Disciplinary Mechanisms and the Discourse of Identity: The Creation of 'Silence' in an Elite Sports Academy

Abstract

Organization studies research exposes the need to examine power relations embedded within the design of organizations, the construction of normative behaviour, and the production of socially constructed meanings that lead to the removal of employee voice. Drawing upon 21 qualitative interviews with Premiership football academy members, this article examines the regulation, control and 'silencing' of young English professional footballers. Building upon two existing literatures concerning the institutional dynamics of footballing traineeship, and the concept of organizational 'silence', the article explains how characteristics associated with surveillance mechanisms and the perpetuation of institutional norms lead to the configuration of a climate of silence. Utilizing the work of Michel Foucault and Erving Goffman, the article addresses the call for an understanding of the interplay between social actors and the confines of their structural context as an example of restrictive practice and for providing insight into the 'how' of silencing.

Keywords: silence, identity, discipline, elite sport, organizational culture

Introduction

The notion of creating and sustaining employee silence as a normative feature of organizational life has previously received attention in relation to concepts associated with the cultural components of various organizations (Brown and Coupland 2005; Morrison and Milliken 2000). Efforts have been made to explain key issues that contribute towards the reluctance or inability of employees to express their 'voice' in

workplace settings (Donaghey et al. 2011). For example, research indicates that a culture of employee silence is likely to arise when voicing one's opinion is perceived as futile or potentially damaging to career progression, and/or where employees are perceived as displaying a lack of credibility or established presence within an organization's hierarchy (Piderit and Ashford 2003). In addition, managers who react uncooperatively towards receiving feedback, or are hostile towards employee voice, cultivate an environment that discourages upward communication (Morrison and Milliken 2000). In this instance, the culture of silence may be justified by, and reinforced through, an adherence to core values and a universal acceptance of key organizational rules and regulations (Argyris 1977). Further research examining specific cultural features of organizational settings has identified individualistic and competitive cultures as sites that may foster a mode of 'voluntary imposed silence' amongst employees, whereby the restriction of voice and the withholding of knowledge might be implemented as a strategy to regain control from those in positions of authority (Blackman and Sadler-Smith 2009; Pinder and Harlos 2001). Whilst self-imposed silence can be enabling for subordinates, it may also contribute to the deterioration of trust amongst employees, impacting upon the ability to detect errors, engage in learning and facilitate organizational efficiency (Milliken, Morrison, and Hewlin 2003; Premeaux and Bedeian 2003).

Although the concept of silence within workplace organizations is often portrayed in a negative way, in this article we wish to emphasize the distinction between being silent and being silenced (Fivush 2010). Thus, whilst acknowledging the multiple and nuanced meanings of the notion of 'silence' for employees and employers alike, research has sought to examine the social context of organizational units, typically citing the positive correlation of 'power distance' and the withholding

of opinion as a precursor to silence (Huang et al. 2005). In this view, clearly defined power relations within organizational settings provide a cultural climate wherein subordinates become increasingly attuned to status cues that communicate threats or can be associated with severe negative consequences, significantly impacting upon the propensity to 'speak out' or challenge authority (Kish-Gephart 2009; Morrison and Rothman 2009). Examinations of the discourse surrounding employee silence and power relations, therefore, place an emphasis upon the design, structure and internal complexion of organizations, identifying the cultural inferences, relations and interactions that guide work–life experiences and contribute towards the establishment, disciplining and silencing of employees (Brown and Coupland 2005; Fletcher and Watson 2007). Fivush (2010) argues that the process of silencing can denote a loss of power and an inability to (re)assert a sense of self (and 'voice') that is autonomous to organizational ideals. In contrast, the conscious adoption (and shared acceptance) of that silence signifies the ability to express a mode of empowerment that has the potential to promote a sense of belonging and/or to create a narrative of resistance (Brown and Coupland 2005). The concealment of voice has also been portrayed as beneficial to the inner workings of organizational structures, with related literature highlighting the dissimulation of industrial and trade 'secrets' as an example of how such practices act to benefit managerial efficiency (Donaghey et al. 2011; Podsakoff et al. 2000).

To date, there has been little, if any, sociological examination of the extent to which athletes within elite sports settings are able to voice aspects of their personhood. That said, the concealment of, and stigma associated with, sporting pain and injury has been addressed (Roderick 2006a; Robidoux 2001) alongside the notion of 'sportsmanship' as a mode of pro-social silence, that is, the withholding of

complaints and the acceptance of inconveniences for the purpose of cooperative motives (Van Dyne, Ang, and Botero 2003). Thus, the central purpose of this article is to identify structural mechanisms involved in silencing those within a specific organizational context, that of an elite sports (professional football/soccer) academy. Research concerning organization studies and the perpetuation of employee silence has demonstrated the need to further examine instances of power relations embedded within the design of organizations, the construction of normative behaviour and the expansive production of ideologies and socially constructed meanings that lead to the removal of employee voice (Argyris 1977; Brown and Coupland 2005; Brown et al. 2010; Milliken, Morrison, and Hewlin 2003). Whilst notions of power and socialization in elite sport have been explored, the primary focus of such research places attention upon sporting performance, talent development and coaching practice (Cushion and Jones 2006, 2014; Potrac and Jones 2009). Furthermore, such research fails to draw upon literature embedded within management and organization studies, ignoring the connection between conceptual issues arising in both sport and wider organizational contexts.

Building upon two existing literatures concerning the personal and institutional dynamics of footballing traineeship, and the concept of organizational 'silence', this article seeks to illuminate the complex interplay between institutional norms and the social construction of self for academy (elite youth) footballers. More specifically, it demonstrates how characteristics associated with surveillance mechanisms, performance assessment and the perpetuation of institutional norms by senior organizational members may lead to the configuration of a climate of silence. These findings are important because they seek to address the call for a clearer understanding of the interplay between social actors and the confines of their

structural environments as an example of restrictive practice, and to provide further insight into the 'how' of silencing (Donaghey et al. 2011). By drawing upon the nuances of elite sport, the article provides a vantage point from which to better understand aspects of organizational regulation and control, whilst furthering debates around the importance of examining organizational behaviour in and through sporting locales (Brown and Coupland 2015; Day, Gordon, and Fink 2012; Lok and de rond 2013).

Theoretical Perspectives

In order to encapsulate the culture of the organization under study, and to understand how core values are cultivated and sustained in relation to notions of employee silence, it is to the work of Michel Foucault and Erving Goffman that we initially turn. In so doing, we use Foucault's (1977) notion of disciplinary power to comprehend the formative structure of the football academy in question, and how this impacts the development and identity construction of its incumbents. Thus, Foucault's (1977) concepts relating to disciplinary regimes are applied to examine how the function of power may shape specific practices or behaviours within organizational locales, highlighting how techniques of discipline influence individuals to reproduce and internalize specific values and norms, acquiring and 'displaying' a particular notion of self. Acknowledging existing scholarship that examines mechanisms of disciplinary power within sporting cultures (Chapman 1997; Heikkala 1993; Johns and Johns 2000; Shogan 1999), a Foucauldian perspective is utilised to expose how notions of 'self' and 'secure identities' are realised and defined in relation to norms made available through disciplinary practice. The root of Foucault's concept of power is embedded in the notion of capacity (Patton 1998). The type of action of which a

4

body is capable may depend upon its physical, social and/or institutional constitution, social and institutional relations, and the moral interpretation that defines acts or behaviours (Patton 1998). Therefore, it is important to consider levels of interaction alongside social and institutional relations when discussing the construction of power relations within organizational settings. To this end, our theoretical approach seeks to provide insight into how we might better assess the level of agency that individuals possess within workplace organizations, whilst furthering debates around identity construction amongst those in positions of relative subservience within professional sporting locales. A central theme here is that of discipline. We argue that within sporting institutions at least, a disciplined self is effectively a 'silenced' self; that is, one which adheres to a particular normative way of being and conforming. We frame this argument in such a way that 'silence' relates to 'managerial practice' – in this instance, the managerial practices of the coaching and sport science staff responsible for player development – limiting opportunities for employees to 'speak out' through a disciplined self.

We are, of course, cognizant of the fact that a Foucauldian perspective presents limitations for studying institutional relations and core concepts associated with organizational culture. When analyzing the body in an institutional setting it is important to consider not only the social space that individuals occupy but also the numerous micro-practices that constitute interactions that take place within that space (Bevir 1999). Whilst a Foucauldian perspective provides insight into the 'how' of power and its impact upon the cultivation of behavioural norms, Hacking (2004, 300) insists that there is something absent from such an approach indicating that, 'Foucault gave us ways in which to understand what is said, can be said, what is possible, what

is meaningful…He gave us no idea of how, in everyday life, one comes to incorporate those possibilities and impossibilities as part of oneself.' In turn, critiques of Foucault's work have placed emphasis upon a lack of attention to the capacity of the individual, or collective, to engage with alternative forms of regulation that oppose the introduction and extension of disciplinary practices, and how power relations framed by a normalizing judgment are enacted through processes of social interaction (Garland 1986; Giddens 1981; Gubrium and Holstein 2011).

