

“It’s not banter, it’s called sexual harassment!” Symbolic violence and gender relations in UK horseracing

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Abstract

Following equalities legislation in the 1970s, many young women have undertaken employment as stable 'lads' at horseracing yards. Similar to their male colleagues, many do so in the hope of becoming professional jockeys. The truth is this is unlikely to happen. Latest statistics show that women make up over half the workforce in racing yards; however, women only take 9% of rides in competitive races (Wilson, 2018; Grissell, 2021). Previous work in this area has outlined how the cultures and practices within racing on a day to day basis are damaging to the aspirations of female riders (Butler, 2014).

This thesis employs the social theories of Pierre Bourdieu to explain how the intricacies of day-to-day life in racing affect the aspirations and opportunities of women. Consideration is given to Bourdieu's (1986, 2003, 2017) work around forms of capital, habitus, and field, and, in particular, symbolic violence. It is argued that the engrained culture in racing is one that is symbolically violent towards women, and therefore hinders their opportunities within the industry. Research was carried out through a multidimensional approach. Firstly, a media analysis was conducted analysing the way in which female jockeys are portrayed in *The Racing Post*, the most popular horseracing newspaper in the United Kingdom. Secondly, semi-structured interviews were conducted with various people operating within the racing industry. From the data collected, key themes emerged that explain the systematic symbolic violence towards women in the racing industry, before conclusions are drawn on proposals to combat this violence in order to bridge the gender gap in competitive UK horseracing.

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Introduction

Horseracing in the United Kingdom

In the United Kingdom (UK henceforth), horseracing is nothing short of an institution. Since races were first recorded at Chester racecourse in the 1540's - and most likely before even that - kings, queens and gentry have owned, bred and trained thoroughbred racehorses (Cassidy, 2002). To this day horseracing remains an essential part of British culture. Whenever you hear someone say they know of a 'dark horse', they are going to win 'hands down', or they gave someone a 'run for their money', they are quoting racing terminology (Cassidy, 2002; Vamplew and Kay, 2006). Scholars recognise an industry steeped in history and tradition; Since the first races previously mentioned, king and queens have been heavily involved in the owning, breeding and training of thoroughbred horses (Cassidy, 2002; Kay and Vamplew, 2012; Sonobe, 2013). Regal blood runs through the veins of the industry: the *King George VI chase* at Kempton Park, and the *Queen Elizabeth II stakes* at *Royal Ascot* are two of the biggest races of the year in their respective codes (flat and jumps), both named in honour of former monarchs (Cowley, 2017).

Racing is as popular today as it has ever been: in April 2021, 8.8 million tuned in to see Minella Times win the 'Grand National', itself a British tradition, first run in 1839. Throughout history, racing has provided essential jobs, revenue, and entertainment to many in Britain. Buraimo *et al.* (2021) describe a modern industry that supports 85,000 careers, and annually contributes £3.5billion to the UK economy. While races like the Grand National, the Derby and the Cheltenham Gold Cup are staples in the sporting calendar,

racing is an everyday obsession for many in this country. 60 racecourses in Britain host meetings between themselves 364 days a year, with a mean attendance of between 1,111-6,150, depending on the code (Buraimo *et al.*, 2021). Latest figures show horseracing on British free-to-air television draws an average audience of 664,000, which is increasing year-on-year (Buraimo *et al.*, 2021). These figures describe a sport and industry with a history as illustrious as any in this country, and a modern world that is increasing in popularity.

Unfortunately, however, a phrase that is rarely used to describe the horseracing industry in this country is 'forward-thinking'. This is where the essence of this study lies. On the face of things, British horseracing would have you believe it is a very contemporary, progressive industry. The sport is proud to promote that it is open to all, regardless of gender or indeed any other factors (Clayton-Hathway and Manfredi, 2017). Letts (2020) has researched into sexuality and the role it plays within the industry, and the British Horseracing Authority (BHA) in its role as the national governing body has been keen to promote equality throughout the industry (Diversity in Racing Steering Group, 2018). However, recent research from Clayton-Hathaway and Manfredi (2017), amongst others, has highlighted issues with how certain groups are under-represented within the industry (Diversity in Racing Steering Group, 2018; Letts, 2020). This thesis will focus on the role that gender plays within the industry; however, it is important for context to understand there are issues surrounding various groups and their representation within racing - for example, ethnic minorities and members of the LGBT community.

Gender inequality in the context of horseracing

The argument for gender equality in racing is multi-faceted, complex, and ever-evolving. It is important to understand the intricacies of the industry, how one individual would typically interact with another, and how people navigate the field. The first complexity to acknowledge is the different codes of racing in this country. 'Flat racing' is, as the name describes, horses running between one point and another over flat ground, with no obstacles. Races in this format vary from roughly 5 furlongs (8 furlongs make up a mile) to 2 miles and 5 furlongs. Horses in this format generally begin racing at 2-3 years old, will peak at roughly 4-5 years old, and often retire soon after. In contrast, National Hunt - or 'jumps' races - are typically run over further distances between 2 and just over 4 miles, and involve jumping a number of obstacles, usually hurdles or 'fences', constructed mainly of birch. Horses running in this sphere tend to be older, and often have longer racing careers, many racing into their early teen years. Although both come under the umbrella term 'racing', flat and National Hunt racing have differing cultures, which is important to understand for the context of this study.

Flat racing is typically considered the 'richer' of the two codes. Although prize money is largely similar, the income that can be generated from breeding flat horses means there is significantly more to be made (Huggins, 2014). In turn, this typically leads to more involvement from people with huge amounts of money, and a more 'worldwide' reach (McManus *et al.*, 2013). There is significant involvement from elites from the Middle East, who in turn impart some of their own cultural norms on the UK flat racing industry (Cassidy, 2013). The money generated from breeding has led to an industry focused on horses as

‘business’, in so much that they are bred, owned, and raced to generate money for ‘connections’ (i.e. owners and trainers).

Contrary to this, National Hunt horses are rarely bred in the same volume as flat horses, meaning there is less financial incentive for owners. This lack of income makes the industry less attractive to those hoping to use racing as their main source of income (Cassidy, 2013; Miller, 2013). This leads to an industry that is very much focused on the horse as an animal for enjoyment, and racing as an endeavour to be enjoyed for leisure. This, in turn, leads to a culture that is generally very family-orientated, and less geared towards business - hence why National Hunt horses often stay in training much longer than those on the flat (Huggins, 2010).

Although there are significant differences between the flat and National Hunt codes, this study will address racing as a whole, as a number of the issues covered are evident across both. It is, however, advised that the differences between the codes are considered throughout reading this thesis, as the issues discussed may manifest themselves differently depending on the context.

This thesis will focus on female jockeys, and barriers for those aspiring to become professional. Therefore, it is also important to understand the typical career path taken by a jockey. Most will begin working in stables or ‘yards’, where the typical day-to-day task will involve exercising and caring for thoroughbred racehorses. From here, the owners and trainers will choose which jockeys they would like to ride their racehorse on race day (Huggins, 2010). This is done on a relatively unregulated basis, where most jockeys will be freelance and ride for many different owners and trainers throughout their careers. As

jockeys become more experienced, they may be offered roles riding a majority of horses for a particular owner or trainers; this is referred to as being a 'retained rider', although these roles are few and far between (Cassidy, 2013). Most jockeys will satisfy themselves with riding for various owners and trainers, and typically the more successful jockeys become, the more riding offers they get. A jockey riding in their first races is referred to as an 'apprentice' in flat racing, and a 'conditional' in National Hunt. 'Apprentices' and 'conditionals' receive a weight allowance against their professional colleagues in most races, in a hope to level the playing field. Once an apprentice or conditional has ridden a certain number of 'winners', they are required to apply for their professional jockey license.

