perceived gender equity efforts to be adequately running, a further confirmation of Pfister's (2010) work was made, that gender equity is considered only a "women's issue" in the industry. However, through unexpected discourse, males in Phase Two sided with the female majority around there still being ongoing discrimination. Both females and

males in Phase Two expressed concern around needing improvements in the future. The types of amendments brought up and referenced in Chapter 6 included continuous education, more accessible narratives from marginalised groups, as well as more diverse visual representation holistically. When asked about specific types of efforts like quotas or schemes, there was hesitation around the discussion from both male and female participants. A comparable indication was made by Evans and Pfister (2020), as they stated in their work that quotas are often seen as a 'fast track' option, and vary on effectiveness, which are still debated between all sectors in sport.

Relating to the concept that there was a call to get more narratives from marginalised individuals, those with non-majority identities (minority ethnic background, members of the LGBT+ group, and those outside the most common age group), the elements above support the last hypothesis for RQ1, indicating that gender equity efforts have been a starting point, however, they have only really been built to support white, cis, straight women.

7.3. Answering Research Question 2

Working as a catalyst to promote gender equity through various systems (including affirmative action), publications pertaining to the impact of specific efforts like Title IX (Staurowsky, 2003), and the Brighton Declaration of Women in Sport (Claringbould and Knoppers, 2007; Pfister and Radtke, 2009; Adriaanse and Claringbould, 2016; de Soysa and Zipp, 2019; Matthews, 2020), were discussed in the literature review in this study. When introducing efforts towards dismantling discrimination, it is just as important to take the time to review all efforts to make sure impact is being achieved. Previous work has shown where issues have occurred with diversity, as Kaiser et al. (2013:11) indicates that an illusion of fairness is made "which in turn leads members of traditionally advantaged groups (e.g., men, whites) to legitimise status quo by being less sensitive to discrimination targeted towards traditionally disadvantaged groups." As found from the results in RQ1, this is reconfirmed from male participants perceiving systems in place are believed to be equitable. This however invokes historical injustice and undermines the support towards

marginalised identities by prompting reproducing homologous groups, thus denying reasons for continued existence of such initiatives (Hideg and Wilson, 2019).

The purpose of this particular research question was to establish within football clubs how employees are perceiving gender equity efforts. In particular, it aimed to explore if any specific efforts around DEI are understood by participants in entry and middle management roles within semi and professional football clubs. While confirming awareness, interpretations investigated the appropriateness of efforts. Following Norman et al. (2018:409) suggestions, more work needs to be done to learn beyond what is claimed, so researchers can fully comprehend the 'day-to-day' routine of organisational culture, and evaluations can go "beyond what is made evident by the organisation (artifacts) or what is claimed (espoused)."

Moreover, with varying legislative and national governing structures, it was also important to see if cross-nationally there are variances, particularly around appropriateness. It also is worth exploring further Rankin-Wright et al. (2019)'s results that DEI efforts have 'blind spots', and that there is a need for them to be addressed to adequately promote inclusion within the industry. Five hypotheses were associated with this research question:

Table 7.2 Research Question 2 Hypotheses

1. There are significant differences between males and females around the awareness of DEI efforts.
2. There are significant differences between males and females around the appropriateness of DEI efforts.
3. There are significant differences between countries, and the US would have the largest disparity between female and male participants regarding legislation and funding.
4. Females and males from England and Scotland will be more aware about the policies, funding incentives, organisational initiatives, and legislation around gender equity utilised as they have been in place for greater than 10 years. Females and males in the US and Canada will be less aware due to no specific industry form of affirmative action.
5. Those with non-majority identities will be very aware of efforts as they are geared to support individuals from marginalised backgrounds, however appropriateness will not be found significant.

7.3.1. Awareness Around Implementation

When awareness around discrimination is acknowledged by marginalised groups, it allows them the opportunity to better prepare for situations they could find themselves in (Hartzell and Dixon, 2019). It could also be argued that having awareness of the efforts in place to dismantle discrimination can work as a resource, as it gives marginalised groups insight on their rights. Minimal research has been conducted around the awareness of such efforts in professional sport workplaces across the globe. However, with frameworks producing goals to promote through awareness (Norman, 2016), it is important to explore employee perceptions around engagement and appropriateness to make sure impact is being made. Prior to DEI frameworks, blindness approaches that advocated for reducing and ignoring category membership were followed, where now awareness approaches celebrate intergroup differences (Plaut, 2002; Sasaki and Vorauer, 2013). Despite these beliefs, little research has examined the effects of awareness and blindness ideologies on gender relations, especially in areas in sport (Hahn et al., 2015; Koenig and Richeson, 2010a, 2010b; Martin and Phillips, 2017). This particular research question looks to establish if participants expressed understanding of any frameworks of affirmative action in their own workplaces.

Results in Phase One confirmed awareness and agreements to efforts like incorporating gender equity training were being equitably offered, as there were no variances between genders nor countries. As the majority confirmed awareness, there was an expectation from hypothesis four in RQ2 that females and males from England and Scotland would be more aware about the policies, funding incentives, organisational initiatives, and legislation around gender equity utilised, as they have been in place for greater than 10 years. This however was not the case, as females and males in the US and Canada had similar levels of awareness.

To reconfirm and gain further explanation in Phase Two, participants were asked to share feelings towards the awareness of diversity, inclusion, and gender equity efforts in their workplaces, and how it could be developed in the future. Through defining 'Acknowledging Efforts' as a reference from interviews, specific examples included

resources like campaigns, training, funding, external relationships, and industry reports being on offer. These types of efforts have often been resourceful as initial starting points in sport compared to mandatory laws or regulations according to Pfister (2010), as campaigns and initiatives can create support for women on their career ladders. Stated in Norman et al. (2018), rather than just 'surface level' drivers of change (including broad mission statements and codes of ethics), there is a deeper level needed for deconstructing embedded meanings and values. These do not carry the force that compliance approaches have, and can weaken efforts, consistent with Straubel (1996). Similarly argued in Skrubbeltrang (2019:2002), participants in this study shared the view that it is not enough just to execute statements and "assume that equality will result". Acknowledging this can be presumed as tokenistic, participants highlighted how tools like educational resources should be focused on intolerance, as well as the insensitive language that has been used. With gender equity being traditionally labelled as a 'women's only' problem (Shaw and Penney, 2003), hypothesis one for RQ2 was constructed assuming there would be a lack of recognition from males around the barriers many females face. Based on the findings however, this assumption can be rejected.

Given that there was confirmed awareness and agreement to equitable training opportunities, there are often claims these tools are unfocused with minimal evaluation, causing deficiencies and ineffective impact (Coatler, 2010). The types of education and training described by participants matched those found in Clutterbuck and Doherty (2019), with a mix of formal and informal offerings. However, unlike in their study, interviewees here did not mention where training supervision was coming from. There was not a clear indication whether it was coming from the national or provincial sport organisation. Determining whether these efforts are appropriate allows researchers to mark if there is value being made, which helps individuals' expectations in leadership positions recognise occupational turnover intentions, and the influence of symbolic interactionism on career advancement (Burton, 2015). From hypothesis five for RQ2, the researcher confirmed that it was correct that non-majority individuals would be aware; however, the purpose as to why this occurs could not be explored due to a low level of representation.

Pfister (2010) shares the sport industry often refers to campaigns and initiatives to support minority groups. It was critical to also observe awareness and appropriateness pertaining to the domestic legislation in which football clubs compete. The significance legislation plays within the sport industry has been described by Harmon (2019:2) as "an institution for social cohesion and the recognition of sport's intimate connection to enumerated equality rights", as it must be organised and operated in compliance with governments. It is also important to recognise the relationship legislation has with initiatives, as without operating alongside voluntary efforts, legal structures supporting DEI would have been absent, as mandated gender equity provisions "need to act in multifarious ways to bring about change" (Gardiner and Riches, 2016).

There were additional variances found around perspectives towards whether legislation was being followed visibly, as well as the language used. Once more, there were higher levels of agreement for male participants around believing their workplaces follow mandatory legal structures. Arguments pertaining to why this may occur can be explained through Bell et al. (2002) work indicating that due to the 'invisible' nature of barriers for women in sport, male colleagues (as the majority) are unable to see gaps where legislation is not effectively resolving issues. Cross-nationally, variances around visibility showed that, within the US, participants were more in agreement their workplaces visibly followed laws. They additionally agreed the phrasing and terminology were appropriate for their workplaces. Articulating further as to why this could have occurred, an argument is made that with the US's Civil Rights Act of 1964 using he/him pronouns, compared to the Equality Act using neutral language (Gardiner and Riches, 2016), the male prevalence of the sport industry correspondingly represents he/him being used most often in workspaces. This argument supports social identity theory, where participants derive a sense of identity from their memberships in different social groups (Tajfel and Turner, 1986). However, using these he/him pronouns protects prevalent social identity, undermining the support for affirmative action (Hideg and Wilson, 2019). Continuing on with addressing legislation language, female participants showed less levels of agreement. Thus, even with The Equality Act of 2010 using neutral language, neither type of legislation can be justified as fit for purpose, or a best practice. Piggott and Pike (2019)

identify that the use of androcentric language works to normalise the position of men in leadership roles; thus it can be confirmed current legislation geared to promoting DEI is not perceived as most appropriate.