We argue that to understand discourses of power and control within organizational cultures one must be attuned to how the 'self' is realized, altered and negotiated in relation to changes in 'material practice' (Newton 1998). It is here, of course, that a consideration of Goffman's (1959, 1961a, 1961b) work proves fruitful providing, as it does, a sense of how individuals within specific locations establish identities and roles that define a presentation and construction of the 'self'. The incorporation of an interactionist perspective (Goffman 1959) within this paper demonstrates how dominant modes of behaviour are displayed in relation to the core values associated with identity (re)presentation amongst academy athletes, aiding in the perpetuation, and solidification, of a particular notion of 'self' that is accepted by significant others.[1] Goffman's (1959) interpretation and representation of self is said to accommodate the Foucauldian concept of disciplinary power and governance as Hacking (2004, 277) suggests that, 'both are essential for understanding how classifications of people interact with the people classified'. Though relatively uncommon, the amalgamation of the offerings of Foucault and Goffman provides a complimentary approach to exploring how the social structure of organizations influences and shapes interaction amongst the lives of their inhabitants (Burns, 1992; Collinson 1999).

Youth, Football and Academy Culture

The fundamental role of elite academies in English professional football is to 'develop players for the first team or (at least) generate income through the sale of "marketable assets"' (Stratton et al. 2004, 201). A definition of such institutions highlights the reproduction of dominant capitalist social relations and the exploitation of athletes as commodities that are often associated with, and endemic to, modern forms of professional and commercialised sport (Brohm 1978; Thorpe 2004; Van Rheenen 2012). As such, the athlete bodies, and their skill sets, are valorized according to economic worth solidifying their organisational position within such environments (Nesti et al. 2012). Like a host of other talent 'development' and/or 'pathway' mechanisms within the realm of professional sport, football academies are also responsible for facilitating a programme of learning that includes the tactical, technical, and physiological components of player development, whilst also providing educational and welfare support in the areas of diet and nutrition, psychological awareness and formal academic and/or vocational progression (Stratton et al. 2004; Premier League 2011). Whilst, in theory, such provision demonstrates a humanistic (and holistic) approach to employee development, there is little available evidence surrounding the everyday organizational experiences of trainee professional footballers save for that concerning the facilitation of their educational progression (Monk 2000).

The educational attainment of professional football youth trainees is a subject that has received a significant amount of attention (Parker 2000a). Resulting discussion has raised concerns about the lack of emphasis placed upon educational attainment within

professional football , suggesting that clubs have traditionally propagated a restricted view of educational progression on account of the fact that related activities might constitute something of a 'distraction' to player development (Monk 2000). In turn, there is evidence to suggest that academic success may be perceived by trainees themselves as a hindrance to their overall goal of achieving 'professional' player status (McGillivary et al. 2005; McGillivray 2006) or, worse still, as an implicit admission of footballing failure (Parker 2000a).

Intertwined with formal programmes of education within football academies are a set of behavioural codes and messages that play an integral part in identity construction and which are both accepted and revered by peers and significant others (see Parker 2000b). Indeed, an acceptance of institutionally defined hegemonic masculine values forms a central component of the occupational identities that youth trainees are expected to uphold (Parker 2000b). A willingness to accept pain and injury is central to one's 'professional attitude', and is a value that reinforces a strong adherence to the norms of wider footballing culture (Roderick, Waddington and Parker 2000; Roderick 2006b). Players who openly admit to injury risk the social stigma of being labelled idle and may face taunts from peers in the form of derogatory 'banter' often directed towards their (hetero)sexuality (Roderick et al. 2000). In line with the traditional values of all-male, working class culture, educational attainment has often been seen as the very antithesis of such masculine norms (Parker 2000b). Since its early beginnings traineeship within professional football has progressed from a somewhat ad hoc form of employment to an altogether more regulated, systematic and standardized set of working practices (Parker 1995). Research focusing on the environment surrounding the professional game indicates that authoritarian

management styles form a common part of the industry's culture (Kelly and Waddington 2006; Carter 2006).

Although in recent years structural changes have been implemented within elite football academies with the aim of providing a more 'well-rounded' experience for youth trainees, those athletes within the system often invest their efforts into establishing an identity that is bound by this authoritarian occupational culture (Parker 1996a). Likened to that of Goffman's (1961) conceptualisation of 'total institutional life', football clubs (and especially the experiences of youth trainees), are often shaped by a variety of 'encompassing tendencies', which collectively combine to refine the contours of a highly enclosed and structured existence (Parker 1996b). Such an environment may serve to cultivate narrow identities, as sporting performances become central to the athlete lives restricting alternative roles or interests that help facilitate a differing sense of 'self' (Brown and Potrac 2009). Hence, assimilating oneself into the world of elite youth football requires the development of a particular kind of social identity.

The particular setting under examination within this paper provides unique insight into the socialisation processes of 'silence', and the silencing aspects of communication within this context, as it draws upon a cultural environment that contains distinctive characteristics often disassociated from 'traditional' workplace organisations. Verbal chastisement, physical punishment, occupational uncertainty and the acceptance of a subordinate position often shape the institutional relations that young players must not only endure but respond to in a positive manner (Parker 1995, 2006; Cushion and Jones 2014; Kelly and Waddington 2006;). For youth footballers,

the body is situated as a central site of (re)presentation in relation to the institutional norms and dominant modes of behaviour that guide interaction within the academy environment. Physical markers of performance become a mechanism through which to distinguish individual excellence and demonstrate adherence to 'professional' ideals, an aspect that is perhaps absent from more regular forms of apprenticeship.

Despite such distinctions, the 'trainee' status of academy athletes is particularly pertinent as it provides an exploration into notions of 'voice' and 'silencing' amidst an environment that should ideally provide a nurturing and holistic approach to learning and development (Armour 2011; Cassidy 2010; Jones 2006). Similar vulnerabilities can be found amongst young employees who embark upon graduate training schemes that promote personal development through creative learning environments, yet in reality foster a shared inability to contribute towards developing ideas and reside within a culture that portrays voicing opinion as a 'risky business' (Brown and Coupland 2005; Brown et al. 2010; Coupland 2001). By placing emphasis upon the power relations embedded within the structures of the football academy, insight into an understanding of how dominant norms are internalized, adopted and perpetuated within a 'learning' environment can be deciphered. Such an approach emphasizes the manner through which conformity to institutional values may function as an effective mechanism to silence the voice of inhabitants, and create a culture whereby humanistic approaches to learning are reduced to the requirements of 'performativity' (Ball 2003).

Context and Method

Valley FC [2] is an English Premier League football club located on the periphery of a large UK urban conurbation. The broader geographical area within which the Club is situated has a staunch industrial heritage built upon the manufacturing industry and working-class values that typically underpin its everyday working practices. Allied to this, Valley FC boasts significant support within its locality, the hallmarks of which are grounded in notions of loyalty, pride, passion and commitment; characteristics which the Club itself promotes amongst its youth trainees. At the time of the research there were 40 Football Association (FA) registered elite academies in England, 18 attached to Premier League clubs with a further 22 located at clubs from the Football League (see Premier League 2011). The empirical data presented here draws upon interactions with coaching, support staff and youth trainees who were members of Valley FC's Under 18 (U18) Academy.

Valley FC's youth trainees were selected on the basis of their performances as 'schoolboy' players – or what were more commonly known as 'trialists' (individuals 'on trial' with the Club). Between the ages of eight to 16 years trialists were eligible to formally enrol ('sign on') with the Academy. From ages nine to 11 years selected players were asked to sign a formal one-year contract to tie them to the Club. At the age of 12 players could sign a formal contract for a minimum of two years. These players trained with and represented (played in representative, competitive games) the Academy in their free time (usually at weekends). At the age of 16, players may be offered a formal two year 'scholarship' becoming full-time, paid trainees at the club.[3] Educational provision for those on a two-year scholarship was carried out within the Academy itself. At 17 years, if they were deemed to be good enough, players signed a full-time 'professional' contract with the Club. The length of this contract was

determined by the Academy manager and coaching staff. Valley FC advocated an ethos of developing 'well-rounded' footballers through a 'holistic' developmental approach.

Data Collection

The research consisted of 21 semi-structured interviews, five of which were conducted with staff members at the Valley FC Academy and 16 with youth trainees contracted to a formal two-year scholarship.[4] Observations of interactions between youth trainees and staff members were also documented to supplement interview data (Flick 2009).[5] Grounded in a constructionist ontology and interpretivist epistemology, the premise of the research was to understand how the concept of disciplinary power impacted the lives, experiences and development of young players at Valley FC. Additionally, the research sought to examine how youth trainees and Academy staff negotiated identity construction within the workplace. By interpreting participants' social experiences through both a Foucauldian and interactionist lens, in-depth insight into their subjective experiences of Academy life was attained.

Data Analysis

Interview data were collected and transcribed verbatim. Open coding allowed for the data to be closely examined, dissected into discrete parts, and compared for similarities and differences (Corbin and Strauss 2008). Text relating to Key over-arching themes such as 'discipline', 'surveillance' and 'professionalism' were delineated highlighted and grouped into specific segments. A 'de-contextualisation' and 're-contextualisation' approach toward analysing and organizing data was adopted. Relevant text within the interviews was isolated into meaningful segments,

and 'tagged' to identify specific features or patterns emerging within the data. Data were then organized by a system of focused coding, where a more selective and precise process of analysis was utilized (Charmaz 2006). By tagging segments of text with mnemonic codes (codes used to remember names of specific categories or topics), an organizing system was developed. A number of complex and diverse issues emerged from the data that underpinned participant perceptions of organizational practice. In the discussion that follows, these issues have been categorized in line with three central themes that collectively represent the experiential landscape across which participant views were aired. These themes comprise: (i) disciplinary power and the internalization of 'norms'; (ii) the internalization of 'norms' over time, and (iii) the concept of 'professionalism'/cultivation of a definitive 'attitude'.