As mentioned, horseracing is promoted as an industry where gender is not a barrier, with over 51% of employees at the 'grassroots' level being female (Wilson, 2018). There's are normally roles working in racing stables, riding out thoroughbreds in the mornings, and accompanying them to various racetracks around the country for afternoon race meetings. However, there is a disparity when examining figures for those that progress beyond this stage, and attempt to become professional jockeys. Latest figures shows females make up 26% of all riders, including professional, apprentices and conditionals (Grissell, 2021). This is concerning as over 50% of all stable staff are female, suggesting there are limits to their progression. This is further evident when looking at professionals, specifically. Females account for less than 18% of professional riders, and perhaps most concerning, less than 9% of all rides, across both codes (Jones, 2021).

Thesis aims and structure

This thesis will concern itself with the worrying statistics presented above, and how they are allowed to manifest themselves in the 21st century in a sport that claims to be progressive and forward-thinking. To this end, this study will aim to answer a number of research questions.

The first question is: *What barriers exist in the industry today that restrict women from progressing to become successful jockeys?* This question is purposefully broad and could be deconstructed into a number of separate pieces of work. This thesis intends to concern itself with the socio-cultural barriers of the horseracing industry in the UK, and how they in particular impact the opportunities and aspirations of women. This will be achieved through applying the social theories of Pierre Bourdieu (1990, 2017, 2018), a French sociologist whose most celebrated works concern with notions of ‘field’, ‘habitus’ and ‘doxa’, as will be discussed in more detail below.

The second question considered in this work is: *What impact does the media, in particular industry-specific media, have on the cultures of the industry, and in turn the opportunities afforded to aspiring female jockeys?* This will be achieved through a media analysis of ‘*The Racing Post*’, the most popular UK daily newspaper devoted almost entirely to the racing industry (Reid, 2021). Alongside this, and to address both research questions, semi-structured interviews will be conducted with various people from within the racing industry.

Following this introductory chapter, the next chapter takes the form of an extended literature review which discusses the findings of past literature on women in the horseracing industry, and will also cover the other main topics relevant to this study, namely Bourdieusian theory, contemporary horseracing and it's place in UK society, and the modern female sporting landscape.

Following the literature review is an explanation of the methods used to obtain and analyse data in this study. The results are then presented, with the empirical data discussed extensively whilst applying Bourdieusian theory. This will take the form of a number of key chapters which discuss the main findings of the research, including the impact of Bourdieusian notions of symbolic violence, forms of capital, and doxa within the field. Following this, the conclusion section will re-summarise the main findings and suggestions for courses of action moving forward. Finally, the methodological processes undertaken will be reflected upon, whilst outlining areas that require further research in relation to the current research questions.

Literature Review

Introduction

The forthcoming literature review is intended to give context around the issues analysed and the results considered later in this thesis, as well as explaining why there is a justification and a need to research into this area. Topics covered include the significance of racing in a modern UK sporting landscape, as well as racing and its turbulent relationship with social class. Furthermore, the main theories of Pierre Bourdieu will also be analysed critically through reference to their past application in the context of sport and gender inequality. Following this will be an assessment of modern female sport in a broader context, as well as a discussion of selected relevant feminist social theories, and how they may apply to this thesis.

Bourdieuian theory in sport

Introduction

Pierre Bourdieu is considered to this day one of the most influential social theorists of his generation. Throughout his works there are strong themes covering a range of anthropological and sociological areas, with an specialism in social class and mobility. Bourdieu's (1984) work, *Distinction and Taste*, was his first recognition of sport as a focus for sociological study. Bourdieu recognised in this work that sport is just one enterprise (others are education and the arts) that is both an institute and a practice, that is affected

by those involved within it, and in turn affects their beliefs and ideologies in return. Bourdieu's works are centralised around his central concepts of habitus, capital and field, which shall be explained and critiqued in this work. Bourdieu's works have impacted a number of academics writing within the sporting industry, perhaps most notably the works of Mennesson (2000), and Wacquant (1995), who both used Bourdieu's theories extensively to explain social construction of identities in boxing.

A key factor Bourdieu identified in *Distinction* (1984) is that through sociology all social interactions and observations should be observed through the context that there is never only one existing context in play. It should be understood that British racing identifies as much as an agricultural endeavour as it does a sport, and therefore should be observed and understood in that context (Cassidy, 2002). Sport itself is never a sole context, there will always be other contexts relevant in any situation, for example the political situation, national identities and the socio-economic status of participants are other contexts that will apply to any social observation. Bourdieu (1984) provides a tennis example to explain his point, suggesting that tennis played recreationally is a very different context to a professional, competitive one, therefore it is problematic to use 'tennis' as the overriding context for any observation, the truth is more nuanced than that.

A significant theme in Bourdieu's work was that of social class. His extensive work observed that different social classes tended to adopt different sports (1978, 1984). He goes on to suggest that the bourgeoisie prioritises style over functionality, and their choice of sporting endeavour reflects this (1978). As Tomlinson (2004) later reflects, sport and social class are so engrained in one another that it is naïve and problematic to socially observe a sporting context without understanding the social context in which it exists. In its simplest

terms, in *Distinction* (1984) and throughout his work Bourdieu argues the importance of an integrated approach to social observation and analysis, and that sport is more a manifestation than causation of any social intricacies.

Habitus

Although there are earlier examples of the term habitus being used in academia, Bourdieu famed the term in his works. Habitus is a system of dispositions in place that create an environment with its own unique set of beliefs, values and ideologies (Bourdieu, 1990). In his 1984 work, Bourdieu explained habitus: “it expresses first the *result of an organizing action*, with a meaning close to that of words such as structure; it also designates a way of being, a habitual state (especially of the body and, in particular, a *predisposition, tendency, propensity or inclination*” (p. 2). One criticism of Bourdieu’s work is the complex and lengthy sentence structure, sometimes leading to an unclear message (Tomlinson, 2004). To this end, later academics have simplified their own definition of habitus. Lizardo (2004) explained habitus as a structure formed of the opinions and ideologies of those that exist within it. A specific habitus will adopt these ideologies and influence in return those that exist within it, as well as any newcomers to the structure. Put simply, individuals will impact the beliefs of the habitus, and the habitus will impact the beliefs of the individuals. This is perhaps a somewhat less confusing explanation of Bourdieu’s (1984) original observation that the “habitus is not only a structuring structure... but also a structured structure (p.170)”.

Within its study, habitus notions towards studies around human agency. As Bourdieu (1984) observed that life-styles are the product of habitus, this would suggest that human

agency is limited. Farnell (2000) amongst other observed that habitus and agency are constantly at play with each other, and that agency repeatedly encounters structures that may restrict it (Tomlinson, 2004; Kontos, 2016). This has led to criticisms that Bourdieu's original notion of habitus is somewhat narrow and does not account for changes and human agency (Sugden and Tomlinson, 2000). Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) argued that these human 'agents' are in a continual process of making and remaking a specific structure; which could, under the right conditions, cause radical change. This would clearly explain that structures of habitus are not steadfast and solid, but fluent and ever changing. However due to the structuring nature of the habitus itself, any change tends to be gradual and minimal, due to the individual agents being influenced by the habitus itself (Fraser, 2013).

Capital

Bourdieu does not offer a concise and clear definition of capital. Tomlinson (2004) defines capital as a "form of power, that capacity individuals and groups might have to impact upon, change, or control situations (p. 168)". This is consistent with other sociological theories of power; the way power or capital is obtained, however, is debated by sociologists. Foucault (1975, 1982) argues power will always rely on the ignorance of those under oppression, that a docile society allows individuals to express their power on others, with very few distinguishing factors. Deleuze and Foucault (1977) attribute power to knowledge, which has led to criticisms that there are many other distinguishing factors (status, opportunity, finances) that can lead to one obtaining power (Patton, 1998; Beer, 2017).