7.3.2. Insufficient Effects

Success within the business industry has typically been measured through stereotyped masculine qualities, including control, decisiveness, autonomy, and toughness (Lange and Young, 2019). Determining what is successful in regard to gender diversity requires understanding of key indicators, making positive changes to challenge these homologous reproductive qualities. Literature surrounding gender equity, particularly in sport, has focused on those who have broken the glass ceiling by achieving success, challenging masculine ideologies (Darvin et al., 2019), leaving minimal understanding around how the resources that helped build them earlier in their careers impact workplaces. One myth around these resources is "the amount of time spent on a task is an indicator of performance and success" which when organisations have a proactive, continuing resource, symbolises commitment to DEI (Pfister and Radtke, 2009:242). As awareness was confirmed in the previous section, Piggott and Pike (2019) indicate that it is not enough just to be mindful of what is going on, but there is a need to engage further for future development. Even with training and leadership opportunities being equitably offered, it is important to investigate other tactics used to push DEI within the workplace. The works of Cunningham and Fink (2006), Burton (2015), and Hylton (2010) share how policies, funding incentives, organisational initiatives, and legislation were four types of tactics considered as references to DEI in workplaces. To test the appropriateness of efforts in specific semi and professional football workplaces, four questions were directly asked around the belief of whether efforts impact gender equity within the workplace, which would confirm them as satisfactory. Referring to the 1-5 Likert-scale that was used for this survey, it was determined all four types of tactics are currently insufficiently being followed due to lower levels of agreement. None of the four types had over a mean of 4, which would have confirmed positive 'agreement'. Additionally, it also confirms that awareness around these four tactics is minimal as well.

When comparing participants perspectives around the impacts of sport policies or funding incentives for promoting gender equity, there were significant differences between the US and England. Differences found showed higher levels of agreement for both policies and funding incentives in England. This means that English participants are more likely aware of the use of these types of approaches, compared to those from the US. As policies and funding incentives are often directed from The Premier League Equality Standard (PLES), it is confirmed that both male and female English participants understand the tools their clubs have been given historically by The Premier League. The concern, however, stems from the lack of confirmation from female participants regarding the appropriateness of these efforts.

As there were also some lower scores between female groups from different countries, this opened doors for exploration around the idea that certain countries have more perceived effectiveness with gender equity initiatives, schemes, or quotas. This will be further explored in the next section around potential counterproductive factors. Arguably however, the appropriateness of these efforts is not adequate due to US employees having higher levels of agreement in regard to perspectives that they can progress due to other efforts. Previous research supports this by showing that approaches like quotas and gender discrimination legislation can have limited results due to representation in leadership not transforming gender constructs (Sotiriadou and de Haan, 2019). It also has been found that anti-racism campaign measures often are symbolic rather than substantive, making the impact minimal and unsatisfactory (Spaaij et al., 2019). Thus, the same can be said based on the findings around sport policies and funding incentives within the UK.

During interviews, specific educational activities around gender equity were discussed. Interviewees spoke around the prominence these activities had during their orientations when initially starting with their clubs. This was not perceived as ideal due to it not being continuous. This was determined as an insufficient practice as ongoing learning provides understanding around the continued legacy of past injustices endured by traditionally disadvantaged groups in our society, "which is crucial for comprehending the roots of inequality today and understanding the existence of contemporary social and workplace

policies promoting equality" (Hideg and Wilson, 2019:1). Putting education into practice allows for reflection, which is a suggested activity following theory-based impact evaluation (White, 2009). Shared by Female 1, however, this does not seem to be occurring, as she shared "we never really have conversations about it unless it gets brought up. It's just emails reminders … I think they could do it more regularly." For successful gender equity strategies to be enforced, there needs to be a balanced approach with achievable benchmarks (European Commission of Sport, 2014). Determining appropriateness early supports successfully attaining these results, and thus has been discussed in specific detail to football workplaces in this section. The reasons why this insufficient approach occurs could also be explained through Norman (2016) work, that often there is confusion and vagueness around terms equity, equality, and diversity with educational experiences only appearing briefly (during orientation for participants in this study) and eventually hitting a 'developmental dead-end'. Based on these results, it can be confirmed that the second hypothesis for this research question was correct, in stating there would be differences between males and females around the appropriateness of DEI efforts.

7.3.3. Counterproductive

Occurring in numerous formats throughout the world, the aim of gender affirmative action remains the same; to increase women's participation in politics, education, and the workplace (Flood, 2015). As described in the previous section, it was confirmed that appropriateness was being missed through efforts of utilising affirmative action. The inappropriateness of these efforts can be justified by the variances in responses by male and female participants. With DEI efforts aiming to promote non-majority groups, the variances show that females do not see efforts as impactful, and thus perceive them as becoming counterproductive to the gender equity movement. Previous studies around counterproductivity and gender equity in sport indicated how techniques like quotas are looked upon as coercive, and can be ineffectual with bringing change as occurring through tick-box activities (Pfister, 2010). When potential inefficient approaches, like quotas for more women on boards and leadership roles are introduced, this does not

seem to change the gender constructs, and can actually "retain a focus on women's disadvantage and fails to highlight men's privilege" (Sotiriadou and de Haan, 2019:2).

Similarly to RQ1, male participants showed statistical patterns of believing current resources (such as support from leadership, gender equity initiatives, schemes, and / or quotas) were helpful in their own personal careers compared to their female colleagues. This shows that what currently is in place is not impactful to support gender equity, and actually is determined counterproductive, as it is not helping the marginalised group (women). Norman (2016) also supports these findings by demonstrating through her work that male employees are often unable to know what gender equity should look like, meaning any form of equity training is failing to dismantle discrimination (e.g. access, fairness or legislation). The reasons behind this is that many organisations take a 'one size fits all' approach, with equity policies that do not create change for organisational practices due to "the direction and construction is often in the hands of those whose interests lie in the failure of equity policies" (Shaw and Penney, 2003:82). Argued by Shaw and Penney (2003), The Equality Standard was an example where the 'one size fits all' approach occurred, where now after revaluation, it comes with a 'multiple, broad [version] of equality' (Turconi and Shaw, 2021:5).

Although being more heavily influenced through governing structures (such as UEFA), England had larger disparities between male and female participants. This also puts into question the appropriateness of industry specific resources, like The Equality Standard. This is not the first-time issues around impact for The Equality Standard have been found, as Karl et al. (2006) highlighted how it only demanded evidence around initial actions, leaving gaps around changes or modifications that had been made since 2015. Thus, they argue that The Equality Standard may no longer be fit for purpose, and it may actually now be causing forms of hegemonic reproduction. Although females broadly indicated they did not perceive these types of efforts to be helping their careers, results from American participants indicated their current system was perceived as most effective. However, this should not be read as being labelled as 'successful', due to it following a counterproductive nature. To eventually achieve success, Flood (2015) suggests stakeholders build stronger partnerships with women's groups to enable men to learn

from existing efforts and scholarship, rather than 'reinventing the wheel' as they often do. Returning to the last hypothesis for this research question, the thought indicating the US would have the largest disparity between female and male participants was rejected.

7.3.4. Challenging Priorities

The sport industry is famous for promising positive social cohesion and moral development for society (Harmon, 2019). Acknowledging this, it was important to establish whether the priorities found in the workplace aligned with both social cohesion and moral development. Discussed in Chapter 6, interviewees spoke on how their day-to-day routine focused on "always business priorities that need to be attended" which catered to revenue generation. What leaders pay attention to, and rewards reflect most, include priorities for organisational culture (Doherty and Chelladurai, 1999:292). Male 1 from Canada indicated that following this approach put DEI on a backburner, deeming it as not a priority. The primacy of revenue-generators in sport business is not a new topic, as previous studies relating to affirmative action showed that those who went against the overwhelming norm of homologous reproduction have been tolerated but not always embraced (Staurowsky, 2003). This area supports the findings of Leberman (2017), that winning at all costs reinforces hegemonic masculinity, especially when winning encompasses profit maximisation. For a change of culture to occur, business priorities need to be rearranged, with making DEI as the priority.

The challenges, however, to changing this have been referenced through Schein's (2004) theory of organisational culture, where often leaders' values and assumptions are "embedded through primary mechanisms of allocating resources, rewards, and status; how they recruit, select, and promote; and through deliberate role modeling, teaching, and coaching" (Norman et al., 2018:405). Similarly to the quote above, interviews showed that participants believed there was a need for diverse and inclusive culture of leadership to be proactively established. Reasons behind why this had not naturally occurred prior were results of profit maximisation being the main drivers of business objectives. The timing of interviews for Phase Two also is a key feature to highlight, as they occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic when Black Lives Matter (BLM) protests were frequently

being held due to police brutality in the US. In some instances, participants shared how the industry was "put on pause", and forced to address issues around systemic discrimination. This pause however demonstrated the reactive nature of the sport industry, now putting a call to change this for the future. With recent ethical concerns, Sheth and Babiak (2010:447) indicate that it makes sense that philanthropy is "top of mind for professional teams at the moment as ethical concerns and problems by initiating and promoting philanthropic activities, it may serve as an avenue for reputation management and for practitioners, a primary concern is whether the costs outweigh the benefits in CSR."

Echoing Harmon (2019:11), participants demanded the industry needs to be more proactive with talking about DEI through catering to "values and the value of people, and of different embodiments and ways of being." The impact 'abnormal' times (like COVID-19) have on the business functions of the sport industry is especially prevalent with challenging historical priorities. Due to COVID-19, the world is forced to pay more attention to 'communitarianism', which focuses on social rather than strictly economic transactions (Kennedy and Kennedy, 2020). To do this, leaders need to get away from the idea that 'equity is a zero-sum game'. To invest in equity means sacrificing elsewhere, such diminishing performance funding (Turconi and Shaw, 2021). A suggestion by Kennedy and Kennedy (2020) is to follow the c-m-c model, which stands for a focus on community welfare and using money to distribute key social services, goods, and skills to meet community needs. From a revenue perspective, it appears that teams that earn a higher revenue report slightly more involvement in CSR, which may lead executives to feel that, "with more money available for business functions, more can be budgeted for CSR-related initiatives for their team" (Sheth and Babiak, 2010:447).