Disciplinary Power and the Internalization of 'Norms'

It was clear that the structural and cultural organization of Valley FC's Academy impacted youth trainees both physically and emotionally. Normative values relating to technical and physiological performance were reinforced by a constant 'normalizing judgment' (Foucault 1979) in the guise of monthly reviews, fitness tests, weight, strength and hydration measurements and body fat tests. Such power/knowledge relations were utilized to guide practices and behaviours capable of shaping organizational reality, a reality that could be reinforced and legitimized through interactions between 'role holders' (those in positions of authority) and the trainees as group members (Leclercq-Vandelannoitte 2011). As indicated by Valley FC's sport scientist Geoff Shortland, an adherence to, or deviation from, specific physiological markers (i.e. body fat percentage), exposed 'truths' surrounding physical performance

and the trainees' desires to adhere and conform to behavioural traits:

> The sort of standard that we set, for an outfield player, must be below 10% [body fat]. For a goalkeeper, we give them a little bit of leeway because, obviously, goalkeepers are predominantly anaerobic …We give them anything below, sort of, 12%. Most of the lads have been spot on. We do get problems in the past where they've gone over that percentage. So I'll speak to them from a nutritional point of view: is it a nutritional problem? I'll try and identify that first: is it a nutritional problem? Or is it a training problem? Or is there other things going on? We'll try and identify that and address that.

Such normative pressures highlighted the indirect influences aimed at impeding and 'institutionalising voice' throughout workplace organizations (Donaghey et al. 2011). Here mechanisms were utilised to identify abnormalities, 'addressed' through inquiry into the training, nutritional and personal aspects of the youth trainees' lives, in an effort to reassert established performance standards. Such systems and practices symbolized an expected behaviour, reinforcing key beliefs associated with institutional norms that encouraged youth trainees to 'take on' desirable aspects of the organizational ideal (Detert and Treviño 2010). Accompanying the Foucauldian concept of a normalizing judgment was the presence of a network of surveillance sites and documentation (Manley, Palmer and Roderick 2012) that attempted to 'fix' the trainees in their performances and induce a mode of self-surveillance and ultimately self-discipline, as first year trainee Eric Robinson explained:

> **Interviewer:** Is there anyone else who monitors your progress?
>
> **Eric:** Well you're reviewing yourself; you're reviewing your own progress really, 'cos, you know, obviously, how well you're doin', whether you're playin' regularly or whatever. And then there's the Academy manager. He'll be watching you, all of the coaches, and, obviously, there'll be the College people who review our work and how we're doin' in our, like, education. And then there'll be Graham [Academy Coach]…Everyone's lookin' in. There's always someone watching you.

The disciplinary mechanism imposed by staff housed within the academy demonstrated the institutional arrangements (Donaghey et al. 2011) utilised to promote an expected mode of behaviour. Such measures maintain the capability to guide and control interactions within organizations, indirectly restricting the voice of subordinates through the capability of senior personnel's 'enactment and control over structures, systems and practices' (Deter and Treviño 2010, 257).

At Valley FC, reviews of trainee performances occurred once every three months. The Academy Coach, Graham Kidd, asked each trainee to rate themselves on a scale of one to ten; one being 'poor' and ten being 'excellent', across a variety of different categories related to their skill acquisition and technical development. Once the trainees had rated themselves they then met with Graham who reviewed their individual score sheets and adjusted their ratings according to what *he* judged their scores to be. The documentation of performances promoted an inward gaze and a strong sense of self-discipline, functioning to correct and coerce the youth trainees into adopting a desired 'norm'/standard. Through such disciplinary mechanisms and processes, trainee bodies became both the object of knowledge and subject to individual transformation and external control. Upon discussing the monitoring of his progress, Oliver, a second year trainee, noted the methods of documentation in play and the regularity of assessment that occurred within the Academy:

> **Interviewer:** Have you been through the review process?
>
> **Oliver:** Yeah, I've done the reviews.
>
> **Interviewer:** Can you explain to me what happens?
>
> **Oliver:** We'll sit down with our coach and we'll be [video]recorded and we'll 'ave a little book from the Premier League and it's got loads of different

attributes and you put down, like, one to ten where you think you're at. There's loads of different things for technical and tactical, and you just sit there and you talk to your coach and he'll say, 'Yeah. I agree with that' and then you just talk about your weaknesses, which you need to improve on and your strong points as well. It's all about gettin' you to a standard that they want, so it's good really.

As in Brown and Coupland's (2005) analysis of employee silence, such processes exerted normative pressures at Valley FC concerning an adherence to standardized behaviours set by significant others, advocating a mode of control that silenced individuals through conformity to uncritically adopted and accepted organizational protocols. In this instance 'silence' was perceived as enabling as those who conformed to values associated with a strong sense of self-discipline, adhering to a desired set of pre-determined 'standards', legitimized their position as a committed individual. Whilst performance assessment may act as a formal disciplinary mechanism to promote the internalization of expected norms, individuals may be aware of the economic value of silence and the financial benefits to restricting voice within a disciplinary environment. Thus, the concept of silence is not simply a sign of powerlessness or an expression of dominance within organizational culture (Brown and Coupland 2005; Tannen 2001). In this sense, Valley FC scholars were able to utilise silence as a self-directed strategy to demonstrate compliance for the purpose of career enhancement and the potential to acquire financial rewards.

Like Barker and Cheney's (1994, 30) examination of contemporary organizational life, discipline at the Club was 'embedded in the social relations of the organization and its actors'. Upon discussing the concept of monitoring and discipline, the Club's Education and Welfare Officer, Colin Wilson, indicated that discipline was to be considered a 'normal' part of the weekly routine implemented not only by a system of

recorded reviews but also through a process of surveillance that involved constant interaction among Academy staff:

> As far as the system here is concerned discipline is not a separate thing, discipline is part of your week-to-week normal activity and we would address things through conversations, through reviews. We would never say that things become a discipline problem because they don't; they're not allowed to get to that point.

Systems of surveillance, data analysis, and a stringent daily regimen were pursued for the purpose of creating docile and malleable bodies that were exposed in their individuality, allowing for differentiation and identification of those who failed to conform to normative standards (Manley et al. 2012; Williams and Manley 2014). Set within 'an activity of information and assimilation of material' (Canguilhem 1978, 72) youth trainee lives were fixed by the acquisition of knowledge for the purposes of productivity and efficiency. The mechanisms of surveillance located within the Academy were interpreted by authority figures as an integrative device utilized to 'enforce the dialectic of control' (Leflaive 1996, 42). The use of normative pressures and systems of monitoring reflected the 'informal' modes of managerial control that reinforced key organizational values; values that attempted to restrict the notion of resistance or the 'voicing' of disdain towards the dominant cultural discourses that encompassed trainee lives (Sewell and Barker 2006). Compliance with such measures was assimilated into the culture of the organization under the guise of creating and promoting a productive workplace environment and through identifying progressive individual performance, as indicated by the following exchange with Education and Welfare Officer, Colin Wilson:

Interviewer: Are there any measures to make sure they [footballers] stay on track?

Colin: Oh, I think we got everything … that's *well* enough. There's no escape. I mean there's nobody that can under-perform either educationally, fitness wise … I mean there's so much monitoring of performance 'cos that's what we're talking about, *everything's* performance. Your body weight, your body fat. I mean now they take your body fats before they go away in the middle of May, the first thing you do when they go back is take your body fat, and you know *exactly* what they've been doing or haven't been doing. There's no escape. So, it's all performance related. And yes as you go through the season individual adjustments may have to be made, but you're under the spot light whatever.

Interviewer: And this translates to education as well?

Colin: Yeah, yeah the whole piece …every aspect of the boys' development is under a pretty rigorous - pleasant - rigorous system of review, and there's no escape.

Trainee existence was fixed by an 'anatamo-politics' (Rabinow and Rose 2006) of the body, as the assimilation of knowledge was implemented for the purpose of productivity, efficiency and integration into the culture of the Academy and of the Club as a whole. Administered through the analysis of data surrounding bodily performances, trainee lives were 'subjected to judgements of worth' (Rose 2001, 21) that invoked a bio-political (Foucault 1990, 1994) analysis of governance and control, demarcating the body as an 'inmate of the institution' (Clegg, Courpasson and Phillips 2006, 148). As Brown and Coupland (2005, 1050) indicate, 'the most potent and insidious forms of control in the workplace are not exercised by direct, often coercive means, but through discursive production of 'quasi-fixed' meanings'. Such a process was expressed within the Valley FC Academy through the cultivation of socially constructed meanings which promoted the embodiment and actualization of a particular social order, demonstrated through the display of behaviour associated with desirable aspects of an 'organizational ideal' (Coupland 2001).

Within the Club's Academy individuals were trained in the most scientific and regimented of ways. However, processes of normalization were not perceived as constituting one particular form of discipline. Trainees regarded such 'disciplines' as positive measures that were necessary to attain success, a process that was instigated upon initial entry into the Academy 's cultural environment, cultivating adherence to desired norms over time. Thus, the culture of silence could be justified by, and reinforced through, an adherence to strong organizational values and the promotion of a universally accepted 'way of being' (Brown and Coupland 2005).