Bourdieu's notion of capital (read: power), contrary to Foucault's, is multidisciplinary. In 1986, he wrote extensively about various forms of capital. He argued that a number of different factors make up one's capital, and therefore it is much more complex than simply one's knowledge. The first of which Bourdieu termed *cultural capital*. He defined three forms that make up cultural capital. The *embodied state*: long lasting beliefs or dispositions of the mind and body, and is heavily linked to gender. The *objectified state*: is the collection of material goods, and is heavily linked with one's economic situation and often as a result, social class. The *institutionalized state* is the habitus' (societies) recognition of capital, usually through the collection of academic or professional qualifications. This knowledge, or at least the illusion of it, is the closest Bourdieu comes to recognises Foucault's (1975, 1982) traditional notion of knowledge as power. The three states in their collective make up one's cultural capital, which in a broader sense is simply one's 'social assets'. In practicality these manifest themselves in this such as the clothes one wears, the manner of one's speech and the education they have received.

Social capital is the understanding that one's 'networks' or social interactions will impact on the amount of capital they possess (Bourdieu, 1992). Bourdieu (1986) argues that the social circles in which an individual moves will have a direct impact on the amount of capital they possess in a specific environment. He points out that an "old boys network" of the wealthy and powerful allow those involved to maintain their levels of capital, simply through being associated with one another. This form of capital is heavily linked with and manifests itself in various social class systems. Politics and sports governance are just some areas which identify social capital as important factor as to who gains power (Groeneveld and Houlihan, 2010; Foley and Edwards, 1997). Social capital is particularly prevalent in this study, as it is acknowledged social networks play a huge part in the upwards movements

of jockeys, due to the comparably unregulated fashion in which jockeys are appointed. For example Lizzie Kelly, Harry Skelton, Bryony Frost and Tom Scudamore are just some examples of jockeys who come from families with rich histories in racing, affording them significant social capital. Bourdieu's theory argues they would find it easier to navigate the field, due to the connection they have built through family ties.

The third form Bourdieu (1986) outlined was *economic capital*. This relates to one's wealth or economic situation. The understanding is that high levels of economic capital will open up opportunities for an individual. Access to higher education and learning enhances one's cultural capital, alongside the collection of material goods and belongings. Economic capital would also theoretically allow one to move in different social circles, due to club membership fees, or other associated costs, (Wilson, 2002). There are some contradictions to the notion that having money entitles you to other forms of capital, however. The evolution of 'new money' as opposed to wealth passed through generations of families has caused friction in some circles (Brooks, 2010). Goldthorpe (2016) argues that people making money where their families have not traditionally been wealthy still face restrictions in social mobility. There are still groups within society there are very difficult to join if candidates come from working class background, despite current wealth (Marshall *et al.*, 2005). A lot of prestigious fraternal groups worldwide require nomination or at least recognition from existing members for someone to be considered, something which does not come easily to individuals from working class backgrounds, despite current wealth (Piff *et al.*, 2018; Samson, 2018). From this evaluation, it is clear that economic capital will allow certain amounts of social mobility and assist in gaining both social capital, but does not exclusively allow an individual to move within social class restrictions.

Bourdieu's (1986) notion of *physical* or *embodied capital* encapsulates all the human body is, could be, and how that impacts on one's ability to navigate a particular field. Bourdieu (2020) argues that one's physical makeup would afford one more or less 'capital' in any context - but this is dependent on what the perceived 'correct' physical makeup for that situation is. It is therefore essential one's physical make-up matches the expectations or 'doxa', of the society within which they exist, otherwise they risk forfeiting capital and will find the context more problematic to navigate (Bourdieu, 2020). Shilling (2004) extended this to discuss how physical capital aligns with Bourdieu's work on social class. He suggested the working classes tend to view their bodies as an 'instrument'; this could be linked to the generally manual nature of roles they find themselves in. Contrastingly, the upper classes view the human body as a 'project', due to the disposable income and time to be able to devote to such a project. Shilling (2004) uses the example of a gym to explain how the working classes may tend to spend their workouts on weight machines to make their body as 'useful' as possible; by contrast the bourgeoisie tended to spend more time in yoga and Pilates classes, moulding their body to what is - by their values and beliefs - the most desirable form.

Linked closely with physical capital is Bourdieu's (1978) notion of *hexis*. Hexis steps slightly away from the physical embodiment of the human body, and instead concerns itself with everything else which encapsulates the way in which one may present themselves (Huang, 2019). Where personal combines with social, hexis includes our mannerisms, accent, the language we use, and the way we hold ourselves in social situations. Similar to the other forms of capital, if one's hexis matches the perceived norms of the context with which the individuals communicates, they will be afforded more capital within that context (Wolf, 2021).

The final form of capital to be considered is the notion of *symbolic capital*. This is the notion that one is afforded capital on the basis of symbolic, prestigious, or honorary accolades (Bourdieu, 1986). It is, however, recognised that this capital is only afforded in line with the norms and values of the context the individual finds themselves in, similarly to the aforementioned forms of capital (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 2013). For example, a war hero would hold significant symbolic capital when running for political office, as in this context anyone who has fought for 'queen and country' is considered to carry a certain level of prestige. One's symbolic capital will often find roots in one of the other various forms of capital, and as such is recognised by some as a culmination of all capitals, rather than a capital of its own (Ihlen, 2018).

Field

The third of Bourdieu's main concepts, the field is a specific network or configuration for social observation (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). In the previous paragraph it was discussed how capital is relevant to a specific situation or context, when it should have read capital is relevant to a specific *field*, to use the correct terminology. It is problematic to discuss capital or field without understanding the complexities and nuances between the two. A 'field' is any context that is specific, and usually where specific habitus exists, and as a result various capitals are at play (Bourdieu 1977, 2018). For example, the field in this study will primarily be the field of British horseracing. This field (racing) will have 'doxa' (as discussed later) that are unique and specific to itself, and as such forms of capital are more or less relevant than they would be in other specific fields. It is important to understand that at any moment an individual finds themselves in number of various fields (Grenfell and

James, 2004). For example, at work the industry is one field, the nation or locality is another, and one's colleagues will have a field unique to themselves. If we understand that habitus is derived from the field(s) we are in, then it is evident that an individual will be experiencing habitus from all of these various fields, all at once. Some may be similar and reinforce each other, and some may be contradictory (Crossley, 2003).

Various other scholars have furthered Bourdieu's arguments of field. Tomlinson (2004) writes of different sporting fields, and how the capital of individuals within those fields is determined:

The sports/golf field has specific features, operating as a network around a set of positions. These smart clubs constitute an exclusive and privileged class habitus, in which particular combinations of capital (educational and cultural as well as economic) will determine your suitability to enter that habitus. (p.169)

The above explains how it could be observed that sports in their individual context are unique fields. The example given uses golf, a field where certain capitals (educational, cultural, and economic) are valued above others. Contrastingly, Cooper and Joyce (2009) discuss the field of Scottish football in their work involving Gretna FC. They claim the football field is one which values players which also display certain capital, including physical capital, and cultural capital (in the form of their footballing skills). What is observed from this is that two sports value certain capitals in different weights, and as such it is perceived different individuals would be successful in each one. Through his work on disability cricket, Kitchen (2014) observed that certain capitals were valued above others in the field, which in turn ostracized certain people - a parallel that may be evident in the

current study. As with the examples above, this study acknowledges that racing in the UK is its own specific 'field' and as such will display its own norms, values and beliefs.

Doxa and symbolic violence

In Bourdieusian language the previously discussed norms, values or beliefs specific to any one field are termed *doxa* (Bourdieu, 2001). Simply speaking, the doxa is a society's 'unquestioned truths' - a collection of norms that no-one challenges. Bourdieu (1979) argued that doxa are constructed through socialisation; as we grow up in a certain environment, we are inclined to believe that what society infers to us is correct. A common example given is the typical school marking system. A cohort of students would each achieve a grade on an exam, and those with the highest scores would be perceived to be the smartest of the group. Bourdieu's work around doxa would suggest that the only reason they are perceived to be the smartest in the group is that the doxa of the school environment suggests levels of intellect are exclusively correlated to exam results. Although some of the students who did not perform as well on the exam may be as smart or smarter than their better-performing colleagues, the norms and beliefs that promote exam results as an unquestionable parameter of intellect would have everyone believe differently (James, 2015; Rainford, 2021). Aligning with the earlier discussions on field and capital in a sporting context, it is argued that the reason certain capitals are more valued within specific fields is because they align particularly well with the doxa of that particular field (Bourdieu, 1986, 2007a).