For the few who shared their organisations were proactive around DEI, they did admit how diversity typically was addressed by one protected characteristic at a time (gender being the most common). As research has shown, informal workplace inequities are not binary (Cech and Rothwell, 2020), interviewees suggested there is a need for organisational culture to be looked at from an intersectional perspective, which would assume individuals' identities are different (Knoppers, 2015). As often a 'them and us'

narrative is shared when offering equity training (Norman, 2016), this can be detrimental to pushing for proactive approaches. In another instance, where interviewees explained why things do not always occur so proactively, one individual highlighted how things were not deemed broken, referring back to the invisible barrier. This explained the majority responses from males in Phase One, as many indicated they had thought efforts were effective. Through following a passive lens to DEI in sport, research shows that this perspective can prevent change from occurring (Claringbould and Knoppers, 2012).

It is considered important to tackle and change discrimination for the future to make sure the industry has shifting values and culture to sensitively facilitate leading conversations around options for normalising positive action and equal opportunities (Harmon, 2019). As we are aware that organisational changes have occurred over the last few decades, it is important to relate how the traditional objective indicants of career success (financial rewards) do not always guarantee employee satisfaction and / or happiness (Heslin, 2005). There is a need for sport businesses to better align priorities to match the values of their workforce surrounding DEI. Failure to do so can be considered counterproductive and inappropriate (Gomez-Gonzalez et al., 2018).

7.4. Answering Research Question 3

Describing the eight factors that define 'best practices' for implementing affirmative action, Noon and Ogbonna (2001) share how accountability, goals and timelines, monitoring mechanisms, transparency, employment practice reviews, special target training, a dedicated equity role or committee, and financial resources shape how successfully DEI can be rolled out. The responsibility of implementing these 'best practices' is just as important with primary obligations being set on national and local stakeholders, so that efforts can be made at all levels to promote women and men in various roles throughout the industry (European Commission of Sport, 2014). Acknowledging inequitable practices, a number of decisions and programmes have been established in order to favour both the involvement and development of women in sport. Even with 'Women in Sport' commissions or committees being built in sports organisations, they are considered very scarce. Specifically, in the European Union, there have been invitations to

governments of member states to build policies and programmes to assist in achieving stronger gender-balanced representation. For some sport institutions, overcoming barriers relating to gender equity can result in failure in strategic planning and implementation. With overinflated and imprecise claims, lack of systematic monitoring, and lack of proper evaluation, Coalter (2010) shares these deficiencies are partly to blame for unsuccessful strategic efforts.

As this study only focused on the private / corporate side of the sport industry, it is just as important also to recognise the varying domestic placements of responsibility. One way this has been demonstrated in the industry is through the Canadian sport structure, where organised sport has been defined as having social responsibility towards gender equity from their Sport Canada Policy on Women in Sport from 1986 (Canadian Women and Sport, 2020). The goal from RQ3 looked to expand on understanding where interviewees believed responsibility should be found in their workplaces, as well as seeing where they thought this should be manifested between departments. More recently, sport institutions and those otherwise working within the sport industry, have become more responsible for providing data regarding the monitoring and evaluation of strategies to demonstrate the impact of gender equity policies in sport (Bloyce et al., 2008). In establishing best practices and responsibility, it allows sport managers to continue having greater accountability, and fulfilling their obligation towards DEI (Norman, 2016). From the answers to this research question, the researcher can develop 'best practice' definitions which aim to include *"explicit reference to time-bound and target-driven activities based on best practice policy and practice"* (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2018a:4). Additionally, the cross-national comparison can help identify methods and reflect on their transferability in different geographical and cultural contexts. As this research question was developed following results from Phase One, four hypotheses relying on more qualitative and detailed responses were established:

Table 7.3 Research Question 3 Hypotheses

1. Best practices will vary by gender, with females indicating specific examples more frequently.
2. Responsibility will vary country by country, with England and Scotland having more focus on coordinators with the US and Candad having fallen under human resources teams.
3. English females and males as well as Scottish females and males will both believe their workplace has a best approach in line with The Equality Standard. Female and male participants from the US and Canada will think the best approach involves using HR teams to drive efforts.
4. Those with non-majority identities will believe utilising policies, funding incentives, organisational initiatives and legislation is the best practice only if it includes all identities. They additionally will believe responsibility should fall on club ownership.

7.4.1. Transparency of Monitoring and Evaluation

Although only a few participants were aware around whether their employer monitored or evaluated the impact of DEI initiatives, there was a consistent call for action indicating the need for more clarity holistically to better perform in the future. Being not only considered a sport issue, there are reported concerns around accountability with reporting on indicators supporting gender ratios across sectors, including services like the police and armed forces (Prenzler and Sinclair, 2013). As there is still a debate over the methodological criteria and epistemological assumptions which guide assessment around effectiveness for engaging men in gender equity, "there is no doubt that we need to know what works to make change and what does not" (Flood, 2015:13).

As all participants valued the outputs from DEI reporting, the demand for more knowledge in this area was shown. Indicated previously in Chapter 3, the clubs investigated in this study did not fall into the public nor national governing body categorisation, which would traditionally have made transparency a requirement. However, employees believe more should be done in the future to align with the public and voluntary sector for these topics. The elements described in interviews aligned with the results from Hideg and Wilson (2019), in that participants understand that to gain a deeper understanding of discrimination, a more formal policy surrounding communication can support gender equity in the workplace. Within football's NGB landscape, this has already occurred between UEFA and domestic FAs through the #EqualGame Conference, where it was reported that partnering organisations specialising in DEI topics can increase

accountability and transparency. Also referenced as transparency and accountability initiatives (TAIs), there are debates about strengthening accountability through two types of efforts: "(i) increasing government transparency (bringing previously opaque information or processes into the public domain) and ii) social accountability (citizen-led action for demanding accountability from providers/public officials)" (Joshi, 2013:29).

For transparency to occur, participants highlighted overall the need for more communication outside of HR, or where the DEI team currently sits internally. As stated in White and Brackenridge (1985), cooperation and communication between men's and women's governing bodies vary, and the same can be said within the private sector around gender equity and diversity, as no single workplace seemed to operate identically. Interviewees echoed the demands from Kang and Kaplan (2019:581) that to create gender-inclusive cultures, "a positive social climate must be cultivated through increasing the representation of previously marginalised groups and using inclusive photos and pronouns in organisational communications, and adopting anonymous evaluation practices that minimise the potential for bias." This call for action also has previously been made in sport research by the IOC in 2004, where support was requested surrounding sustainability of evaluation through use of tools (like the internet) to foster communication around gender equity (IOC, 2004).

Given the 17-year difference between the IOC report and this study, it can be argued there has not been a sport industry-wide resolution around transparency and monitoring, which can be explained by the associative nature of the IOC versus a private / corporate football club. To resolve this for the future, participants expressed the need for more effective communication to help implement successful DEI initiatives. Consistent with Clutterbuck and Doherty (2019:27), participants suggested the need for a communication means that can be "described as open, two-way, and regular." The prevalence of this is supported by Chou (2012), where the author indicated how millennial leaders are highly focused on the social aspects of work, and value strong relationships with co-workers, where effective communication is considered essential for accomplishments (Gursoy et al., 2008; Howe and Strauss, 2007; Murphy and Loeur, 2018; Porter et al., 2019). Interviewees were well aware that historically industry employers had not prioritised DEI.

Understanding why priorities did not align with DEI is important, as traditionally, responsibility around human survival and reproduction has been devalued, creating marginalisation for those in caring roles (mostly women). Institutional theory notes that within organisational studies, it is crucial to now look beyond technical and resource environments, and researchers should consider "how societal institutions shape structures" as the dominant sport business logic currently focuses on profit maximisation as the central goal (Allison, 2016:245).

In the next section of this chapter, compliance and incentives will be highlighted, as some participants shared the belief that there is no room to make excuses around not monitoring and evaluating DEI in sport, as there already are other areas of the industry (such as scouting) where they measure data for business performance.

7.4.2. Implementing Compliance and Incentives

It has been found that there are better results for diversity efforts when employers capitalise on people's need for autonomy. Indeed, this increases the contact between diverse groups, and encourages personal engagement for inclusion of all members "rather than only those who are part of the group targeted for intervention" (Sotiriadou and de Haan, 2019:582). Exemplified by techniques like Title IX and the Rooney Rule, DEI has been introduced through regulated features requiring sport managers to spend time confirming they are following practices and not breaking rules. During discussions with interviewees, a question directed around their perception around implementing compliances and rewards was asked. It was confirmed that there are no mandatory DEI fulfilments in the private sport sector. In some interviews, the Scandinavian approach was brought up, confirming awareness of how this occurs internationally in the public sport domain, and how gender quotas have been enforced through organisational policies. Unlike the work of Pfister (2010), interviewees were not sure if this type of strategy would be successful and accepted into their own workplace settings. This allowed the researcher to reject the fourth hypothesis for RQ3, that English females and males, as well as Scottish females and males, would all believe their workplaces have a best approach in line with The Equality Standard. It additionally allowed the research team to

reject the idea that the US and Canada do not believe the best approach involves using HR teams to drive efforts.

Established in Phase One, current DEI efforts in place are not viewed as effective and / or appropriate. Thus, following suggestions from interviewees, it was explored how compliance fits with best practices. Participants seemed to support Claringbould and Knoppers' (2007) work in believing the number of women in leadership will not change by itself, without policy measures. Participants who supported a mandatory approach highlighted how organically, without such a push, things would keep repeating the cycle, which once again follows homologous reproduction that is found within cultures and countries (Hoeber and Kerwin, 2013). As changing priorities were also highlighted as a factor to move DEI up the ranks, arguments were made which indicated DEI efforts cannot just happen for the purposes of 'saying it happens'. Instead, cultural change needs to occur so DEI can be fully appreciated and implemented.