The Internalization of 'Norms' Over Time

Within the Valley FC Academy the intensity to which documentation and observation were implemented was increased by coaching staff once the potential to become a professional footballer was realized. Due to the strict regimentation of their lifestyles, youth trainees were compelled to structure their leisure time around the constraints of training and performance. Through an adherence to an appropriate 'professional attitude', youth trainees contributed to the (re)production of dominant ideologies that promoted a silencing of individual voice leading to their continual subjection. This process of adaption was thus perceived by trainees as 'the price of organization[al] membership' (Coupland 2001, 1104). For those trainees who had not been in the Club's academy system since early childhood the demonstration of a 'correct' attitude was often delayed. Having come from a lower league football club, Julian, a first year trainee, was somewhat unfamiliar with the disciplinary lifestyle and the level of self-discipline that was required at clubs like Valley FC:

> Before, like, off the pitch I could've been quite bad, I was late a few times
> when I came here and I had quite a few, like, times I had to 'ave meetings

[with the Coach] 'cos I was poor … That's probably coming from my previous club, the place I've come from. So, like, I came 'ere quite arrogant at first but now Graham's [Academy coach] been speaking to me he's made me such a better professional, like, me attitude's so good now and it's worked wonders for me; just through listening to him.

What Julian describes here is that trainees may be perceived by Academy staff as 'part-colonized subjects' (Brown and Lewis 2011, 874), (re)constructing notions of identity through the guise of disciplinary mechanisms imposed by authoritative figures, and legitimized by the acceptance of such practices as constituting normative behaviour. Even in instances where more direct modes of authoritative discipline were administered trainees responded positively, identifying verbal chastisement as means by which the working efficiencies of the team might be enhanced and as an opportunity to reflect critically upon individual performance. This was acknowledged by Owen, a second year trainee, when discussing his own reaction to being verbally disciplined after committing errors in training:

Owen: Ah, it's horrible … It's horrible, 'cos he stands you up in front of everyone and just picks you out and then just shouts at you in front of everyone, which is a bit embarrassing. But it's good for us 'cos it makes us not do it again really. It'll not happen again and we'd improve upon it.

Such examples of authoritarianism may be considered reflective of the dominant culture that has traditionally permeated English professional football (Carter 2006; Cushion and Jones 2006; Parker 2006). Upon describing the difference in coaching styles between his experiences as a schoolboy player at the Club and that within the Academy, Eric outlined how he believed a harsh disciplinary and authoritarian approach was necessary for his own progression:

Eric: Obviously as a kid you if you weren't doin' as well as you could then you, well you might've been shouted at a bit, but you wouldn't of been like bollocked really. But now with Graham [Academy Coach], which is the right way to go about it I think, you're bollocked really and you're told where you stand.

Interviewer: How do you feel when you're bollocked?

Eric: Well you feel like an arse, but you feel like he's an arse an' all … But he's helping you really so you've just gotta get on with it and don't sulk and stuff like that. Just get on with it and improve.

Shaped by the organizational ideals inherent within the institution, youth trainees were compelled to stay silent when experiencing such authoritarian behaviour. Dictated by a clear social order, the collective acceptance of silence upon encountering chastisement was perceived as natural, beneficial and as an inevitable aspect of everyday life (Fletcher and Watson 2007). Within organizational cultures that promote clear hierarchical structures, the emphasis to 'speak out' may often be perceived as a challenge to authority and/or 'unsafe', reinforcing a collective representation of silence amongst those residing in the organization (Kish-Gephart et al. 2009; Milliken and Morrison 2003). Charles, a second year trainee, demonstrated the normative values associated with voicing opinion and the subservient relationship portrayed when disciplined by fellow teammates and the head coach:

Interviewer: How do you feel when your teammates are giving you a good rollicking?

Charles: Like I need to get mi finger out [laughter]. You can't do anything about it. You know in yourself that you should be playin' better, so if they give you an earful you feel like tellin' 'em to shut up 'cos you already know when you're playin' badly, but you just need to accept it and try even harder really.

Interviewer: Is there any other way you might know apart from the players?

Charles: Manager, halftime might give you a good rattlin' [verbal chastisement] as well.

> **Interviewer:** How do you feel when you get that at half time?

> **Charles:** Like … I can't really say it, rubbish I'll say again.

Valley FC demonstrated an institutional culture whereby 'concertive control' (Barker 1993) not only facilitated and reinforced the disciplinary power relations between trainees and coaches/staff, but also enabled youth trainees to discipline each other. However, the expression of voice whilst subject to authoritarian behaviour carried a high degree of risk. In organizational cultures where a deep form of silence exists, employees must negotiate the consequences associated with 'speaking up', challenging practice or breaking silence (Grant 2013; Pinder and Harlos 2001; Morrison 2014). Indeed, Charles' inability to fully disclose his thoughts and feelings towards managerial chastisement during the interview process further highlighted 'voice' as a risky endeavour for employees (Grant 2013; Morrison and Milliken 2003). To develop an enhanced understanding of 'silence', Perlow and Repenning (2009, 197) indicate that researchers should have access, 'not only to what members of an organization say, but also what they think but do not say'. Owen, Eric and Charles all expressed feelings of embarrassment and frustration when disciplined by coaching staff and teammates, but were unable to voice their thoughts in the presence of significant others, rationalising the acceptance of such decisions as necessary in order to enhance individual performance. Such insights serve to further reinforce the notion that 'speaking up' or 'voicing' opinion was perceived as futile or unnecessary, and demonstrated a cultural climate that represented the tensions between that which was *felt* but not *said*.

Whilst within sporting institutions notions of 'performance' are routinely integral to

attaining success, the pursuit of excellence is partly determined by an outward representation of a particular sense of 'self', one that is embodied by the display of a certain kind of 'character' or 'attitude' - a sense of 'professionalism' - that is perpetuated by significant others and the organization itself. As such the concept of silence must be considered as both, 'an aspect of power and as implicated in peoples' efforts to impression manage' (Brown and Coupland 2005, 1050). That is, 'silence' as represented through conformity to a 'professional ideal', a particular display of 'self' that legitimizes one's position within the culture of the organization (Brown et al. 2010).

Professionalism and the Definitive 'Attitude'

At Valley FC, a series of specific organizational values encompassed the notion of a 'good' or 'compliant' trainee attitude (Parker 2006; Roderick 2006a). Through a process of 'informal learning' young players within professional football become increasingly aware of the required behaviours that are integral to the acquisition of a good 'professional attitude' the demonstration of which may elicit a positive response from significant others (Roderick 2003). As within other workplace organizations, an adherence to professional competencies may be associated with, 'an appropriate mode of conduct rather than simply a way of performing one's job' (Fournier 1999, 296), and thus becomes inscribed by the disciplinary logic of that institutional setting. Where 'professionalism' was concerned Valley FC academy staff placed emphasis upon a specific set of behavioural characteristics and a particular 'presentation of self' (Goffman, 1959).

This notion of 'professionalism' was defined by academy coaches and trainees as comprising the possession of a strong work ethic with an emphasis on discipline and self-improvement both within and outside the confines of the organization. Through an adherence to this desired 'attitude', youth trainees contributed towards the (re)production of dominant ideologies and a predetermined 'front' (Goffman, 1959). Valley FC trainees were considered to be permanently on display, and due to the strict regimen surrounding their lifestyles, trainees had to structure their leisure time around the constraints of training and playing. Constant reference to professionalism and the notion of being a '24/7 footballer' highlighted the obligations of the 'role' of professional players and the necessary level of commitment required to succeed within the game. Joshua Hunt, a second year scholar, explained further:

> **Interviewer:** What qualities do you need in order to be a professional footballer?
>
> **Joshua:** You need to be a 100% dedicated, I mean you must want to be a footballer, if you're thinking to yourself, 'Ohh do I wanna be a footballer? Don't I wanna be a footballer? Then you're not gonna get very far. Football's like 24/7 ... Everything, *everything* about your lifestyle is based around performances really.

Here the notion of 'professionalism' proliferated into the social aspect of trainee lives, establishing organizational control and the restriction of voice through a purposefully pursued mode of 'identity regulation' (Alvesson and Willmott 2002; Alvesson, Lee and Thomas 2008). Whilst Joshua placed emphasis upon the 'performance' culture at Valley FC, he (like his contemporaries) also knew that to internalise and 'display' the key norms of Club culture was to give oneself a chance to gain the acceptance and credibility amongst coaching and managerial staff. Therefore, a conscious acceptance of silence may also be considered an expression of collaboration for the purpose of

personal gain and career progression. Hence, young players could modify how they

expressed themselves, and to whom, in order to secure favourable positions within the

club. Academy manager, Henry Webb, further emphasized the social training that the

young players received to ensure that the correct attitude was adopted upon entering

into the Academy:

> Our opinion is you get them in early. You get them into good habits, not just
> from a football aspect but, you know, how to live, what you eat, how to act.
> It's a holistic approach once the boys come in to sort of develop all aspects of
> their character and basically how they do things.