Bourdieu (1979, 2001) also discussed the notion of *symbolic violence* as a way of reinforcing societal structures. If we recognise fields within society as structures that constrict and

afford opportunities to individuals based on their field-specific levels of capital, it is important to understand the process of how this happens. Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) describe symbolic violence as a violence that manifests itself within the power (capital) differential between groups within a field. Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) argue that symbolic violence is not a conscious, deliberate action by those in power, but a nuanced perpetuation of doxa that in turn reinforces the power of those who manifest it. Foley (2010) recognised that symbolic violence is mentioned in different guises by various feminist and critical race scholars.

It is predicted that symbolic violence may well be at play in the field this thesis concerns itself with: UK horseracing. It is therefore essential that it is understood how symbolic violence plays a part in not necessarily creating, but certainly perpetuating harmful doxa within fields. The subtle nuances and inexplicit manner of symbolic violence mean it is often presented as a way in which one group in society maintain hegemonic power over another (Burawoy, 2019). Connolly and Healy (2004) provide an example where boys from differing socio-economic backgrounds in Belfast discuss their education and career aspirations. They argue the working class boys in their study were subjects of symbolic violence. The underlying doxa is that those with 'better' socio-economic circumstances were more likely to achieve (in the typical sense) more in school, and in turn obtain better, higher-paid employment. What is interesting is that they observed the boys from working class backgrounds were aware of the doxa, and 'played their role' in perpetuating it. By not challenging the violence they are subjected to, these boys are unconsciously strengthening the doxa even further, and perpetuating it for future generations (Bourdieu, 1989).

There have been various examples of this phenomena used in sports academia to date. Kennelly (2017) used Bourdieu's work to explain the emotions and attitudes of homeless and partially housed young people in Olympic cities. It was observed that the typical Olympic legacy, one that leaves a city rejuvenated with new employment and housing opportunities, is not one these young people could identify with (Brown and Szymanski, 2012). Kennelly and Watt (2013) further observed their lack of ability to gain Olympic volunteering experience or employment left many of these people feeling worthless and a failure. This is evidence of symbolic violence at play as these young people had very little chance of 'living' the Olympic legacy, but the 'unspoken (perceived) truths' that the Olympics brings better opportunities for everyone left them feel more ostracised and oppressed than ever.

Interestingly, contemporary scholars have suggested that a modern society is more susceptible to symbolic violence than it ever has been before (Gray *et al.*, 2017; Zhang, 2018). Recuero (2015) believes that contemporary ways of communicating and the emergence of social media in the 21st century has given 'superpowers' to symbolic violence. She observes that many people are comfortable sharing on social media views and discourses they would not typically share in a polite conversation, and this leads to a more polarised field than ever, where one group is unconsciously violent towards another. With an understanding of Bourdieu's key concepts that will frame this thesis, the next section will horseracing in the UK.

After careful consideration, it is for the concepts outlined above that Bourdieu was chosen as the theorist that would be best aligned to this work. There was consideration given to other theorists, however. Namely, Goffman's work around *Presentation of Self* (2006), and

Gramsci's notions of *hegemony* (1971). It is acknowledged that either of these could have been used to produce a viable study on a similar topic. The motivations behind choosing Bourdieu was the consideration that the racing industry is a strong example of a Bourdieusian 'field', and the hypothesis that the notions of habitus, capital and symbolic violence would provide a sound lens through which to analyse the racing industry.

Horseracing and its modern cultural significance in the United Kingdom

Horseracing for the masses and the few

Sport in a modern society is often deemed a unique enterprise, in that it has the ability to engage a wide range of people, transcending cultures, languages and nations (Markovits and Rensmann, 2010). Sports participation in the UK has generally been increasing year on year, the latest UK sport figures which show 1 in 4 people regularly participate in some form of sport or physical activity (Stamatakis and Chaudhury, 2008). UK sport figures show that over 17 million adults take part in physical activity at least once a month, suggesting the huge impact sport has on UK culture (Sleap, 1998; Ramchandani *et al.*, 2019). As well as participation, sport in the UK is hugely popular with spectators, and it is with these spectators that horseracing really resonates, as the second most popular spectator sport, behind only football (Buraimo *et al.*, 2021).

Horseracing finds itself in a unique position within the wider UK sporting landscape. When compared to other sports at the professional level racing is a very select enterprise, with

only 726 licensed jockeys in the UK (BHA, 2020). Despite its limited involvement at the professional level, racing has a significant cultural impact, partly due to its deep history that is engrained into British culture, with racing records dating back the 17th Century (Hall, 2005; Huggins, 2014). Racing's original roots can be traced back to the days of foxhunting, when men on horseback would jump fences and hedges in British countryside. The history surrounding racing is perhaps one of the reasons its reach in the UK is wider than might be expected (Brailsford, 1992; Kay and Vamplew, 2012). For hundreds of years the British monarchy has taken a deep involvement in racing, emphasising that racing is as quintessentially British as any sport could hope to be. Arguably, this is most famously illustrated by the Queen mother, who was a famous racehorse owner, as well as member of the monarchy (Vickers, 2013). As well as famous participants, a number of the best races around the UK are named in honour of monarchs, including the King George VI Chase and the Queen Anne stakes; two of the most prestigious races in the jump and flat racing calendar, respectively.

Racing's popularity as a typical British pastime means that even today it carries considerable significance over the wider sporting landscape. Nearly ten million people tuned in to watch the 2019 running of the Grand National, the pinnacle of the National Hunt (jump) season (Baxter, 2019). In comparison, this was over one million more people than watched England lift the Cricket World Cup in the same year (Bold, 2019). As well as viewership, racing is the second biggest sport in terms of generating money for the British economy, again behind only football (Forrest and Simmons, 2003; Walker and Jackson, 2011). Buraimo *Et al.* (2021) argue that in today's society racing supports over 85,000 jobs in the UK alone, and generates roughly £3.5Billion expenditure per annum.

Media and horseracing

As modern society embraces various new forms of media, the appetite for sport is ever growing (Boyle, 2009). Bloggers, social media, podcasts and celebrity fans have opened new floodgates through which those who traditionally took little interest, are consuming sport and absorbing its norms, cultures and values (Campbell, V, 2004; Campbell, A, 2008). Those who consume media are susceptible to its influence on their opinions and values, helping form cultures and individual beliefs, so it is only sensible to assume that sports media is having more of an impact than ever, as it grows in presence (Curran and Hesmondhalgh, 2019; Lebel *et al.*, 2019). From this growth and development of media outlets, Norman *et al.* (2019) argue sport is having a bigger cultural impact than ever before, and therefore the cultures and values it promotes should be observed with ever growing attention and caution. It could be argued that the fast-paced, immediate nature of media of today is perfectly suited to racing. With racing every day of the year save for Christmas Day, with three to four meetings each day consisting of at least six races, it is clear to see how racing generates enough content to fulfil a constant need for by-the-minute updates, and engages an audience with a short attention span and desire for excitement, and instant thrills (Stassen, 2010).