Ideally, participants believed compliance could be a resource that can work as a catalyst to address factors like culture. Keeping this in mind, previous research indicates how "conservative, incremental and modest approaches to redressing gendered workplace cultures" can have limited success in challenging this (Flood, 2015). This has been found in all areas within the industry (paid and voluntary), as constructivist gender theories "laid the foundation for a theoretical framework that includes general approaches towards explaining gender segregation" for gendered culture of organisations (Pfister and Radtke, 2009:231). However, as this was not seen as a whole solution, and argued to be a strong starting point for the future, more work needs to be done to observe if, for the short-term, compliance measures would more effectively promote DEI. Additionally, determining the success for affirmative action, like compliancy, is especially difficult. Regarding Title IX as an example, even after its passage close to 50 years ago, it was confirmed that not all institutions had met the requirements. This puts into question the impact and efficacy behind it; as compliance is considered a binary variable, you have either met your objective or failed to do so (Stafford, 2004). It is noteworthy to state that "finding or developing a new test and standard for compliance with affirmative actions requires an understanding of the current regulatory and case law interpretations and the

implementation", making the recommendations later in this thesis resourceful for revising equity legislation in the future (Straubel, 1996:1044).

The ways in which DEI could be best implemented varied between countries. Two of the three UK participants referenced how their workplaces use The Equality Standard as a reference tool. While in the US, there were minimal specific references around resources used. The key ones shared by all participants included education, surveys, forums, and more industry specific policies and legislation like Title IX. The first hypothesis made for this research question which surrounded specific examples more frequently from females can be rejected. Even though it was based on the responses from males in Phase One, indicating the belief current efforts were appropriate, all but one male participant shared suggestions to make DEI efforts better for the future. With research exploring the relationship between hierarchy and gender inequity in rewards, studies in this area have not always been clear about the mechanisms that produce these patterns (Fernandez and Campero). As measurement tools like diversity report cards are produced, it is important to recognise benchmarks that have forced sport stakeholders to become more accountable for DEI with "pushing for more dialogues and awareness, focuses collective and collaborative reports, and providing a roadmap for where to dedicate resources" (LaVoi and Silva Breen, 2019:7).

Rewards and punishments often are regarded as outputs to results from monitoring and evaluation. With resources like The Equality Standard, rewards are given with each of the four levels of good practice (Sports Council Equality Group, 2012). Additionally, the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) has provided in the past compliance incentives for its member institutions who achieve equitable places of representation (Stafford, 2004). The reasons behind rewards extend off Turban and Keon's (1993) findings that people who have a high need for achievement choose employment with incentive systems, rather than rewards based on seniority (Heslin, 2005). When individuals are intrinsically motivated (they do something because it is inherently fun and rewarding), they report higher life and job satisfaction, enjoyment, well-being, sustained commitment, and effort, and are more likely overall to perform at an optimal level (LaVoi and Wasend, 2018). However, research has shown that PR (public relations), tokenistic

rewards often are perceived as less valuable compared to forms of actual cultural achievement, which puts into question how effective The Equality Standard is with allocating rankings as responses. During Phase One, it was found that these structures in the UK model are perceived as less appropriate compared to countries where this resource does not exist.

Transactional leaders do not prioritise relationship building and / or collaboration, and focus more on outputs of rewards (Gerhardt et al., 2019). Extending off Schein (2004) theory, leader values are embedded through allocation of resources and rewards. As such, males who follow hegemonic masculinity may perceive the end line of reaching DEI occurring when securing the highest rank of The Equality Standard, which displaces where the reward should lie (Norman et al., 2018). Many men to this day still receive formal and informal benefits from gender inequities, as indicated in Phase One, and can include material rewards such as when organisations hit Equality Standard rankings, which reproduces interpersonal power (Flood, 2015).

With acknowledging how incentives can construct tokenistic approaches, an idea to minimise this came up in a few discussions around mandatory punishments for those who did not meet the obligations set out around DEI. 'Sanctioning' discrimination (recognition of discriminatory behaviour and penalising those instigate negative behaviours) has already been established into professional football (Equal Game, 2018). However, this has only be found at the NGB level. Based on participants' responses, it should also be introduced at the league (macro) and club (micro) level. With the example of instrumenting something like the Financial Fair Play (FFP) approach, there is a greater call to understand if industry practices like that will be positively or negatively viewed around DEI. Another significant example where punishments have been introduced occurs in Canada, with a fine of $50,000 for employers who "failed to develop and implement employment equity programs pursuant to the standards set out. . . [or fail to] comply with their employment equity plans, goals and timetables'" (Mentzer, 2002:43). Sanctions, if not consistently embraced by all stakeholders, can lead to misunderstanding and lack of impact. One important note around perspectives between participants and literature is the varying views of compliance. Allison (2016:250) stated that "the larger

sports marketplace is not (and should not) be subject to mandated equality of the sort legislated by Title IX." Regarding the fifth hypothesis for RQ3, the researcher was able to confirm that those with non-majority identities believe utilising policies, funding incentives, organisational initiatives, and legislation are the best practices. Due to low levels of representation, however, there was not room to explore further how this occurs for all identities.

7.4.3. Capacity Apprehensions

Capacity research that has previously occurred in sport has often only referenced the public and non-profit sector of the industry (Hancock and Hums, 2016). Although this study incorporated private / corporate football teams, diversity work has historically sat within CSR, and thus has been addressed through a non-profit lens. With statements made by interviewees around overstrained departments, a need to discuss barriers around capacity towards addressing DEI linking in CSR established efforts was identified.

Earlier in this chapter, industry priorities toward revenue generation were discussed as a barrier to achieving DEI. It has been argued that with such focus on profit maximisation, there was little room, and / or capacity, prior to 2020, to sustainably dedicate resources towards diversity in sport workplaces. Supported by the work of Hancock and Hums (2016), it has been observed that with capacity, infrastructure is the biggest barrier. Organisational conflicts around capacity typically revolve around resource requirements, and can have added influences around priorities set by personal agendas (meeting needs of administrators compared to meeting organisation wide essentials) (Robinson and Minikin, 2011). Also expressed by interviewees, the idea that personal agendas from the top-down, with emphasis on revenue generation, can be the explanation for non-diverse priorities in the past. Organisational capacity has been described as a multidimensional concept reflecting varying domains, including social, financial, and human resources capital (Sharpe, 2006). Organisations that are most competent with capacity dimensions link these three features in which the business better develops (Misener and Doherty, 2009).

As the majority of participants shared that traditionally DEI efforts sat under an HR umbrella, discussions were around this being inadequate, as HR departments are already being overworked with "wearing 7 hats". Additionally, a point was made that there is a need for more involvement from others holistically. HR was referenced through Svensson et al., (2017:2066) as many directors often "overwork their existing staff due to limited financial capacity for hiring sufficient staff numbers—risking staff burnout and restricting their goal achievement ability." Overworking (referred to as human resources capacity) and limited financial capacity, are also considered key barriers to why DEI has not been fully achieved. Sufficient staffing has also been found as barrier around administering DEI operations, programming, and growth (Clutterbuck and Doherty, 2019). As financial resources to DEI were not mentioned and perceived as limited, there is a need for sport managers to spend their resources efficiently (Robinson and Minikin, 2011). One example of a voluntary resource, referenced as a tool to overcome this type of human resources capacity barrier, came from one participant who indicated staff networks were constructed internally to support as actors to drive DEI throughout the company. These internal networks align with Clutterbuck and Doherty (2019), where there are arguably critical capacity concerns as voluntary groups often rely on administrative support, which if not addressed with strategic planning early on, could be missing financial resources for sustainability. This leaves a short term, unnoticed impact. It is argued that sustainable funding is critical to maintaining such external networks (Clutterbuck and Doherty, 2019) and contributes to building further trust with minority groups that may be members of outside groups.

For any programme to be successfully implemented, the appropriate time and resources must be allocated. Beginning to test the second hypothesis for this research question, it was confirmed that HR was the area this tends to fall under. However, the next section of this chapter will return by discussing if this is perceived to be the most effective way from the perspectives of employees. Relating back to overworking existing staff due to limited financial capacity, there has been high risk of employee burnout that restricts diversity achievement (Hancock and Hums, 2016). Due to prominence of the 2020 BLM protests, many organisations have shifted capacity efforts to hiring specific DEI individuals and

teams (diversity directors, inclusion specialists). With interviews occurring for this project prior to many of these new appointments, it can be argued that evaluation continues to occur in a reactive nature, with hiring these individuals as a result.

Lastly, regarding capacity, as referenced in previous sections, the significance of partnerships also can work to support DEI. However, one element researchers must keep in mind, according to Clutterbuck and Doherty (2019), is around concerns with the time needed to engage with partners for lasting relationships and sustained practices as the amount of time to pursue new partners can be a substantial burden on the limited human and financial resources of the organisation (Svensson et al., 2017).

7.4.4. Macro and Micro Accountability

There are four elements around establishing accountability which include: setting standards, getting information about actions, making judgements about appropriateness and sanctioning unsatisfactory performance (Joshi, 2013). Accountability was built into the last part of this research question to gain perspectives around who employees believe should oversee responsibility of DEI. Based on examples given, two categorisations were developed following Bourdieu (2001) with micro (internally to a club) and macro (externally through leagues and governing bodies). The sport industry is described as unique in comparison to other businesses, as the stakeholders vary with ownership structures and consumers. This was also perceived by participants in interviews with the statement that the sport industry is considered "a different beast" as described by one participant. During her opening speech around challenging the gender order in sport, Carolyn Hannan (2006) indicated that the responsibility of gender equity and empowerment of women belongs to everyone across all sectors, and not just a sole duty for gender specialists. The results presented supported these observations with ranking accountability at both levels.