Henry continued to highlight the social control measures present within Valley FC's

cultural milieu. Importance was placed upon how the young players conducted

themselves; their appearance and mannerisms upon interacting with 'outsiders' and

senior members of staff:

> On the other side we work hard on the social aspects, you know, when the
> boys are in the Academy, how they conduct themselves, how they dress, what
> they wear, how they interact with other adults ... Basically, you know,
> encouraging the boys to interact, but more importantly knowing how to
> interact with adults and other members of staff.

As Morrison and Milliken (2000, 711) indicate, silence is more likely to occur within

organizations that are, 'dependent on predictability, control, and efficiency'. The

management behaviours at Valley FC shaped the contours of voice structures through

promoting an idealised front or particular way of being, perpetuating silence across

the organization (Donaghey et al. 2011). In this sense silence was adopted 'as a

strategy for the presentation of self' (Brown and Coupland 2005, 1051) leading to the

creation and display of a consistent self-concept, a notion of 'self' that was performed

on a routine basis, and, more importantly, in the presence of significant others.

Ingham and Loy (1973, 18) indicate that 'the sport role leaves little room for redefinition by the here-and-now actor; the obligations of the role are predetermined'. Trainees had to 'show' constantly that they were willing and committed to conform to the prescribed norms that were representative of the Academy's culture and the identity of a professional athlete as Max Winters, a first year trainee, explained:

> **Interviewer:** Could you describe the right attitude to have?
>
> **Max:** Come in everyday on time, don't be late, *never be late* ... doing what you're told to do and what you have to do everything by training the right way and givin' your all, make sure you lead a professional life off the football pitch. The most important thing is give your all. Show what you can do. Show them that you wanna be here and you wanna make it as a professional player.

At Valley FC the acceptance of such behaviours was viewed largely as part of the induction process into the life of a 'professional player'. The Academy consisted of a culture 'engineered' (Ezzy 2001) through processes of pre-established cultural discourses, disciplinary mechanisms and observational techniques that contributed to a contained and clearly delineated notion of self, processes that inevitably impeded the voice of trainees and (re)asserted defined power relations. Valley FC was representative of an organization that restricted voice through large power distinctions and the promotion of a high power distance culture, reinforcing legitimate behaviour through a hierarchical structure and a clearly defined cultural mind-set (Kish-Gephart et al. 2009). Such power distinctions restricted the ability of trainees to 'voice' disdain and were integral to disciplinary procedures within the Academy, as head coach, Graham Kidd explained:

> **Interviewer:** What happens to players who are not performing well in training?

> **Graham:** Do you mean do I beat 'em up? [laughter]. If we're out training I will verbally tell 'em in an assertive manner.

> **Interviewer:** How do the players respond to that once you have to discipline them?

> **Graham:** Fine, well they ain't got no choice …There will be a stage where I'll say [to the player], "Listen get off my pitch, you don't wanna play, off my pitch", and I'll say, "Get up the tunnel". I've told the players, I'm not gonna …try and sit 'ere and lie and say to you I find a nice way of doin' it. There's times where players come down and I just say, "No sorry you're not working, you're not training, you're not at it".

Trainee performances, both in relation to their physical and technical development and adherence to institutional norms, inevitably impacted academy staff opinions and decisions concerning potential career status. A rejection of such norms could result in a perception of poor performance or even dismissal from the Academy. Here identity management and (re)presentation became an integral aspect of each trainee's pathway to professional status, a concept shared within wider workplace organizations where the labour process often becomes a practice of negotiation involving 'the indeterminacy of identity rather than the indeterminacy of labour' (Thompson and Ackroyd 1995, 627). Neither was the demonstration of a good 'professional attitude' solely assessed on the basis of footballing performance. Academy manager, Henry Webb, revealed that some former trainees had been suspended from attending the Academy due to their inappropriate behaviour and poor educational progress, displaying a clear lack of 'professionalism':

> A couple of years ago we actually expelled two boys from the Academy for a period of six weeks until they got their act together in school. So you know…We want footballers but they've got to toe the line, you know you can be the best footballer in the Academy but, at the end of the day, if he's being a bit of a Charlie [disrespectful] or he's messing about then we'll, we'll act on that, and if it means he can't come training for a period of time then that's, that's the case.

Whilst previous work in this area highlights instances of dismissive and disruptive practice amongst football youth trainees within educational contexts (McGillivray 2006; Parker 2000a), Valley FC's Academy demonstrated a clear intolerance towards such behaviours. A failure to uphold the ideals and institutional norms associated with professionalism, served to disrupt the identity of trainees posing a threat to their (re)presentation of 'self'. Bound to this notion of a 'professional attitude' was the ability to adhere to the pressures and regimes present within the Academy, ensuring that increased anxieties associated with life at Valley FC were not to be disclosed to significant others as discussed by first year scholar Julian:

> **Julian:** There're so many high expectations once you reach this age to do well 'cos this is where you wanna be pushin' on to make it, like, into the first team playing Premiership football week in week out. So, the standards are so much higher and the expectations are so much higher, so there's a lot more pressure at this stage. So, like, there is enjoyment but there's not as much.
>
> **Interviewer:** Really?
>
> **Julian:** Yeah.
>
> **Interviewer:** What kind of pressures do you have?
>
> **Julian:** Pressures of performing, say if you make a mistake you have to be able to hold that pressure on your shoulders to do, like, to not react to it.

Julian's self-confessed silence and determination to suppress reactions toward the enhanced pressures and expectations associated with elite level performance revealed a workplace environment that was deemed increasingly unfavourable. As Tangirala et al (2013, 1042) indicate, 'voice can hold real negative consequences for employees who are focused on getting ahead in their jobs and careers'. For Julian, and for many other youth trainees at Valley FC, the ability to remain silent reinforced 'secure identities' (Thonmpson and Ackroyd 1995) within the precarious culture of youth

football, placing emphasis upon personal ambition and a focus on outcomes to the self. Thus, silence could be adopted as an individual strategy to progress one's career and to attain job security within an increasingly competitive environment.

The central values associated with professionalism were predetermined. To conform to these normative values was to 'step-in' to the role of professional athlete. Similar to Fournier's (1999) examination of professionalism as a disciplinary mechanism in occupational domains, the Academy emphasised the formation of a specific attitude, code of conduct or work ethic alongside the acquisition of skills or knowledge. At Valley FC the body became a focus of interaction in the surroundings of the Academy, and thus a central component of the 'me', that experience of the self in which the vision of 'others' is vitally present (Mead 1934). The body, and thus interaction amongst collective individuals, can be viewed as a tool of affirmation and re-affirmation, of attaining status and belonging to a particular group (Schyfter 2008). Whilst disciplinary mechanisms were required to ensure that specific norms were internalized over a period of time, socialisation amongst role others aided in the perpetuation of behavioural values associated with the dominant mode of 'professionalism' propagated by peers and those in positions of authority. In this sense, the notion of self became 'intrinsically somatic' (Rose 2001, 18), and aided the verification of an identity that, if adhered to and displayed accurately, conveyed an acceptance of institutional norms that asserted a commitment to a specific way of being. At Valley FC the construction of a particular sense of self provided a non-verbal mode of intentional self-presentation (Van Dyne et al 2003), a strategy that was perceived as favourable amongst youth trainees but subsequently, and without their explicit acknowledgement, led to their silencing.

Conclusion and Implications

This article has sought to utilize the work of Michel Foucault and Erving Goffman to explore the mechanisms that contribute to a culture of silence within the context of English professional football, and in particular the everyday lives of young elite (academy) players. Of key importance has been the mode by which specific values were acquired and adhered to at Valley FC, and an analysis of the mechanisms imposed both at the level of interaction between agents (players and staff/coaches) and the structural nature of the institution itself. Such processes aimed to reflect the role of governance and the mechanisms imposed that contributed towards creating and sustaining a sense of silence. By incorporating the work of Foucault and Goffman we have sought to explicate what the managers of the organization hoped to instil, and how those subject to such structures and designs reacted, portraying the organization as both 'producer' and 'signifier' of the subjectivity that characterized youth trainee status.

The predominant feature of everyday life at Valley FC was the lack of agency surrounding trainee players, and the accompanying lack of resistance to the behavioural norms and practices that existed within the Academy itself. That said, we are not suggesting here that the athletes concerned were devoid of a sense of agency or that they lacked the capability to resist dominant occupational norms. Nor are we suggesting that this is the case in other sporting contexts. On the contrary, we acknowledge that the manifestation of mechanisms of resistance and challenge to organisational hierarchies has been witnessed by various authors within the culture of elite sport (see Lok and de rond 2013; Purdy et al. 2008, 2009; Potrac and Jones 2011;

Roderick 2006c). Similar to research examining resistance within wider occupational domains (Fleming and Sewell 2002; Fleming and Spicer 2003), subtle displays of dis-identification have also been deployed within sporting culture in an attempt to create social distance and a feeling of relief and empowerment from the burden of adhering to predefined roles (Roderick 2006c, 2014).