Horseracing and social class in the United Kingdom

In traditional literature and throughout history, sports in general have been championed as endeavours for good (Mandell, 1999; Collins, 2010). Although it is undeniable that for some sport offers the opportunity to access new opportunities, it is also argued that often

in its elitist nature, sport can be as inaccessible for some as it is opportunistic as it is for others (Harris, 2017, Andersen and Bakken, 2019). Practical constraints such as cost of equipment, lack of facilities or lack of spare time are just some of the more obvious reasons sport can be inaccessible to those of lower classes (Somerset and Hoare, 2018). The rules and regulations and regulations come under scrutiny from scholars in the same debate. Boxill (2003) and Scrambler (2005) are amongst those arguing the rules of competitive sport are 'for good', although plenty would argue they offer as many negatives as positives (Hill, 1996; Wilson, 2005; Marqusee, 2016)

Some of the more intricate, subtle or nuanced restrictions include social status, or being unfamiliar in the environment or culture surrounding that particular sport (Stempel, 2018). Bourdieusian theory labels this 'capital', and those with lower levels of capital are less likely to be able to access the cultures and norms (doxa) around a particular sport (Bourdieu, 1986; Asquith, 2019). It is argued that although both the tangible and intangible constraints are apparent in racing, it is perhaps those more nuanced and subtle examples that are the most prevalent. Given that sport offers clear opportunities as well as restrictions to those aiming to progress, this following discussion will see how (if at all) racing fits into this typical notion of sport in the UK.

At face value, horse racing would appear to be an exclusive exercise for the upper classes; the need to own, keep and train horses comes at huge expense (Gordon, 2001). The 'sport of kings', has enhanced its impression upon the higher echelons of society through the involvement of the Royal Family. Many monarchs have owned race horses, and to this day a number of the most famous races are named in honour of them; for Example the Queen Anne stakes and the King George VI Chase, two of the most prestigious races in the flat and national hunt racing calendar, respectively (Cassidy, 2002).

Racing is curious in its manner, however. While owning and training racehorse has traditionally been the exclusive endeavour of those upper classes, there are still roles and opportunities for the lower classes (Huggins, 1994). Jockeys, stable staff and others involved in the training, keeping and preparation of racehorses have traditionally come from no distinctive background, and those most successful (in particular jockeys) have viewed racing as an opportunity to increase their social standing (Filby, 1983).

Upon further inspection it is clear racing offers opportunities (to an extent) to people of all classes, in one manner or another. To this end, May (2019) argues it is problematic to look at racing through a simplistic lens, as some traditional scholars have. Although racing is not the 'sport of kings' reserved for the gentry, it also not the exclusive reserve of the working classes, its place in the sporting landscape is curious and complex.

Gambling, horseracing, and the working classes

It is problematic to discuss UK horseracing and not discuss its relationship with gambling, as it is often argued that UK horse racing and the gambling industry rely on each other to stay afloat (Forrest and Simmons, 2003). As with many sports, gambling helped formalise the rules of racing (Munting, 1996). Horse racing in its nature is an often unpredictable sport with shock outcomes leading to wins at big odds, enticing the working class gambler (Downs, 2008). Since the legalisation of sports gambling in the early 1960's the industry has grown hugely, even more so in the 21st century with the access to internet gambling (Pilling and Bartlett, 2012). McManus *et al.* (2013) argues that since gambling has allowed the working classes an introduction to racing they would not previously have had, the sport is

more accessible than ever before. This would support work by Kruse (2019) suggesting that it is gambling that allows the working classes 'access' to a wide range of sports; and this 'access' has grown as gambling has become more popular and widespread over the past 30 years.

Aside from gambling, further access and opportunities are afforded with roles in stables (Hammond, 2016). Having said this, when delving deeper there is still a clear social divide in the industry. The upper classes make up a majority of owners, trainers and officials within racing (Huggins, 2014). In contrast, the working classes involvement in a professional capacity is limited to the roles of stable hand and 'leading up'¹. These typical menial or 'dirty' jobs only serve to enforce the divide between the classes in the industry (Filby, 1987).

This divide is further strengthened when looking at spectators at a racecourse. Most courses in the UK will have separate 'enclosures'. The ticket you have will dictate which enclosures you can enter, and the best viewing points will be reserved for the most expensive tickets (Huggins, 2010). The enclosures are often named accordingly, at Royal Ascot the most expensive ticket allows you into the 'Queen Anne enclosure', whereas the cheapest ticket allows the holder entrance to 'the village'. This would suggest that although racing is accessible to a wide range of people, the most prestigious positions are still reserved for the upper classes, and subtle nuances are in place to subconsciously enforce these barriers (Kay and Vamplew, 2012; Sonobe, 2013). Bourdieusian theory would identify

¹ 'Leading up' is the practice of a stable hand immediately before a horse races. The hand will prepare the horse in its stable box, ensuring its riding equipment and tack are fitted correctly. Following this they will parade the horse in the parade ring, walking the horse in laps until the jockey mounts and heads to the start point.

this as symbolic violence, the notion that subtle and often unconscious nuances are in effect to damage an individual or groups 'capital' or power (Schubert, 2014).

The jockey and social class

Although racing often transcends somewhere between enforcing and negating a class system, it is perhaps best optimised by studying the position of the jockey. Typical jockeys cannot be held in the same regard as the bourgeoisie owners and trainers, because they are 'employees', and because of the physical nature of their role, that often leaves them battered, bruised and dirty (Martin *et al.*, 2017). However jockeys cannot be held in the same regard as the casual working class gambler or enthusiast, because they move in the same circles as the gentry, and often possess a very specific knowledge, affording them significant 'capital' (May, 2019). It is argued that the jockey is unique in the horse racing field, in that they have the ability to transcend social classes, and possess power in the cultures associated with both the upper and working classes. The jockey also typically possesses a 'habitus' that is favourable within the racing field. As previously discussed, if one's habitus suits the 'doxa' of the field, that individual will be afforded much more capital, and in turn find it easier to navigate and negotiate the field itself (Tomlinson, 2004; Lyke, 2017).

The jockey is one example of what Friedman (2015) amongst other would term social mobility. In simple terms, this is understood to be one's ability to move between social classes, usually towards the upper classes (Breen, 2004). Much has been written about sport as a tool for social mobility (Spaaij, 2011). Throughout history, there have been celebrated examples of how sport has allowed those from the poorest backgrounds to

better themselves financially and socially, although some observe restrictions upon social mobility as well as the affordances it can offer (Carrington, 1986, Major and Machin, 2018). What is curious about the jockey is that although they are an example of social mobility, there is still an underlying understanding that they are still 'below' some of these peers (Binder and Grimes, 2021). This again aligns with Bourdieu's (2003) work on symbolic violence, with subtle structures in place to perpetuate the class divide.

The modern-day sportswoman

More money, same problems

It is essential while looking into the progress of women in any specific sport to gather a view of the wider sporting landscape, and how women fit in an ever-evolving, modern sporting environment (Bradbury and O'Boyle, 2017). Sport is a constantly changing enterprise, impacted by and impacting on the societies in which it exists (Tomlinson, 2019). With this in mind it is pertinent to review historical research on the topic, as well as contemporary works (Booth, 2019). Although not as relevant as they once were, it is still useful to bear in mind the traditionalist standpoint when reviewing racing in particular; because as Huggins (2018) argues, the sport identifies with its rich history and traditions more than some others.

The historical struggle has been heavily documented and well publicised (Cahn, 2015, Hargreaves, 2002), and the narrative in women's sport since the turn of the 21st century has been a more positive one (Fountaine and McGregor, 2002; Oglesby, 2017). Although participation statistics and media coverage would suggest female sport is in a much

healthier place today than it was fifty or even twenty years ago, many including Toffoletti (2017) would argue that there is still a 'long way to go' to reach genuine sporting equality between genders. As well as discussing the opportunities for women hoping to compete in sport, it is also relevant to discuss those who work in and around the sporting event (coaches, staff, journalists etc.) as well as female sports fans. All these identities combine to give an overview of where women sit in a modern sporting landscape (Toffoletti *et al.*, 2019).