The obligations industry stakeholders have were shared by participants, with echoing the argument that gender equity in sport has been primarily a responsibility of national sport stakeholders (such as leagues and governing bodies) (European Commission of Sport, 2014). This follows Bourdieu (2001)'s elements of 'macro' with the defined power leagues

and governing bodies have to make a significant influence in the workforce and gain adequate power to achieve goals. It has been found that at both the individual (micro) level and at the sport level (macro), male equity sponsors pave the way for both challenging existing stereotypes, as they have more powerful influences (Sotiriadou and de Haan, 2019). One example of a country that has already emphasised a commitment to these DEI efforts from a macro level is through the Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport (CCES), stating how policies must go beyond athletes, and should encompass all members in the organisation to create opportunities to improve the experiences of traditionally marginalised individuals (Harmon, 2019). This argument, combined with the statements made by participants, supports Cox (1993) multicultural organisation theory framework with requiring necessary components of leadership, research management, education, and cultural management through ongoing audits to be necessary holistically throughout, from the macro to micro level (Byrd and Scott, 2014).

Highlighted in Chapter 6 however, participants spoke on how compliance at the macro level comes with struggles, as there were varying perspectives regarding access to resources on a club-by-club basis. If research indicates the benefits of greater gender inclusivity in the corporate world in other industries have occurred, there is no reason to suppose these cannot be equally applicable to sport governing bodies (Gaston et al., 2020). Since 2014, FIFA has begun to organise conferences and workshops for the development of gender equity in leadership in football governance (Ahn and Cunningham, 2020). Acknowledging this, however, it is observed to not be trickling down from macro to micro at the club level. Thus, if this responsibility does sit with NGBs, respondents in this study support the works of Turconi and Shaw (2021) that there is more required from organisations like FIFA, UEFA, The FA, and The Premier League around filtering DEI throughout.

At the micro, club specific level, participants provided discussion around how they perceive responsibility should occur in their own workplaces. Supporting arguments from Henry and Robinson (2010), many believed in narrative aims to recognise gender equity as a matter of good responsibility of everyone in an organisation rather than only the responsibility of women's committees (Sotiriadou and de Haan, 2019). Similarly, roles like

grounds staff, administrators, and cleaners holistically were described by some participants at an individual micro level of responsibility. When asked about responsibilities outside of their personal positions within the organisation, the most common approach suggested continued from the macro argument that those with powerful, leadership roles should hold the obligation to DEI. This supports Norman et al., (2018:410) that diverse and inclusive culture needs to be driven from the 'top-down' so it can be "embedded within the organisation as it is such leadership that is mainly responsible for compliance." As participants in this study were entry and early career employees, a 'top-down' approach arguably makes sense based on Ridgeway's (2011) findings that there is a form of dependence on leaders for those lower-level employees, as they look for guidance and instruction from those with more experience. HR approaches were discussed again as a concern based on the notion they can have a negative implication around promotion. Additionally, regarding HR, COVID-19 became a key point made by interviewees that the current priority for many HR leaders was around health and safety. Thus, if left in HR, it could get lost in translation.

7.5. Chapter 7 Summary

This chapter provided a detailed discussion of the findings from this sequential explanatory mixed-method study, and compared these against the backdrop of previous research. The main findings highlighted how females universally do not perceive the efforts in place to promote gender equity as appropriate. Additionally, results showed that countries like England and Scotland, where DEI systems have been in place for a number of years, do not guarantee higher levels of agreement from those who engage with them day-to-day. Concerns around established priorities from industry leaders, as well as organisational capacity, were depicted as barriers for promoting gender equity holistically throughout the industry. Lastly, responsibility was highlighted following Bourdieu's concept around macro and micro, with indications around institutional theory.

8. Conclusion

8.1. Synthesis of Main Findings

The literature reviewed in Chapters 2 and 3 demonstrated that there has been limited research around diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in the private, corporate side of sport management workplaces. Therefore, this study sought to answer, in the football context, the three research questions which can be found again below:

RQ1: Within football clubs, how are employees perceiving gender equity efforts, and does this vary cross-nationally?

RQ2: How aware are employees within football clubs of policies, funding incentives, organisational initiatives, and legislation around gender equity, and do they consider them appropriate?

RQ3: What do employees think is the best approach to achieve gender equity, and who is responsible for implementing, measuring, and monitoring it?

In Chapter 7, the answer to RQ1 was discussed in detail, with variances identified in perspectives between genders, and also cross-nationally (i.e., across England, Scotland, the US and Canada). Similarities in results included the observation that gender inequity is a global, football industry-wide concern. Additionally, there was a consensus from Phase Two that DEI efforts are just scratching the surface for gender inclusion, as both females and males indicated amendments are necessary for the future. The variances in perspectives showed that males are more likely to believe that their workplaces are equitable, with females indicating they feel that their gender still works as an obstacle in their career experiences. Elaborations were further made in Phase Two, where female participants indicated that many believe DEI approaches have been tokenistic, due to gender equity efforts not being inclusive for all settings in which they operate.

Findings partially supported the second hypothesis of RQ1, about variations cross-nationally, as significant differences were found between the three countries. However, as England and Scotland were projected to have the strongest levels of agreements around DEI efforts being considered impactful (with having tools like The Equality Standard in place), this was not found to be true. In turn, the US, a country without any

specific DEI efforts in the professional sport industry, showed stronger levels of agreement between participants. Key findings from RQ1 can be found visually displayed in Table 8.1.

Table 8.1 RQ1 Key Findings

1.	There is a differentiation between males and females around the effectiveness of gender equity efforts (males are more in agreement it is effective). Females provided examples where it is not effective and they believe their gender impacts chances of earning promotion.
2.	Countries like the US and England have contrasting views between men and women. Cross-nationally, women are similarly experiencing barriers around promotion while men do not see the issue.
3.	Gender roles are apparent as females shared that they have been treated differently.
4.	Both genders alluded to the idea that more work needs to be done.
5.	Suggestions were made that to dismantle gender inequity, more needs to be done around the hiring process with unconscious bias, pushing recruitment processes to become more inclusive.

Answers to RQ2 were also outlined in Chapter 7, in which awareness around DEI efforts from both genders was discussed. Although awareness was confirmed, results showed that participants perceived DEI efforts as insufficient, with lower levels of agreement around awareness towards how their workplaces were approaching gender equity initiatives. There were significant variances once more between males and females, and also cross-nationally. Similarly to RQ1, male participants showed greater levels of agreement that current resources were helpful in their own careers, compared to female counterparts, specifically relating to the idea that legislation is being followed visibly. These differences pertaining to the second hypothesis of RQ2 showed that appropriateness is only being considered by males. This arguably is determined to be counterproductive concerning achieving the goal of gender equity. Cross-nationally, the variances also showed that US participants had higher levels of agreement around legislation, compared to those from England and Scotland. This went against the hypothesis shared previously. However, it can be confirmed that current legislation geared to promoting DEI is not viewed as appropriate. All these key findings can also be visually found in Table 8.2.

Table 8.2 RQ2 Key Findings

1.	There was consensus that training is equitably offered for both genders from all participating countries, however the perception of appropriateness varies. What currently is in place cannot be considered adequate to support gender equity.
2.	There were no significant differences between genders on impacts of sport policies or funding incentives for gender equity. There were significant differences between the US and England, with England having higher levels of agreement.
3.	US participants believe their workplace goes beyond expectation, which rejected hypotheses 3 and 4 for this research question.
4.	Organisations were not always engaged proactively; many were found to be reactive instead to address DEI concerns.
5.	Reactive DEI efforts stem from COVID-19 and BLM protests.

Lastly, with answering RQ3, Phase Two allowed the researcher to determine any best practices participants perceived to be effective, as well as directing attention around responsibility. Hypothesis one was rejected, with the understanding that best practices did not vary by gender, as males in Phase Two differed from the results in Phase One, by showcasing a need for greater improvements. Key findings included transparency concerns around monitoring and evaluation, as minimal participants were aware if this was occurring. There was also a focus around equitably implementing rewards and punishments, while pushing for more responsibility from the top at the macro level (leagues) to feed into the micro (club) level. The hypothesis of responsibility was also rejected, as participants from the three countries all indicated a top-down necessity, as well as capacity concerns regarding DEI responsibility resting with human resource (HR) departments. Once more, a visual display can be found in Table 8.3.

Table 8.3 RQ3 Key Findings

1.	There was a consensus that mandatory/compliance policies and procedures are the key. However, these do not need to become a permanent solution, and can become cemented to business operations.
2.	Communication was perceived as a barrier to DEI holistically and how a compliance approach could help fix these issues department by department.
3.	Responsibility falls on both internally (club) and externally (leagues and governing bodies).
4.	Comments around HR varied. There was the idea that HR already wears multiple hats so this could come as a concern. In North America, there was little to no awareness, with statements made about generic HR surveys which results were never shared, compared to fully aware English participants.
5.	Statements were made that there is no excuse not to be monitoring and evaluating, as in sport they already scout and measure data and performance on the field just as well.

Overall, this thesis was able to answer all three research questions, through testing the hypotheses proposed prior to data collection. For RQ1, it was possible to see how employees perceive gender equity efforts within football clubs. The first hypothesis was accurate, as there were noticeable differences between males and females around gender equity efforts, with females perceiving more efforts are required. Additionally, the second assumption was found to be true, that there are differences between the four countries. However, as indicated earlier in this chapter, it was incorrect to project that England and Scotland would have the strongest level of agreement that DEI efforts were impactful for achieving gender equity.