Whilst it has been argued that professionals in occupational domains are not to be considered 'clones' lacking any sense of ownership over the construction of a particular notion of self (Brown and Lewis 2011), our portrayal of sporting culture raises questions about the ability of young employees to negotiate an identity that exists outside that of the proscribed institutional norms of the organization itself. By highlighting the disciplinary mechanisms utilized to establish control, questions may be posed concerning the ethical implications surrounding the undercutting of alternative possible selves. Although, in recent years, codes of conduct and safeguarding have been instilled and specific personnel employed to ensure that a humanistic and altogether more holistic approach towards elite athlete development has been adopted within professional football academies, such methods are imposed by adult authorities, with children and young people maintaining few opportunities to influence these measures (Pitchford et al. 2004), a power relation that contributes towards the authoritarian/subservient relationship perpetuated within academy organizations (Parker 1996a) and actively removes the voices of those inhabiting such environments. In addition, coaching staff are often constrained to fulfil perceived expectations and adhere to an idealised image associated with their role as practitioner, limiting the ability to engage with alternative narratives of 'self' (Potrac 2002). Further research, focusing upon coaches and support staff within the elite sport

fraternity, may highlight the extent to which specific disciplinary mechanisms and regulatory norms 'silence' through conformity and impact upon issues of performativity and workplace conduct.

Drawing upon further empirical evidence we may attempt to understand how the notion of 'professionalism', as a normative value system and mode of control, and those mechanisms utilized to create and sustain institutional behaviour, impact upon the ability to express one's voice in multiple organizational settings. Moreover, greater consideration concerning the impact of silence upon organizational efficiency (Milliken et al. 2003), and the negative consequences of encouraging such cultures to exist within organizations, must be pursued. Silence through conformity to institutional norms within organizational settings has been interpreted positively amongst young employees seeking to enhance career prospects (Brown and Coupland 2005). However, the perpetuation of silence through conformity at Valley FC, and elsewhere in English professional football may serve to promote the withholding of specific information concerning health related issues and personal injury (Ronderick et al. 2000). The questioning of such behaviours is required in order to further examine if and to what extent the culture of silence is impacting upon the mental and physical health/well-being of those concerned, the overall functioning of organizational efficiency, and the development of a creative workforce both within and outside of sport specific contexts. Moreover, and perhaps of greater importance, is the need for further critical investigation into the concept of 'silence', its impact upon effective organizational learning and the outcomes arising from restricting 'voice' (Blackman and Sadler-Smith 2009; Edmonson 2003; Morrison 2011), specifically within cultures that seek to adopt a holistic approach to pedagogical

practices. This may also elicit questions as to whether the silencing of voice impedes the transition of employees to and from organizations, making it somewhat difficult to integrate into differing working cultures. Further examination of such environments, and non-sport related organizations, would provide useful insight into whether or not such trends and practices are to be considered the norm and, where they are present, the extent to which resistance is able to modify or reshape disciplinary techniques so as to affect change within the organization's ranks.

Finally, we recognize that the theoretical approach adopted to understanding silence within this paper has its limitations. Previous critics have demonstrated that the work of Foucault provides little insight into the manner in which disciplinary techniques are diffused or deflected, and how they might guide social interactions and shape the local conditions between those situated within institutional settings (Driver 1994; Garland 1987; Hacking 2004). Moreover, the application of Foucault toward organization studies has been viewed as overly deterministic (Collinson 1999). The consequences of disciplinary mechanisms imposed, and their impact upon dominant power relations, are witnessed through somewhat complex and ambiguous behaviours. In this sense, compliance to dominant norms, and the silencing of voice, may be viewed as much an expression of self-control as the manifestation of docility. Therefore, to understand how organizations operate in multiple contexts we must look to matters of human identity and strategic practice (Watson, 2011), placing emphasis both upon the design of organizations and their impact upon those who are subject to it, an approach that is facilitated by an understanding of social relations at the level of structure and interaction. In this instance an attempt was made to examine Valley FC as both 'producer' and 'signifier' (Alvesson, 1994) of the subjectivity that characterized the

youth trainees, and the concept of 'professionalism' that embodied their experience of self. Further empirical studies that pursue a longitudinal approach to understanding silence within organizational culture, focusing on the day-to-day interaction of employees and their patterns of behaviour, will acquire greater insight into the evolving processes of silence and help to identify the acts that contribute towards the suppression of voice (Perlow and Repenning, 2009; Premeaux and Bedeian, 2003). It is our belief that such empirical and theoretical approaches will enable studies to further understand the connection between systemic power relations and structures devised across institutional contexts, their organizational actors and the creation of silence within the everyday workplace environments.

Notes

1 When using the term 'significant others' we are referring to both coaching and managerial staff within the Academy.

[2] Pseudonyms have been used throughout to protect the anonymity of the club, staff and players.

[3] Scholarships within Valley FC lasted for two years (from16-18 years of age). As an "Academy Scholar" trainees were contracted to play for Valley FC and were expected to train on a 'full-time' basis attending the Academy from 8.30am till 5.00pm Monday to Friday whilst competing over the weekend. Youth trainees signed to a Scholarship received a wage from the club whilst also remaining in full-time education, once their contracts had expired trainees were either offered a 'professional contract' playing regularly for the first team or 'reserves' or, if unsuccessful, were subsequently released form the club.

[4] The 'youth trainees' interviewed were taken from a sample of both first and second year trainees signed on to a formal two year 'scholarship' contract (ranging from 16-18 years of age), some of whom had previous experiences of 'Academy life' at other clubs.

[5] Initial access to the research setting was granted to the lead author of the paper by the Academy Coach (Graham Kidd). The length of fieldwork spanned over a period of 11 months, incorporating semi-structured interviews with a total of 21 participants (five Valley FC academy staff and 16 youth trainees). Interviews with the trainees and Academy staff were conducted on a one-to-one basis and in the confines of Valley

FC's Academy. Observations of daily training sessions and routine interactions between staff members and players were also conducted when researching on site.

References

Argyris, C. 1977. "Double Loop Learning in Organizations". *Harvard Business Review*, 55(5), 115-129.

Alvesson, M. 1994. "Talking in Organizations: Managing Identity and Impressions in an Advertising Agency." *Organization Studies* 15 (4): 535-563. doi: 10.1177/017084069401500403

Alvesson, M., K. L. Lee., and R. Thomas. 2008. "Identity Matters: Reflections on the Construction of Identity Scholarships in Organization Studies." *Organization* 15 (1): 5-17. doi: 10.1177/1350508407084426

Alvesson, M., and H. Willmott. 2002. "Identity Regulation as Organizational Control: Producing the Appropriate Individual." *Journal of Management Studies* 39: 619-644. doi: 10.1111/1467-6486.00305

Armour, K. (2011). *Sport pedagogy: an introduction for teaching and coaching.* London: Routledge.

Ball, S. J. 2003. "The Teacher's Soul and the Terrors of Performativity." *Journal of Education Policy* 18 (2): 215-228.

Barker, J. R. 1993. "Tightening the Iron Cage: Concertive Control in Self-Managing Teams." *Administrative Science Quarterly* 38 (3): 408-437.

Barker, J.R., and G. Cheney. 1994. "The Concept and the Practices of Discipline in Contemporary Organizational Life." *Communication Monographs* 61 (1): 20-43. doi:10.1080/03637759409376321

Bevir, M. 1999. "Foucault, Power, and Institutions". *Political Studies* XLVII: 345-359.

Blackman, D., and E. Sadler-Smith. 2009. "The Silent and the Silenced in Organizational Knowing and Learning." *Management Learning* 40 (5): 569-585.

Brown, A. D., and C. Coupland. 2005. "Sounds of Silence: Graduate Trainees, Hegemony and Resistance." *Organization Studies* 26 (7): 1049-1069. doi: 10.1177/0170840605053540

Brown, A., and C. Coupland. 2015. "Identity Threats, Identity Work and Elite Professionals." *Organization Studies* 36 (1): 1315-1336.

Brown, A. D., M. Kornberger., S. R. Clegg., and C. Carter. (2010). "'Invisible Walls and Silent Hierarchies': A Case Study of Power Relations in an Architecture Firm." *Human Relations* 63 (4): 525-549. doi: 10.117/0018726709339862.

Brown, A. D., and M. A. Lewis. 2011. "Identities, Discipline and Routines." *Organization Studies* 32 (7): 871-894. doi: 10.1177/0170840611407018

Brown, G., and P. Potrac. 2009. "'You've not Made the Grade, Son': De-selection and Identity Disruption in Elite Level Youth Football." *Soccer & Society* 10 (2): 143-159. doi:10.1080/14660970802601613

Brohm, J-M. 1978. *Sport: A Prison of Measured Time*. London: Ink Links Ltd.

Burns, T. 1992. *Erving Goffman.* London: Routledge.

Carter, N. 2006. *The Football Manager: A History*. London, Routledge.

Canguilhem, G. 1978. *On the Normal and the Pathological.* Dordrecht, Holland: D.Reidel Publishing Company.

Casidy, T. (2010). "Holism in sports coaching: beyond humanistic psychology." *International Journal of Sports science and Coaching* 5: 439-443.

Chapman, G. E. 1997. "Making Weight: Lightweight Rowing, Technologies of Power, and Technologies of the Self." *Sociology of Sport Journal* 14 (3): 205-223.

Charmaz, K. 2006. *Constructing Grounded Theory a Practical Guide through Qualitative Analysis.* London: Sage.

Clegg, S. R., D Courpasson., and N. Phillips. 2006. *Power and Organizations.* London: Sage.

Collinson, D. 1999. "'Surviving the Rigs': Safety and Surveillance on North Sea Oil Installations." *Organization Studies* 20 (4): 579-600. doi: 10.1177/0170840699204003

Corbin, J., and A. Strauss. 2008. *Basics of Qualitative Research Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded* Theory. 3rd Ed. London: Sage.