Women as competitors

“...fitful but undeniable progress for women in sports as they ascended to places in the executive suite, in the commentary booth, and on the awards podium they had never reached before” (Clarey, 2018)

It is a generally accepted belief that although not always smoothly or at a steady pace, female sport has progressed in terms of participation and opportunity over time; in particular since the turn of the twenty-first century. On the face of things that would seem to be the case. A number of sport including soccer and cricket have begun awarding equal prize money to male and female competitors, and women are being hired for more positions in sport than they had previously (Ridinger and Pastore, 2019). This is consistent in racing, as more females are turning professional year-on-year, although the progress is at a very slow rate (Cashmore, 2018).

Despite this progress a number of scholars would argue that some deep-rooted issues still exist. LaVoi *et al.* (2019a) argue that although participation has risen worldwide, the number of female coaches has actually declined. They go on to say that even those female

coaches who have been most successful have been recipient of a predictable, sexist and homophobic rhetoric. A cynical view would be that as female sport has become 'bigger business' (Prize money, TV air time), a male-dominated society has pushed an agenda that a male would be a better fit in roles of responsibility. Indeed, this is a common reflection on roles of responsibility in business and wider society (Wynn and Correll. 2018). Statistics support the view that there is still a significant disparity in modern day sport.

Feminism in sport

It would be naïve to investigate any area involving women in a sporting context without at the very least looking into modern day sport feminism. Indeed, for this study it is crucial to understand what role (if any) feminism plays on impacting opportunities for young women in racing in order to apply social theory effectively.

Over the years the term *sport feminism* has been coined by many authors, without reaching a concise, clear definition (Birrell, 2000; Scraton and Flintoff, 2002). Hargreaves (2002) argues that sport feminism has many different manifestations, and these largely mirror the characteristics of various mainstream feminisms. Hargreaves (2004) goes on to argue that sport feminisms have occurred through two main forms: 'intellectual' and 'political' action. Intellectual feminisms manifest as a result of ideas, academic theories, discourses and arguments presented by intellectuals (Ferguson, 2017). Bryson (2019) describes political action feminism as the practice of challenging gender bias through membership at official bodies, institutions and in our case, sport organisations. Though it may appear in various guises, Hargreaves (2004) suggests that sport feminism has always had one common goal: "to expose, challenge and eliminate gender-biased dominant policies and practices". Many,

including Allen (2018) argue that neither intellectual or political action is as effective individually, as they are when applied in conjunction to combat gender biases.

There are various schools of feminist thought. *Liberal feminists* argue that society believes women to be naturally less physically or intellectually able than men, and that these beliefs are reinforced by subtle nuances in everyday life (Baehr, 2017). To use a racing example, liberal feminists would argue that the racing industry recognises women as less physically able to ride horses at speed, and argue the norms within the industry reinforce this. As its name suggests, *radical feminism* is a much more extreme model. A radical feminist lens shows a society that is fundamentally a patriarchy in which men oppress women (Thompson, 2001). Through this lens it is believed that gender differences should be abolished completely within society, and that there should be no distinction between males and females at all (Mackay, 2015). Focused more on social class and capitalist structures, *Marxist feminism* aligns the opportunities of women with other ostracized groups within wider Marxist literature (Rafter and Natalizia, 1981; Mojab and Zia, 2019). Drawing upon a partial synthesis of the aforementioned *Marxist* and *radical feminisms*, *cultural feminism* argues that society portrays a reflection of both ideologies, and as such it is essential to gather an understanding of both to fully understand the impact on society (Evans, 1995).

One of the main focuses of sports feminists is the body of the female athlete. Markula (2003) argues that having control of their own body allows women agency or freedom that demonstrates the 'unapologetic' approach adopted to achieve gender equality in sport. Some, including Hargreaves (2007) and Ponterotto (2016) argue that by expressing their freedom and agency by changing their bodies through training and competing in sport,

women are challenging the hegemonies and norms of a patriarchal society, aligning with radical feminist ideologies. As well as this, because there is usually a tangible goal women are striving for in sports competition, there is an argument that by competing women are doing something 'for themselves', rather than to satisfy the patriarchy (Tolvhed, 2013).

Broad (2001) furthers this argument when discussing agency surrounding sexuality in women's rugby. She claims that rugby players coming out as lesbians is one example of destabilizing the binary understanding around gender and sexuality, whilst confronting stigmas. Although this is discussing the issue of sexuality rather than gender, it is often argued that these are both issues that need addressing within modern sport, and share many common struggles and challenges (Cahn, 2015). This would again appear to fall in line with radical feminist ideas of challenging a patriarchal society, one in which men suppress on women what they believe the sexuality 'norms' should be (Thompson, 2001). It is the notion of challenging the 'status quo' that is the essential argument of how sport feminism can positively impact society (Feezell, 2013).

Scholars have written how sport feminisms are problematic. Some argue they are too narrow, and others suggest they ignore ostracizing factors including race and disability (Wyatt, 2012; Grant, 2013; Hirsch and Keller, 2015). Other also suggest the schools of feminism contradict one another, some wanting integration of genders, some wanting abolishment (Hargreaves, 2004; Ramazanoglu, 2012). Contrary to both these beliefs some postmodern 'sport feminists' would suggest that through gender differences (in particular the body) women can empower themselves and demonstrate efforts to challenge the norms of an oppressive society (Caudwell, 2011). This contradiction of theories and ideologies has led to confusion as what exactly feminism looks like in a sporting context,

and as such it has perhaps not been as effective as it may have been with a concise, clear message.

Bourdieu, symbolic violence and gender in sport

Feminism generally aims to challenge the patriarchal hierarchy, and one way scholars suggest this is enforced is through symbolic violence. Toffoletti (2017) observed the position of the female sports fan, and where they sit in the sporting field. She recognised a changing sporting landscape that embraces the female fan more than ever before, but also a landscape that structures the way in which those female fans engage with the sports they are spectating. Esmonde *et al.* (2015) also observed this, using the example of gendered marketing and the 'hyper-feminizing' of female sport fans. They propose that rhinestones on jerseys, pink equipment, and replica sportswear designed specifically for women is an example of this. To interpret this through Bourdieusian (2003) theory, it is argued that these are attempts to reinforce the gender hierarchy between sports spectators. Sparkly jerseys only reinforce the fact that anyone wearing them is a *female* fan, and as such 'different' from the norm. Although to some it may appear to be a harmless attempt to encourage more females into sports spectatorship, Toffoletti (2017) argues that it is a subtle form of symbolic violence that is actual harmful to the levels of capital afforded to women in the sports spectator field. Studies show that female fans of male-dominated sports (namely, soccer and ice-hockey) often downplay their femininity in attempts to be taken seriously and considered 'real' fans (Crawford and Gosling, 2004; Jones, 2008). To this end, it could be argued that the 'feminisation' of sporting regalia is a symbolically violent attempt to reinforce the gender differences female sports fans are consciously trying to distance themselves from.

Thorpe (2005) explains how symbolic violence is evident in snowboarding cultures, and how this effects the aspirations and opportunities afforded to female riders. Similarly to our context of horseracing, snowboarding is one of very few sports where males and females compete alongside each other. Through her observation of media, Thorpe observed the common use of 'snowboarding as a form of war' metaphor.

War has traditionally been an important test of manhood and a masculine activity. Sport/war metaphors exaggerate and celebrate differences between male and female riders in a covert way, idealizing and valorizing men and masculinity, making heroes of the aggressive male and female snowboarders while marginalizing non-recruits. Symbolic violence has replaced acts of physical aggression as the means of constructing snowboarding as a masculine activity. (Thorpe, 2005, p. 88)

As explained, it is argued that through the use of such metaphors, snowboarding - alongside a number of other sports - continue to identify their competitions as 'warzones', which in turn is incredibly damaging to the aspirations of the female competitor (Jansen and Sabo, 1994). Through the perpetuation of this metaphor and the celebration of 'manly' injuries, Thorpe (2005, 2009) observed snowboarding as a field that is symbolically violent towards women, and although many are 'getting on with it' and proving themselves to be successful, it is impossible to measure the harm this subtle violence is causing to female sport.