RQ2 expounded further, to understand how aware employees within football clubs were of gender equity efforts and legislation, and if they consider them appropriate. The first assumption that was demonstrated correctly was that there were variations between males and females regarding awareness of DEI efforts. As females showed they were more aware of DEI efforts, the second hypothesis for this research question showed that there were further differences in perception around the appropriateness of DEI efforts, as males were more in agreement that they believe that they are appropriate. Similar to the first research question, there were significant variations between countries, which confirmed the final hypothesis for RQ2. However, it was assumed the US would have the
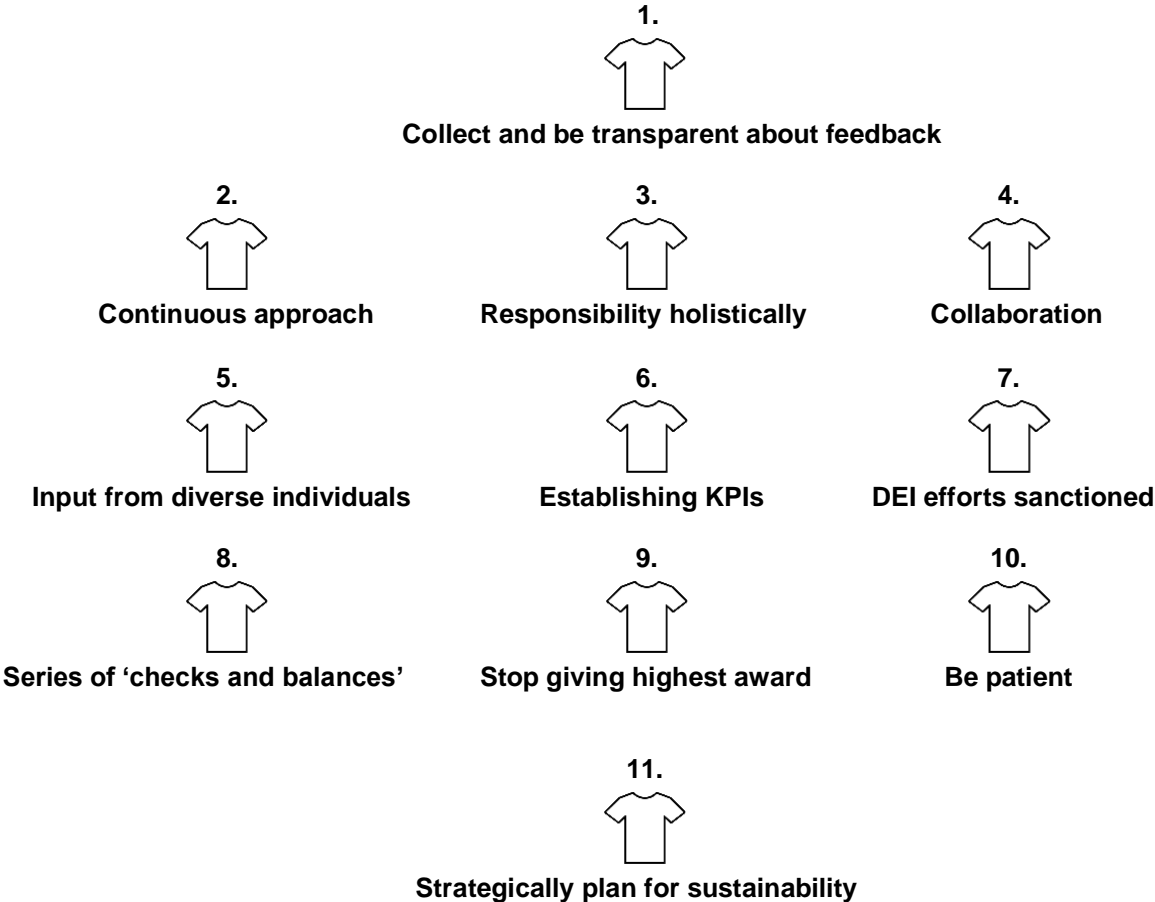
largest disparity between genders, which was not demonstrated, as there were greater variations found in England.

Finally, for RQ3, this study aimed to see what employees observe to be the best approach to achieve gender equity, and who holds the responsibility for implementing, measuring, and monitoring it. The first assumption was demonstrated accurate, as it was believed that 'best practices' would vary between genders, and that females would be able to give greater detail on this more frequently. Additionally, the last hypothesis for RQ3 predicted that the responsibility would vary country by country, with England and Scotland having more staff in DEI roles, whereas in the US, responsibility would sit under HR. This was found to be accurate during interviews, where English participants all spoke on the individuals who oversaw gender equity work in their organisation, holding a DEI coordinator or director position, where US interviewees shared they traditionally relied on HR for DEI.

8.2. Recommendations for Practice

As a result of the analysis and discussions in this study, a series of recommendations for practice have been developed. These recommendations stem from both direct statements made by participants during interviews in Phase Two, as well as insights based on the triangulation of results made by the researcher and her supervisors. One proposal that has been previously made by Yang and Konrad (2011:15) is that, for diversity management practices, it is best to separate early and later adapters "to examine their similarities and differences." The researcher would like to echo this further, by following the suggestions below. Similarly to the number of players on a starting football squad, a total of 11 recommendations have been constructed from this empirical study. However, it is important to note that this number is not justified by the willingness to fit with the number of players on a starting football squad. Instead, the 11 recommendations below specifically cover the implications that can be derived from the findings of the present thesis (Figure 8.1):

Figure 8.1 Recommendations for Practice

1.

⬆

Collect and be transparent about feedback

2.   **3.**   **4.**

⬆   ⬆   ⬆

Continuous approach   **Responsibility holistically**   **Collaboration**

5.   **6.**   **7.**

⬆   ⬆   ⬆

Input from diverse individuals   **Establishing KPIs**   **DEI efforts sanctioned**

8.   **9.**   **10.**

⬆   ⬆   ⬆

Series of 'checks and balances'   **Stop giving highest award**   **Be patient**

11.

⬆

Strategically plan for sustainability

1. With unconscious bias and discrimination being found as an ongoing occurrence, participants in Phase Two highlighted a need for narratives from non-majority groups (females and ethnic minority members) around experiences in the sport industry from various perspectives. Participants shared in interviews that they believed it would be helpful in their own practices to hear from various stakeholder groups of non-majority group members, ranging from fans, to partners, to fellow employees. As Clarkson et al. (2019) indicated, barriers like the 'glass ceiling' are often unseen and / or difficult to notice for those who do not have to deal with them day-to-day. Hence, with collecting and being transparent about feedback from non-majority members, this allows the opportunity to shed light for those who have not experienced discrimination historically (cis-straight, white, men).

2. As often as DEI efforts occur during inductions, and / or as a response to big news stories, it is highly suggested that, going forward, a proactive, continuous approach needs to exist so that adjustments can be made when necessary. With ever changing demographics, it is suggested to keep a continuous model, so that the beliefs can impact new standards which are adopted (de Jonge, 2015). Examples could be having ongoing professional development opportunities around DEI, as well as more revisions to frameworks like The Equality Standard. The simplest and yet most effective form of ongoing efforts is through frequent communication that extends beyond the unique timeframes of COVID-19 and Black Lives Matter (BLM) protests. This is suggested to be done following the c-m-c model (community model centred), which has the focus of football clubs being on community welfare, using money as a means to distribute key social services, goods, and skills to meet community needs that have been used in corporate social responsibility (CSR) areas, but also arguably could be done in the workplace through using resources (like employees), as means to distribute key social services, goods, and skills (Kennedy and Kennedy, 2020).

   Based on responses from participants, DEI awareness was confirmed. However, there was little knowledge around the tools they could use to challenge discrimination. Knowing that simple awareness makes a minimal impact, and is considered counterproductive, there needs to be proactive adjustments so that responsibility does not just fall on the already over-worked HR departments. There is a need for 'champions of DEI' to help push practices in areas that have struggled previously by following hegemonic behaviours (revenue generating areas).

3. Acknowledging that there is a need to spread the responsibility of DEI outside of HR departments, football practitioners need to make plans around representation with the varying identities throughout the industry. This is especially needed during all DEI planning, implementation, evaluation, and future development conversations. Evidence to support this has occurred in other industries where there have been positive outcomes attributed to following actions that represent non-majority groups in recruitment processes, as well as balanced panels, and shortlists for interviews, using skill-based recruitment tasks, and conducting structured interviews (Equality and

Human Rights Commission, 2018a). This supports the first recommendation by highlighting the need for more narratives to dictate future efforts when making plans going forward. For instance, initiatives geared toward promoting gender equity should include insights from women of all backgrounds, so it is illustrative of all identities. The responsibility of this needs to occur holistically at all macro and micro levels. At the macro level, institutions (e.g., leagues and governing bodies) hold a great deal of responsibility following the top-down approach according to participants in this study. Even with this obligation, there needs to be opportunities from micro institutions (e.g., clubs) to shape industry-wide practices. Through following Yang and Konrad (2011), diversity management practices should support the need for formalised organisational processes to be developed and implemented for the purpose of effectively establishing diversity management.

4. The findings in this study support the phrase 'no need to re-invent the wheel'. This was found when discussing implementing, monitoring, and evaluating DEI with participants. This suggestion entails utilising pre-existing, external partners that have focused on DEI historically, and often are found to be non-profit or public entities. Based on one female participant, she discussed how she found success with engaging with club partners around DEI through linking with their CSR teams. Examples of where this has occurred are through the group 'Kick it Out' and The Premier League. This model has also been supported by Kanter (2004), highlighting that in order to successfully pursue a diverse culture, stakeholders in sport need to address the situation through increased collaboration.

5. Based on the results of participation in this study (lack of representation of non-majority groups), diversity issues are revealed once more. To address this, there needs to be more work around the inclusion of intersectional identities. It is found that DEI efforts in the past have only focused on the white, cis-gender, straight women, leaving further marginalisation for women of other intersectional backgrounds (Walker and Melton, 2015). When intersectional identities are equitably represented, inequities do not just focus on binary gender to make a 'them and us' situation, but instead formulate 'we'. Surface level attempts of this have occurred with gender-neutral

language, however, as shown by results in this study, this is not enough, and makes a minimal impact on appropriate representation throughout the industry. Cited also in Walker and Melton (2015:269), studies have shown that "from a managerial perspective, it is important for organizations to be aware of the realities multiple-minority women face within sports […] as administrators need to implement policies and practices that will make marginalized minorities feel more included in the department." From this suggestion, stakeholders must implement inclusion efforts, with input from diverse individuals.