Coupland, C. 2001. "Accounting for Change: A Discourse Analysis of Graduate Trainees' Talk of Adjustment." *Journal of Management Studies* 38 (8): 1103-1119. doi: 10.1111/1467-6486.00274

Cushion, C. and R. L. Jones. 2006. "Power, Discourse, and Symbolic Violence in Professional Youth Soccer: The Case of Albion Football Club." *Sociology of Sport Journal* 11 (2): 195-208.

Cushion, C. and R. L. Jones. 2014. "A Bourdieusian Analysis of Cultural Reproduction: Socialisation and the 'Hidden Curriculum' in Professional Football." *Sport, Education & Society* 19: 276-298.

Day, D. V., S. Gordon., and C. Fink. 2012. "The Sporting Life: Exploring Organizations through the Lens of Sport." *The Academy of Management Annals* 6(1): 397-433: doi: 10.1080/19416520.2012.678697.

Detert, J. R, and L. K. Treviño. 2010. "Speaking Up to Higher-Ups: How Supervisors and Skip-Level Leaders Influence Employee Voice." *Organization Science* 21 (1): 249-270.

Donaghey, J., N. Cullinane., T. Dundon., and A Wilkinson. 2011. "Re-conceptualising Employee Silence: Problems and Prognosis." *Work, Employment and Society* 25 (1): 51-67. doi: 10.1177/0950017010389239

Driver, F. 1994. "Bodies in Space: Foucault's Account of Disciplinary Power". In *Reassessing Foucault Power, Medicine and the Body,* edited by C. Jones and R. Porter, 113-131. London: Routledge.

Edmonson, A. C. 2003. "Speaking Up in the Operating Room: How Team Leaders Promote Learning in Interdisciplinary Action Teams." *Journal of Management Studies* 40 (6): 1419- 1452

Ezzy, D. 2001. "A Simulacrum of Workplace Community: Individualism and Engineered Culture." *Sociology* 35: 631-650. doi:10.1177/S0038038501000323

Fivush, R. 2010. "Speaking Silence: The Social Construction of Silence in Autobiographical and Cultural Narratives." *Memory* 18 (2): 88-98. doi:10.1080/09658210903029404

Fleming, P., and G. Sewell. 2002. "Looking for the Good Soldier, Svejk: Alternative Modalities of Resistance in the Contemporary Workplace." *Sociology* 36 (4): 857-873.

Fleming, P., and A. Spicer. 2003. "Working at a Cynical Distance: Implications for Power, Subjectivity and Resistance." *Organization* 10 (1): 157-179. doi: 10.1177/1350508403010001376

Fletcher, D., and T. Watson. 2007. "Voice, Silence and the Business of Construction: Loud and Quiet Voices in the Construction of Personal, Organizational and Social Realities." *Organization* 14: 155-174. doi: 10.1177/1350508407074221

Flick, U. 2009. *An Introduction to Qualitative* Research. 4th ed. London: Sage.

Foucault, M. 1977. *Discipline and Punish the Birth of the Prison*. New York: Vintage Books.

Foucault, M. 1988. "Technologies of the Self". In *Technologies of the Self: A Seminar With Michel Foucault*, edited by L. H. Martin., H. Gutman and P. H. Hutton, 16-49. Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press.

Foucault, M. 1989. *The History of Sexuality, Vol 3: The Care of the Self*. New York: Pantheon Books.

Foucault, M. 1990. *The History of Sexuality, An Introduction, Vol. 1*. New York: Vintage Books.

Foucault, M. 1994. *Power: The Essential Works 3*. London: Allen Lane.

Fournier, V. 1999. "The Appeal to 'Professionalism' as a Disciplinary Mechanism." *The Sociological Review* 47 (2): 280-307.

Goffman, E. 1959. *The Presentation of the Self in Everyday Life*. London: Pelican.

Goffman. E. 1961a. *Encounters: Two Studies in the Sociology of Interaction*. Indiana: The Bobbs-Merrill Company.

Goffman, E. 1961b. *Asylums: Essays on the Social Situation of Mental Patients and Other Inmates*. London: Penguin.

Garland, D. 1986. ""Foucault's Discipline and Punish" – An Exposition and Critique." *American Bar Foundation Research Journal* 4(1): 847-880.

Giddens, A. 1981. *A contemporary critique of historical materialism Vol 1, Power and the State*. London: Hutchinson Publications.

Grant, A. M. 2013. "Rocking the Boat but Keeping it Steady: The Role of Emotion Regulation in Employee Voice." *Academy of Management Journal* 56 (6): 1703-1723.

Gubrium, J. F., and J. A. Holstein. 2011. "Analysing Interpretive Practice." In *Handbook of Qualitative Research 4th ed*, edited by N. K. Denzin and Y. S. Lincoln, 341-358. London: Sage.

Hacking, I. 2004. "Between Michel Foucault and Erving Goffman: Between Discourse in the Abstract and Face-to-Face Interaction." *Economy and Society* 33 (3): 277-302. doi: 10.1080/0308514042000225671

Heikkala, J. 1993. "Discipline and Excel: Techniques of the Self and Body and the Logic of Competing." *Sociology of Sport Journal* 10 (4): 397-412.

Huang. X., E. Van de Vliert. and G. Van Der Vegt. 2005. "Breaking the Silence Culture: Stimulation of Participation and Employee Opinion Withholding Cross-Nationally." *Management and Organization Review* 1 (3): 459-482. doi: 10.1111/j.1740-8784.2005.00023.x

Ingham, A. G., and J. W. Loy. 1973. "The Social System of Sport: A Humanistic Perspective." *Quest* 19: 1-23.

Johns, D. P., and J. S. Johns. 2000. "Surveillance, Subjectivism and Technologies of Power: An Analysis of the Discursive Practice of High-Performance Sport." *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* 35 (2): 219-234. doi: 10.1177/101269000035002006

Jones, R. (2006). *The sports coach as educator: reconceptualising sports coaching*. London: Routledge.

Kish-Gephart, J. J., J. R. Detert., K. L. Treviño, and A. C. Edmondson. 2009.

"Silenced by Fear: The Nature, Sources and Consequences of Fear at Work."
Research in Organizational Behavior 29: 163-193. doi:
10.1016/j.riob.2009.07.002

Kelly, S., and I. Waddington. 2006. "Abuse, Intimidation and Violence as Aspects of
Managerial Control in Professional Soccer in Britain and Ireland."
International Review for the Sociology of Sport 41 (2): 147-164.

Leclercq-Vandelannoitte, A. 2011. "Organization as Discursive Constructions: A
Foucauldian Approach. *Organizations Studies* 32 (9): 1247-1271. doi:
10.1177/0170840611411395

Leflaive, X. 1996. "Organizations as Structures of Domination." *Organization Studies*
17 (1): 23-47. doi: 10.1177/017084069601700102

Lok, J., and M, de Rond. 2013. "On the Plasticity of Institutions: Containing and
Restoring Practice Breakdowns at the Cambridge University Boat Club."
Academy of Management Journal 56 (1): 185-207.doi:
10.5465/amj.2010.0688.

Manley, A., C. Palmer, and M. Roderick. 2012. "Disciplinary Power, the Oligopticon
and Rhizomatic Surveillance in Elite Sports Academies." *Surveillance &
Society* 10 (3/4): 303-319.

McGillivray, D. 2006. "Facilitating Change in the Educational Experiences of
Professional Footballers: The Case of Scottish Football." *Managing Leisure*
11 (1): 22-38.

McGillivray, D., R. Fearn and A. McIntosh. 2005. "Caught Up In and By the
Beautiful Game: A Case Study of Scottish Professional Footballers." *Journal
of Sport and Social Issue* 29 (1): 102-123. doi: 10.1177/0193723504268730

McGillivray, D., and A McIntosh, A. 2006. "'Football is My Life': Theorizing Social
Practice in the Scottish Professional Football Field." *Sport in Society* 9 (3):
371-387. doi:10.1080/17430430600673381

Mead, G. H. 1934. *Mind, Self and Society.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Milliken, F. J., and E. W. Morrison. 2003. "An Exploratory Study of Employee
Silence: Issues that Employees don't Communicate Upward and Why."
Journal of Management Studies 40 (6): 1453-1476. doi: 10.1111/1467-
6486.00387.

Milliken, F. J., E. W. Morrison and P.F. Hewlin. 2003. "An Exploratory Study of
Employee Silence: Issues that Employees Don't Communicate Upward and
Why." *Journal of Management Studies,* 40 (6): 1453-1476.

Monk, D. 2000. "Modern Apprenticeships in Football: Success or Failure?" *Industrial
and Commercial Training* 32 (2): 52-60. doi: 10.1108/00197850010320680

Monk, D., and C. Olsson. 2006. "Modern Apprenticeships in English Professional
Football." *Education + Training,* 48 (6): 429-439.

Monk, D., and D. Russell. 2000. "Training Apprentices: Tradition Versus Modernity
in the Football Industry." *Soccer & Society,* 1 (2): 62-79.