Sportswomen in the media

The modern sportswoman

In contemporary academia, there has been substantial discussion around the position of sportswomen in sports and mainstream media (Bruce *et al.*, 2010; Toffoletti, 2016, 2019). Over time the narratives of the work in this area has changed to reflect important issues such as the sexualisation of sportswomen in media, the amount of coverage (or lack thereof) afforded to female sports, and an analysis of how sportswomen's relationships are covered in media, including periods of maternity and raising children (Goc, 2007; Sherry *et al.*, 2016; Bruce, 2016). This section will therefore discuss past academic literature on these topics, in order to give a background of the landscape women find themselves in, within a sporting media context.

Lack of coverage

The first crucial thing to understand when discussing sportswomen in modern media is the lack of coverage afforded to women's sport worldwide (Kane and Maxwell, 2011). Bernstein (2002) acknowledged that at the turn of the 21st century female sport had made significant progression, with many sports professionalising and forming formal competitions. One key observation was that although women were celebrating more success in sport, this is not always matched with recognition within the media. What was observed was that this progression was not matched in newspaper inches. Kane (2013) observed that at the time of writing, women made up roughly 40% of all American athletes, however were afforded less than 2% of televised media coverage. This statistic is mirrored

in the UK. O'Neill and Mulready (2015) observed in their review of media coverage related to the London 2012 Olympic games, coverage of female sports accounted for between 1-5% of all sports coverage in British newspapers. This figure stayed fairly constant over a ten-year period, and it is argues sports media is one the last areas to left to see progression in gender balance (O'Reilly, 2012).

This would seem to support claims from Kane (2013), where she argued that there exists a "symbiotic relationship between sport media and hegemonic masculinity". She, amongst others, argues that the media do not just ignore female sport; they actively encourage a narrative that suggest women are generally not interested in sport (Bradshaw and Howard, 2017). The narrative within sporting media is further manipulated to suggest those few that are interested are not competent when they do take part (Messner, 2002). Messner (2002, 2010) also argued that this relationship and narrative between sports media and masculinity has created a phenomena that relegates female sport to the outskirts of relevance, and created a "cultural centre of masculinity". This is turn creates more male-focused content within both sports and mainstream media, which systematically reinforces the suppression of the undeniable progression women sport has made in recent years. By focusing more and more on achievement and stories within male sports, female sports are marginalised further and further (Bruce and Antunovic, 2018; Pavlidis *et al.*, 2020). Discussed in more detail later, this is consistent with this study's analysis of *The Racing Post*.

The main argument to the challenge presented by scholars is that media outlets simply "give the fans what they want" (Kane, 2013). That is to say, the demand for coverage of female sport is simply not there, and the lack of coverage is simply a logical response to

this. Having said this, scholars argue that the coverage of a major sporting event, for example the Olympics, is never an accurate account of events due to the reluctance to publish works on the female events (Cooky *et al.*, 2018). Hall (2001) argues that the media present what they deem to be newsworthy to the consumer, and as such any 'demand' (or lack thereof) for coverage of female sports is a direct correlation of what media outlets deem appropriate, further supporting Kane's (2013) argument of a relationship between media outlets and hegemonic masculinity. Despite attempts from the media to marginalise female sports, there is evidence to suggest that when sportswomen are in the media, they are generally very well received (Fraidenburg and Backstrom, 2021). Bibel (2012) recognised that when women's basketball was afforded television coverage, it routinely broke records for viewership and attendances also grew significantly, suggesting that the argument that there is no demand for female sports in media holds little water.

Male OR female, binary stereotyping in modern-day media

A significant part of forming cultural norms and opinions on a specific population revolves around the perception of the group to the wider population (Wilcox and Laird, 2000). In this case, it is argued that societal norms and practices towards women are informed by the perception of women received worldwide, a significant source of which is in the media. Research by Godoy-Pressland and Griggs (2014) amongst others found that women's sport in the media was portrayed in such a way to frame it as less important than men's sport, which in turn supports and reinforces a masculine hegemony (English, 2017).

Before discussing the female image in sports media, it is first imperative to understand the relevance and significance of images within media more generally. Wang (2021) discussed

the importance of images in any media report, but in particular within sports reporting. It has long been argued that images within media are generally accepted as more truthful and representative by consumers (Barthes, 1977). LaVoi *et al.*, (2019b) suggested that images in media are a very effective socialising agent, manufacturing beliefs, ideologies and attitudes within societies. Through his work on presentation of self, Goffman (1978) suggested that this socialisation through media imagery is problematic within society. Gender relations are presented in a way that is not necessarily reflective of a true society, but done so in a manner to support an agenda already agreed upon. To interpret this through a Bourdieusian (2018) lens, it could be argued that the 'agenda already agreed upon' is the doxa within the field. Those who's habitus do not match the doxa within the field would find themselves afforded less capital, and as such find the field more difficult to navigate (Bourdieu 2007a; 2017). In layman's terms, it is generally accepted that women are underrepresented in sports media. The current doxa or 'norms' of the industry are structured as such that anyone who challenges this would find themselves ostracised.

Research into the representation of women in sports media imagery presented some interesting findings. Jones and Greer (2011) argue that society subconsciously 'sex-types' most sports, that is to say when discussing any particular sport it could generally be labelled as 'masculine' or 'feminine'. This is manifested from, or reinforced by (more likely, both) representations of genders in sports media (Drake and Radford, 2021). Lumpkin (2007) examined the cover of *Sports Illustrated* over ten years, and found female tennis players represented more than any other sport. This concludes that although we know that women are generally underrepresented in sports media, when they are shown it is hugely over-representative of 'female' sports, reinforcing gender boundaries (Cooky, 2018).

This lack of significance placed upon women's sport in mainstream media has resulted in female sport stars being less prominent in the public eye, which in turn feeds the rhetoric that male sports competitions are more important than their female colleagues (Thorpe, 2005). Lack of exposure results in female athlete being less attractive to potential sponsors, which in turn means there is less money available in women's sport, and therefore a (perceived) lesser competition (Ellis and Leopkey, 2018). This has led to female sport stars finding sponsorship in fields other than sport, only weakening further their identity as genuine sport stars (Lobpries *et al.*, 2018). Male athletes have exploited sponsorship opportunities outside of sport as well; however their perception in media is solidified as sportspeople, first and foremost (De Oliveira *et al.*, 2019).

Sexy not sporty: representation in sports media

Interestingly, research has shown that even when women are represented visually in media, it is more often than not in 'passive' poses (Buysse and Embser-Herbert, 2004; Mogaji *et al.*, 2020). This is to say they are represented in scenarios or poses not representative of their sport. In a similar study in UK media, George *et al.*, (2001) found that sports men were generally presented in much more active poses, representative of the sport they are known for. It could be argued that this discrepancy in representation again reinforces the masculine hegemony within sports media, by suggesting that sportsmen are more relevant as sports-specific celebrities than their female counterparts (Hartmann-Tews, 2019).

The media has a history of portraying female athletes differently to their male counterparts, partly due to perceived insignificance of female sport, and partly due to the sexualisation of the female to suit the hegemonically masculine audience (Kane *et al.*, 2013). Research has found that sportswomen are often seen in sexualised poses, which in turn only devalues their position as an athlete further (Daniels and Wartena, 2011). Cranmer *et al.* (2014) argued the use of photography in this instance is crucial, as it is a much more nuanced and subtle way of reinforcing gender differences, compared to text-

It has long been discussed how the female celebrity is hugely sexualised within mainstream media, which seems to be consistent within sports media (Sherry *et al.*, 2016, Papadopoulos, 2010). Cranmer *et al.* (2014) reported that sportswomen were often represented in highly sexualised poses, bearing no reference to their sports. They, amongst others, go on to argue that this highly sexualised representation of sportswomen significantly devalues their worth and performances as sportswomen, as well as reinforcing the narrative that sport is for men (Kane and Maxwell, 2011; Kane, 2013; Kim and Sagas, 2014). Bowman and Daniels (1995) wrote in detail about the media representation of American sprinter, Florence Joyner. They argued that when images of Joyner were presented in media, there was always a focus on her physical appearance, and her “outrageous and sexy workout clothing”. This is one example of how a female athletes sexuality and gender status have always been the focal point of media representation.