6. Once approaches and / or techniques around DEI efforts have been constructed and agreed upon by all stakeholders, it is essential to establish monitoring and evaluation. Evidence behind this approach has been seen with The European Commission's Strategic Action Plan (2014:10), where they indicated that a successful practice regarding gender equity follows a "balanced approach in setting benchmarks which are realistic and achievable." In doing this, it is suggested to follow traditional business observing practices with establishing key performance indicators (KPIs). Establishing KPIs will allow stakeholders to put resources towards assessing progress through multiple lenses. These KPIs should be in line with capacity in the three areas (social, financial, and HR), so they are in line with the same business normalities. In relation to diversity efforts, consistent transparency, and holistic approaches, also referred to as 'transparency and accountability initiatives' (TAIs), are required for KPIs, which deliver attempts to "place information or processes that were previously opaque in the public domain, accessible for use by citizen groups, providers or policy-makers" (Joshi, 2013:31). Once applied, the measurement options can vary from formal, external reviews, to ongoing, internal reflection. Outside of the sport industry, equity impact assessments have occurred. These have involved eight stages, according to Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) (2010) i) Identification of policy aims; ii) consideration of available data and research; iii) assessment of the likely impact on race equality; iv) consideration of measures or alternative policies; v) consultation; vi) decision; vii) arrangements to monitor and review the way the policy works; and viii)

publication of the results. From the results of this study, similar processes are recommended.

7. Established in Phase One, gender discrimination and ineffective DEI efforts seem to be universal issues for football clubs. Based on responses from the interviews, governing bodies and leagues need to communicate more strategically and efficiently to build best practices, as these do not seem to be happening. Indicated through the work of Danisman et al. (2009:315), a top-down approach is needed, as development is unlikely without leaders "being aware of both the extent of differences in values in their organization, and of processes for dealing with any variation." Having such open communication often leads to room for constructive feedback, as stakeholders come from varying cultural and geographical backgrounds. This will help ensure that best practices do not become a 'one size fits all' approach. Examples where this could occur were discussed by a few participants in Phase Two, with examples around where other business areas were regulated. The most common one was around governing bodies and leagues enforcing regulations like Financial Fair Play (FFP). It is suggested that DEI efforts be constructed and sanctioned similarly, so that when gender discrimination occurs going forward, punishments can be implemented. UEFA has begun piloting this with their #EqualGame campaign through penalising those perpetrating violent behaviour and offences motivated by racism, xenophobia, religious intolerance, or bias (UEFA, 2019).

8. When enforcing compliance, it would be expected for this to occur at the macro, governing body, and league level to make industry-wide impact. To successfully do this, however, individuals at the micro level need to be invested in DEI to help clarify what is feasible. A series of 'checks and balances' needs to be established for leaders in football club workplaces. Returning to the idea that it should not be falling on HR departments, this structure would allow leaders to go beyond 'talking the talk', but now would be enforcing 'walking the walk' with accountability. There is a clear need for accountability based on the variances in responses from males in both phases. Also, as stated in a few of the recommendations prior, a top-down approach helps get

everything cemented industry-wide, and gender equity would not become a 'women's only' issue.

9. During Chapter 3, The Equality Standard was discussed, highlighting the award system clubs are given based on their DEI commitments. However, based on the results from participants, there is a need to stop giving out the highest levels for minimal and baseline efforts, as it is perceived as counterproductive, and allows leaders to falsely believe they are 'doing equity'. By no means is the researcher suggesting positive reinforcements be removed. Nevertheless, returning to the 'developmental-dead ends' highlighted in Chapter 7, setting an end date for DEI reinforces the idea it is a tangible final product. Instead, it needs to be viewed as a continuous, proactive journey. The Premier League Equality Standard is the most prominent example in this study. However, The Premiere League has made efforts to re-evaluate its approach through hiring external consultants, such as Ernst & Young (EY).

10. Another recommendation based off Turconi and Shaw (2021) is to build DEI efforts by not expecting immediate, positive financial results. Often when there are not instant outcomes, legitimacy through institutional theory is lost, and the acceptance of a practice becomes 'ceremonial' and 'superficial' rather than a genuine desire for changes. This in turn can be seen as a form of organisational resistance to change (de Jonge, 2015). In this instance, stakeholders must remember that strategic human resource management (SHRM) has shown that formalised practices can be linked with positive outcomes at an organisation-wide level of analysis, and can take time to be effectively established.

11. Continuing on from this, the last recommendation focuses on the understanding that DEI has the potential to work as a financial and capital investment for the future. This is based on millennials' and future generations' expectations requiring more c-m-c activities from brands and teams they support (Kennedy and Kennedy, 2020). With money being a binary construct (income made or lost), stakeholders need to make a shift of priorities strategically, with KPIs showing value of DEI as 'good business' is

'good for businesses'. To do this, strategic planning is necessary for sustainability (i.e., annual budgets like traditional business). The focus of sport can still be about winning and promotion; however, stakeholders need to keep in mind that they may not see immediate results, but there will be dividends in the future.

8.3 Recommendations for Future Research

Expounding further from the limitations that will be discussed later in this chapter, there are opportunities for future research to be conducted in the area of DEI and professional sport workplaces. As noted, when evaluating diversity management, when qualitative approaches are combined with quantitative ones, these processes can complement each method with an output of rich and detailed information (Kang and Kaplan, 2019). However, future research could be used to investigate using one preferred approach over the other. Specific quantitative approaches could help provide more industry-wide, generalised arguments about the population, while qualitative methods could share greater details around lived experiences. It could also be helpful for future researchers to explore if these DEI issues are common in other footballing countries across the globe, outside of predominantly English-speaking countries and Western society. It, additionally, would be interesting to see if DEI efforts can be found in other sports.

As this specific thesis only explored clubs themselves, there is room in the future for comparisons to occur between governing bodies, fans, and partners. This would also provide insight around institutional theory and isomorphism from new lenses. The last recommendation for future research is for this study to be replicated post-COVID-19, as there would be an opportunity to access more participants, as well as evaluate the results after the reactiveness from Black Lives Matter protests, furlough schemes, and redundancies.

8.4 Limitations of Study

This study has some limitations that are considered worth noting. Mixed-methods limitations indicated earlier by Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009) include that the research design can be very complex. This study did use more time and resources through

implementation, compared to the use of a single qualitative or quantitative approach. As different data collection methods were utilised in each phase of this study, the discussion of limitations is broken down.

Additionally, as the topic of gender equity in the sport workplace currently has a paucity of specific articles relating to DEI in professional sport, several limitations had to be acknowledged for this study. One key limitation based on the philosophical position and chosen methods was that there remain concerns about the imperative nature that researchers must articulate diversity clearly in the parameters of approach (Siegel, 2019). This left some gaps for misinterpretation of findings or justifications of study. In addition, Siegel (2019) also shares that studies using discourse analysis have been critiqued for using the terms discourse, text, narrative, theme, and story, as if they are interchangeable. Therefore, maintaining adequate and clear findings was considered a barrier in this study. The lack of previous positivist approaches to this subject could cause some difficulties. Harrison and Reilly (2011) have found that mixed-methods researchers can have difficult times identifying exemplary research due to absence of best practice templates from which to draw on, when it comes to triangulating the findings. In this present study, an attempt was made to mitigate these limitations by always keeping in mind the need to maintain the overall consistency and clarity in the terms used and their meanings.

During Phase One, the researcher faced barriers around access to participants due to the private sectors limited-access norms. To overcome these challenges, snowball sampling had to be used to build healthy relationships with clubs DEI professionals (if they had them) to introduce the studies aims. As most clubs did not have a DEI professional, often the researcher was referred to the HR department, which typically were limited with capacity, due to other responsibilities day-to-day within their jobs. Even after those contacts were made, access to participants became even more difficult, with COVID-19 causing a pause in sport industry operations. Many applicable clubs were furloughing staff, which made recruitment even more challenging. Additionally, working as a cross-national study, connecting with clubs and participants outside the UK (where the researcher was located) was even more difficult, due to geographic distances making

networking harder. Overcoming this was explained in Chapters 4 and 5. This included using social media networking tools, such as LinkedIn, to directly share the survey with applicable individuals.

Although there were many benefits in conducting an online questionnaire, there were also many limitations researchers needed to consider as well. Some limitations were that the format of survey design made it difficult to probe complex issues, like gender inequities. There were difficulties in knowing if all participants understood all questions properly, and there were additional risks around biases (e.g., self-selected highly motivated section of respondents on certain topics). Lastly, the research team had to be aware around the risk of missing data due to the time-consuming nature of surveys. Nevertheless, as for the limitations developed in the previous paragraph, an attempt was made to mitigate these potential issues by making the survey as clear and to the point (i.e., focused on the specific dimensions needing investigation only) as possible. Lastly for Phase One, a limitation commonly found with surveys is they can be left unfinished when respondents do not feel encouraged or fully aware of their reasons for any given answer due to the virtual settings. In the present study, there were a total of 374 fully completed surveys, meaning 114 surveys were left unfinished.

Phase Two limitations which caused the project to pivot efforts included a change from a series of in-person focus-groups, to individual semi-structured virtual interviews following COVID-19 regulations. Attempts were made to select a male and female from each country accounted for in the study. This, however, was not successfully met due to low responses from those who indicated they were from Scotland and Canada during Phase One. Another limitation about sampling revolves around the fact that because respondents' propensity for participating is "correlated with the substantive topic the researchers are trying to study, there will be self-selection bias in the resulting data" (Olsen, 2011:2). Potential consequences can be that respondents take part because of their strong opinions on the topic and they may not be representative of the whole population. The impacts of this self-selection bias were lessened by the research team intentionally incorporating different demographic characteristics (such as race, or role in the organization) for "judicious post-stratification weighting" (Olsen, 2011:2).