Morrison, E. W. 2011. "Employee Voice Behaviour: Integration and Directions for
Future Research." *The Academy of Management Annals* 5 (1): 373-412. doi:
10.1080/19416520.2011.574506

Morrison, E. W. 2014. "Employee Voice and Silence." *Annual Review of
Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior* 1:173-197.
doi:10.1146/annurev-orgpsych- 031413-091328

Morrison, E. W., and F. J. Milliken. 2000. "Organizational Silence: A Barrier to Change and Development in a Pluralistic World." *Academy of Management Review* 25 (4): 706-725.

Morrison, E. W., and F. J. Milliken. 2003. "Speaking Up, Remaining Silent: The Dynamics of Voice and Silence in Organizations." *Journal of Management Studies* 40 (6): 1353-1358. doi: 10.1111/1467-6486.00383

Morrison, E. W., and N. B. Rothman. 2009. "Silence and the Dynamics of Power". In *Voice and Silence in Organizations*, edited by J. Greenberg and M. Edwards, 175-202. Bingley, England: Emerald.

Newton, T. 1998. "Theorizing Subjectivity in Organizations: The Failure of Foucauldian Studies?" *Organization Studies* 19 (3): 415-447. doi: 10.1177/017084069801900303

Nesti, M., M. Litlewood., L. O'Halloran., M. Eubank, and D. Richardson. 2012. "Critical Moments in Elite Premiership Football: Who do You Think You Are?" *Physical Culture and Sport: Studies and Research* 56 (1): 23-32.

Parker, A. 1995. "Great Expectations: Grimness or Glamour? The Football Apprentice in the 1990s." *The Sports Historian* 15 (1): pp. 107-126.

Parker, A. 1996a. *Chasing the 'Big-Time' Football Apprenticeship in the 1990's*. Thesis (PhD). University of Warwick, Coventry UK.

Parker, A. 1996b. "Professional Football Club Culture: Goffman, Asylums and Occupational Socialization." *Scottish Centre Research Papers in Sport, Leisure and Society*. Edinburgh: Moray House Institute of Education: pp. 123-130.

Parker, A. 2000a. "Training for 'Glory', Schooling for 'Failure?': English Professional Football, Traineeship and Educational Provision." *Journal of Education and Work* 13 (1): 61-76.

Parker, A. 2000b. Masculinities in English Professional: Youth Traineeship, Sub-Cultural Expectation and Gender Identity. In *Studies in Educational Ethnography, Volume 3*, edited by G. Walford, and C. Hudson, 41-65. Oxford: Emerald Group Publishing Limited.

Parker, A. 2006. "Lifelong Learning to Labour: Apprenticeship, Masculinity and Communities of Practice." *British Education Research Journal* 32 (5): 687-701.

Patton, P. 1998. Foucault's Subject of Power. In *The later Foucault: Politics and philosophy*, edited by J. Moss, 64-77. London: Sage.

Perlow, L. A., and N. P. Repenning. 2009. "The Dynamics of Silencing Conflict." *Research in Organizational Behaviour* 29: 195-223. doi:10.1016/j.riob.2009.06.007

Piderit, S. K., and S. J. Ashford. 2003. "Breaking Silence: Tactical Choices Women Managers Make in Speaking Up About Gender-Equity Issues." *Journal of Management Studies* 40 (6): 1477-1502. doi: 10.1111/1467-6486.00388

Pinder, C. C., and K. P. Harlos. 2001. Employee Silence: Quiescence and Acquiescence as Responses to Perceived Injustice. *Research in Personnel and Human Resource Management* 20: 331-369.

Pitchford, A., C. Brackenridge., J. D. Bringer., C. Cockburn., G. Nutt., Z. Pawlaczek, Z., and K. Russell. 2004. "Children in Football: Seen but not Heard." *Soccer & Society* 5 (1): 43-60.

Podsakoff, P. M., S. B. MacKenzie., J. B. Paine, and D. G. Bachrach. 2000, "Organizational Citizenship Behaviours: A Critical Review of the Theoretical and Empirical Literature and Suggestions for Future Research." *Journal of Management* 26: 513-563.

Potrac, P., R. Jones. and K. Amour. 2002. 'It's All About Getting Respect': The Coaching Behaviours of an Expert English Soccer Coach." *Sport, Education and Society* 7 (2): 183-202. doi: 10.1080/1357332022000018869.

Potrac, P., and R. Jones. 2009. "Power, Conflict and Cooperation: Toward a Micropolitics of Coaching." *Quest* 61 (2): 223-236. doi: 10.1080/00336297.2009.10483612

Potrac, P., and R.L. Jones. 2011. Power in Coaching. In *The Sociology of Sports Coaching*, edited by R. L. Jones., P. Potrac., C. Cushion, and L. T. Ronglan, 135-150. London: Routledge.

Premier League. 2011. *Elite Player Performance Plan*, London premier League/Football Association.

Premeaux, S. F., and A. G. Bedeian. 2003. "Breaking the Silence: The Moderating Effects of Self-Moderating in Predicting Speaking Up in the Workplace." *Journal of Management Studies* 40 (6): 1537-1562. doi: 10.1111/1467-6486.00390

Purdy, L., P. Potrac, P, and R. L. Jones. 2008. "Power, Consent and Resistance: An Autoethnography of Competitive Rowing." *Sport, Education & Society* 13: 319-336. doi: 10.1080/13573320802200693

Purdy, L., R. L. Jones, and T. Cassidy. 2009. "Negotiation and Capital: Athletes' use of Power in an Elite Men's Rowing Program." *Sport, Education & Society* 14: 321-338. doi:10.1080/13573320903037796

Rabinow, P., and N. Rose. 2006. "Biopower Today." *BioSocieties* 1 (2): 195-217. doi:10.1017/S1745855206040014

Robidoux, M. A. 2001. *Men at Play: A Working Understanding of Professional Hockey.* Quebec: McGill-Queen's University Press.

Roderick, M., I. Waddington, and G. Parker. 2000. "Playing Hurt Managing Injuries in English Professional Football." *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* 35 (2): pp. 165-180.

Roderick, M. J. 2003. *Work, Self and the Transformation of Identity a Sociological Study of the Careers of Professional Footballers.* Thesis (PhD). University of Leicester, Leicestershire UK.

Roderick, M. 2006a. *The Work of Professional Football A Labour of Love?* London: Routledge.

Roderick, M. 2006b. "Adding Insult to Injury: Workplace Injury in English Professional Football." *Sociology of Health and Illness* 28 (1): 76-97.

Roderick, M. 2006c. "A Very Precarious Profession: Uncertainty in the Working Lives of Professional Footballers." *Work, Employment and Society* 20 (2): 245-265.

Roderick, M. 2014. "From identification to dis-identification: case studies of job loss in professional football." *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health* 6: 143-160. doi: 10.1080/2159676X.2013.796491

Rose, N. 2001. "The Politics of Life Itself." *Theory, Culture & Society* 18 (6): 1-30. doi: 10.1177/02632760122052020

Schyfter, P. 2008. "Tackling the 'Body Inescapable' in Sport: Body-Artifact Kinesthetics, Embodied Skill and the Community of Practice in Lacrosse Masculinity." *Body & Society,* 14 (3): 81-103.

Sewell, G., and J. R. Barker. 2006. "Coercion Versus Care: Using Irony to Make

Sense of Organizational Surveillance." *The Academy of Management Review,* 31 (4): 934-961.

Shogan, D. 1999. *The Making of High-Performance Athletes: Discipline, Diversity, and Ethics*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press Incorporated.

Stratton, G., T. Reilly., M. A. Williams., and D. Richardson. 2004. *Youth Soccer: From Science to Performance.* London: Routledge.

Tangirala, S., D. Kamdar., V. Venkataramani, and R. Parke. 2013. "Doing Right Versus Getting Ahead: The Effects of Duty and Achievement Orientations on Employees' Voice." *Journal of Applied Psychology* 98 (6): 1040-1050. doi: 10.1037/a0033855

Tannen, D. 2001. "The Relativity of Linguistic Strategies: Rethinking Power and Solidarity in Gender and Dominance. In *Discourse Thoery and Practice*, edited by M. Wetherell., S. Taylor and S. Yates, 150-166. London: Sage.

The Premier League. 2011. *Elite Player Performance Plan*. The Premier League.

Thompson, P., and S. Ackroyd. 1995. "All Quiet on the Workplace Front? A Critique of Recent Trends in British Industrial Sociology." *Sociology* 29 (4): 615-633. doi: 10.1177/0038038595029004004

Thorpe, S. 2004. "Pick the Best Forget the Rest? Training Field Dilemmas and Children's Football at the Turn of the Century." In *British Football and Social Exclusion Sport in the Global Society*, edited by S, Wagg, 224-241. London: Routledge.

Van Dyne, L., S. Ang., and I. C. Botero. 2003. "Conceptualizing Employee Silence and Employee Voice as Multidimensional Constructs." *Journal of Management Studies* 40 (6): 1359-1392. doi: 10.1111/1467-6486.00384.

Van Rheenen, D. 2012. "Exploitation in College Sports: Race, Revenue and Educational Reward. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* 48 (5): 550-571.

Watson, T. J. "Ethnography, Reality, and Truth: The Vital Need for Studies of 'How Things Work' in Organizations and Management." *Journal of Management Studies* 48 (1): 202-217. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-6486.2010.00979.x

Williams, S., and A. Manley. 2014. "Elite coaching and the Technocratic Engineer: Thanking the Boys at Microsoft!" *Sport, Education and Society*. doi: 10.1080/13573322.2014.958816