Once interviews began, significant efforts were taken to direct discussions based from prepared, semi-structured interview scripts. Based on discussion, there was a great deal of room for even deeper insights to be revealed, but due to time commitments, this was unrealistic, as sessions would have gone beyond the 60-minute slots asked from participants. The researcher had to respect how busy participants involved were, as most were working full-time in their roles.

Lastly, a notable limitation revolved around the focus of one sport in predominantly English-speaking nations. This arguably restricts the ability to make a generalisation, due to the variations of sports and languages used around the globe. Participants within the current study do not represent the entire semi and professional football structure, nor do they represent every sport or sport program. Although focused around DEI, gender was the main characteristic investigated, thus leaving limits around other protected characteristics. Another limitation to this study was the impact of COVID-19 causing modification to data collection methods. With initial aims to follow, Andrew et al. (2011)'s suggestion that focus groups would be especially effective to identify new feedback on proposed messages or services, while also being able to record participants' expansions on responses, social distancing regulations restricted in-person meetings, which shifted to digital, individual, semi-structured interviews.

8.5 Concluding Remarks

This research has been conducted at an interesting point in time during the COVID-19 pandemic. It additionally comes at a time of prominence surrounding social injustice protests occurring across the globe. This study revealed that the dominant gender power relations continue to contribute to football leadership, with a lack of diversity and gender equity management. The main results found highlight a necessary top-down approach from stakeholders, with proactive follow-through approaches to DEI in football workplaces. Similar to the work of McLeod (2020), this study offered new insight utilising institutional theory in sport, by showing how national institutional systems (such as affirmative action and legislation) can act as drivers and barriers of isomorphism. The

findings from this study may be transferable to other countries and football organisations; however, they would need to be investigated to confirm whether this is really the case. Moreover, further research is needed to identify systems for improving DEI in other sports, as well to increase DEI opportunities for all women and girls across the globe.

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10. Appendices

Appendix 1. Project Brief for Participant Recruitment

**Gender Equity Initiatives Within Football Workplaces:
A Cross-National Comparison**

As sports institutions become more committed to the development of gender equity, it is crucial this also occurs for the **non-playing roles** in the organisation as well. With initiatives like the Premier League Equality Standard (PLES), MLS Works 'Soccer For All', Irelands 20x20 and the FA Diversity & Inclusion Plan, it is important to see if there are any links cross-nationally that can be made.

Gabrielle Salomon of Manchester Metropolitan University is a PhD candidate investigating the effectiveness diversity and inclusion initiatives have on gender equity within **semi and professional football** workplaces in **England, Scotland, Ireland, Canada and the U.S.A** and she is now excited to invite participants to take part in her study. For this, she needs semi and professional football clubs to provide **full-time employees in entry to middle management roles to participate in an online questionnaire.**

Link to questionnaire: https://mmu.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_bPYvMdd7HXu46JT

This project aims to investigate the following research questions:

- Do sport policies, funding incentives, organisational initiatives and employment legislation impact gender equity in the football/soccer management workplace?
- Are there any links that can be made around affirmative action policies on gender equity in the football management workplaces?
- What is the best way to measure the impacts on gender equity from sport policies, funding incentives, organisational initiatives and employment legislation on the football management workplace?

The benefits of participating in this study include allowing for leagues and clubs to maintain dominance of staying ahead with demonstrating their commitment towards diversity and inclusion in all areas of sport. The consequences of not maintaining a gender equitable workplace include lower profitably, harassment lawsuits, lower staff retention, and a negative reputation.

This project is built on identifying gaps within monitoring systems for initiatives like PLES, EFL Equality Code of Practice, and MLS Works 'Soccer For All'.

If your club is interested in taking part, please contact:

Gabrielle Salomon

gabrielle.a.salomon@stu.mmu.ac.uk

Appendix 2. Participant Consent Form

Faculty of Business and Law

Manchester Metropolitan University

All Saints Campus
Oxford Road
Manchester, M15 6BH
United Kingdom

CONSENT FORM

Title of Project: **A Cross-National Investigation for Evaluating Gender Equity Initiatives in the Football Workplace**

Name of Researcher: **Gabrielle Salomon (gabrielle.a.salomon@stu.mmu.ac.uk)**

Please initial all boxes

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet dated **04/09/2019** (version 3) for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason. If I withdraw from the study, the research team will keep the information about me that has already been obtained.

3. I understand that data collected during this study will be processed in accordance with data protection law as explained in the participant information sheet. I also recognise that all data collected will be analysed in the United Kingdom.

4. I agree to allow the use of anonymised verbatim quotes in the reporting of research findings.

5. I agree to the interview / focus group / consultation being audio recorded. The recording will be transcribed, anonymised and analysed for the purposes of the research. The recordings will be stored until transcribed and then destroyed.

6. I agree to treat all information shared by other participants as confidential.

7. I agree to take part in the above study.

_____ _____ _____
Name of Participant   Date   Signature

_____ _____ _____
Name of Person   Date   Signature
taking consent.

Consent form date of issue: **04/09/2019**
Consent form version number: **3**   Page 1 of 1

Appendix 3. Online Self-administered Survey (To Be Continued)

Questionnaire Drafted Questions: Gender Equity in the Football Workplace

1. Please select the country your employer is located
   a. Answer Options Drop Down Box (England, Scotland, Ireland, Canada or U.S.A)

2. Do you agree with the statement that 'the football industry is a male-dominated industry'?
   a. Yes or No

3. Please indicate levels of agreement

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
My gender impacts my role in my organisation.					
There are barriers around promotion within my workplace.					
There are barriers around the pay gap within my workplace.					
There are training and leadership opportunities equitably offered in my workplace.					
Both males and females are treated equitably within my workplace.					
I feel I have the resources from leadership staff to progress equitably to my peers in my workplace.					

4. OPEN QUESTION –
   Does your employer follow any initiatives, schemes, and or quotas to promote gender equity in your workplace, and if so what do they include?

5. OPEN QUESTION –
   Do you feel your workplace appropriately offers gender equity initiatives, schemes, and or quotas to everyone; why or why not?

Appendix 3. Online Self-administered Survey (Continued/ To Be Continued)

"An employer (A) must not discriminate against an employee of A's (B)— (a) as to B's terms of employment; (b) in the way A affords B access, or by not affording B access, to opportunities for promotion, transfer or training or for receiving any other benefit, facility or service; (c) by dismissing B; (d) by subjecting B to any other detriment."

6. Please indicate levels of agreement based on the above passage:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I believe this legislation is visibly followed in my workplace.					
I believe the language in this legislation is appropriate for my workplace.					
I believe my workplace goes beyond the expectations of this legislation.					

7. On a scale from 1-5, I believe I can progress quickly if I work hard in my workplace due to the gender equity initiatives, schemes, and or quotas my employer follows.
    a. 1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree

8. On a scale from 1-5, I believe my gender has impacted the chances of earning a promotion within my workplace.
    a. 1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree

9. OPEN QUESTION –
    Do you believe gender equity laws and policies in the sport workplace need revised; why or why not?

Appendix 3. Online Self-administered Survey (Continued)

10. Please indicate levels of agreement:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
You believe sport policies have impacted gender equity in your workplace.					
You believe funding incentives have impacted gender equity in your workplace.					
You believe organisational initiatives have impacted gender equity in your workplace.					
You believe employment legislation has impacted gender equity in your workplace.					

11. Within your own personal career, what aspirations do you have (promotions, raises, experiences, etc)?

DEMOGRAPHICS ALL OPEN (w/ prefer not to say option made clearly each question)
12. What is your role within your organisation?
13. How many full-time employees would you estimate are within your organisation?
14. Please specify your age.
15. Please specify the gender you identify as.
16. Please specify your ethnicity.
17. Please specify your sexual orientation.
18. Optional: Please specify the football club you are affiliated with.
19. As interviews will be conducted later in the year, I am looking for participants of this survey to volunteer for this as well. If you are interested, please leave your contact information in the box provided.

Appendix 4. List of Semi-structured Interview Question

Gender Equity in Football Workplaces Interview Schedule

Introduction: Elaborate interview focus on diversity, equality, inclusion (DE&I) impact on gender equity specifically within semi and professional football/soccer workplaces.

1. Can you please share your age, gender and preferred pronouns, race and sexuality?
   a. Can you please also share the organization you're employed by, your role and where you geographically are located?

2. How has diversity, inclusion, and gender equity been taught or described to you?
   a. What does it personally mean to you?

3. What does diversity, inclusion, and gender equity look like in the sport industry from your perspective as an employee?
   a. How do you feel the sport of football/soccer specifically handles it?

4. How do you feel your workplace handles diversity, inclusion, and gender equity?
   a. How do you think it's being viewed by other colleagues?

5. What do you think about the awareness of diversity, inclusion, and gender equity initiatives, schemes, and or quotas in your workplace?
   a. Why do you think this occurs?
   b. Do you think your workplace could do more around promoting and if so, how?

6. What do you think is the best approach to diversity, inclusion, and gender equity in football workplaces?
   a. Should it be compliance based?

7. Whose responsibility do you feel it is to promote diversity, inclusion, and gender equity through your workplace and the football industry? and why?
   a. How do governing bodies (such as leagues) or domestic governments come into play with these?
   b. Do you believe the football industry needs their own set of policies and laws? If so, what does this look like?

8. Is diversity, inclusion and gender equity monitored or measured in your workplace? Do you believe there are any best practices to this?

9. Within your own personal career, what aspirations do you have (promotions, raises, experiences, etc)
   a. What do you feel you will need to succeed?
   b. Are these services currently accessible?
   c. What do you believe your role should be in diversity, inclusion and gender equity in your workplace?