Daniels and Wartena (2011) argue that this overt sexualisation of female sports stars in media has implications on the audiences that consume them. They argue this form of representation devalues female sport, and further marginalises them in a wider sporting context. More recently, Smallwood *et al.* (2014) warned that there is a substantial risk that

female athletes who recognise their value as sexualised commodities in media may turn to 'selling' themselves in order to establish a presence, gain fans and secure sponsorship. Although perhaps not deemed problematic by all, it is hard to ignore that the sexualisation of female sports stars in mainstream media are informing opinions, most likely in a way to marginalise women sports as previously discussed (Sherry *et al.*, 2016). If sportswomen are presented, and therefore viewed primarily as sexualised celebrities, is it very difficult to argue the relevance of female sport compared to male sports.

Gender issues in horseracing

When applying these theories and ideologies of various feminisms and other social theories to a racing context, it is important to first understand what that context looks like. As discussed in other chapters, British racing is a unique culture, with its own values and beliefs (Sonobe, 2013). It is important to understand that although a sporting context will apply, British racing also finds cultural roots in agriculture, and as such a simple sports 'lens' is not nuanced enough to discuss racing culture in its most complex entirety (Vamplew and Kay, 2005). From previous evidence, it would suggest that although clear progress has been made in women's sport over recent years, its true impact is more nuanced and intricate than it appears at first look (O'Reilly, 2012). For the purpose of this study it is then pertinent to take this information and apply it to a racing context. This knowledge of the wider environment will assist in forming conclusions on racing cultures; however it is dangerous to think this is a 'cover-all' context. Racing, as with other sports has its own cultures, norms and structures. With this in mind it is wholly predictable that these issues and controversies surrounding gender may well exist within racing, but will not necessarily manifest themselves in the same way (Clayton-Hathway and Manfredi, 2017).

Butler (2013a, 2014) has written extensively about the culture of British horseracing, and the subtle nuances in language, norms and values that ostracise women:

Within the racing field a habitus is developed by the racing workforce and the establishment working in it that incorporates particular views of women. Women are assumed to occupy a subordinate position and cause resentment when they take up positions that could (or should) have been given to a 'lad'. This racing habitus underlies the structuring and restructuring of all subsequent experiences and those within the racing field assimilate negative messages about women and, in particular, about their physical 'weakness' being an impediment to their becoming jockeys.

The racing field is therefore characterized by a series of unequal power relations which are both gendered and classed and which make it difficult for women to become professional jockeys. (Butler, 2014, p. 415)

In her work *'Achieving against the odds'*, Butler (2014) uses Bourdieu's theories to explain contradictions in the horse racing industry. Her work examines how physical capital is curious within racing. To a layperson, the perfect jockey shape would be someone who is lightweight, albeit tough, short, and flexible; to all intents and purposes, this is a female specimen. What Butler and Charles (2012) observed was the curious way in which the doxa is contradictory and champions a 'tortured masculinity'. Female bodies are restricted by the habitus of those within the field, and will always be deemed too weak and not fit for the physical labours of the horseracing industry - even though many show themselves as physically able by completing the same work as men in racing yards every day. Butler (2013a) explained this by suggesting the physical capital afforded to women in racing is one shaped around their affinity towards horses and their caring nature, explaining how they are accepted to care for horses in yards, but not ride competitively. Velija and Hughes (2019) observed how manipulation of doxa in racing recognised women fell off horses in a

different way to men, as if anyone falling off an animal at 35 miles per hour has any control over how they fall.

The manipulation of physical capital is just one way Butler observed damaging structures to women in racing. She also observed the importance of social capital, by analysing 'success stories' of females within the industry. Cassidy (2007) also observed that a significant amount of people within the industry have family or social ties, and that is their way 'in'. This is not specific to gender of course, but is another barrier that the aspiring female jockey would have to overcome. Butler (2013b) also observed that women who were successful within racing, particularly jockeys, tended to distance themselves from their gender as much as possible.

...in order to become accepted within the masculine racing field, women had to embody a racing habitus. Toughness, fitness, assertiveness, strength and stamina are all characteristics which are regarded as mandatory in order to be able to work in racing, and any woman (man) who is unable to embody these is singled out as being different and out of place. The working identities that women develop involve behaving like a 'lad' and not being 'girly girls' in order to be accepted. (p. 70)

From this understanding that female jockeys are distancing themselves from all that makes them women suggests that, as predicted in Bourdieusian (1978, 2003, 2018) theory, the subordinate class (women) are embracing their role as such, and in turn perpetuating the class divide, strengthening the habitus and doxas that condemn them.

Similarly, Clayton-Hathaway and Manfredi (2017) wrote a comprehensive analysis of the gender positions in the horseracing industry roughly five years ago. They argued:

Several participants, though, both male and female described the industry as still being a "boys club", or an "old boys' network", citing examples of men-only dinners and events which may not be widespread but nevertheless still persist and exclude women from valuable networking opportunities. Exclusion from such events may not be career-constraining on the surface, but the ethos surrounding this is seen to “drip down”. (p. 21)

The above portrays an industry that, although on the face of it may seem progressive and inclusive, in reality is still incredibly structured and restricts the opportunities for women. What is interesting is the understanding that these structures are not as rigid as forbidding women from participating and progressing, but instead simply discourage and make the environment an uncomfortable one for woman to exist within (Manfredi *et al.*, 2019). This is a perfect example of Bourdieu’s (2003) notion of symbolic violence. The men-only dinner does not explicitly stop women from being involved and being successful in racing, but it makes networking much more problematic, which in turn is likely to be harmful to their progression. Women who see this go on and understand that racing is a very difficult industry for them to be involved in are more likely to leave altogether. This in turn creates a false pretence that many women find the industry ‘too difficult’, and therefore perpetuates the rhetoric that men are more suited to the racing industry.

To illustrate this point, a later study from the same authors found that the most recent data shows there are plenty of women involved in the UK racing industry, but many found it hard to progress and there are very few in senior positions (Manfredi and Clayton-Hathway, 2021). This is consistent with Butler’s (2014) work some years previous. Reasons given for this included a lack of role-models and male-dominated structures. Through a Bourdieusian lens, this could be interpreted as a male-dominated field that prescribes to the idea that

men are more suited to senior positions, and as such restricts the opportunities for women (Bourdieu 1994, 2003, 2007a).

Summary

This literature review has covered the main theories that will inform the collection and analysis of data throughout this study. The theories of Pierre Bourdieu were chosen for multiple reasons. Through her existing work, Butler (2014, Butler and Charles, 2012) has evidenced how Bourdieusian theory 'fits' the racing industry well. It was therefore expected that the habitus and doxa would be key as to ascertaining why women are still afforded so few competitive riding opportunities. It was also predicted that there will be evidence of significant symbolic violence, where structures subtly restrict and ostracise women within the field.

It is understood that any study in sport cannot be wholly focused on the individual sport it concerns, and must appreciate the place in which their study sits in the wider sporting landscape. As this is a study on gender, it is key that there is an understanding of how gender in our sport is representative of gender in sport worldwide in order to inform analysis of women in racing specifically. This study concerns itself with a modern-day racing landscape, and as such has considered how a contemporary media affects the sporting female. This was particular relevant to this study, given its emphasis on media as one aspect of its methodology.

The horseracing industry is one that is fairly lightly researched, and even more so gender relations within it. This literature review concluded with analysis of key scholars who have

published on the topic recently, in order to gather an informed view of what the research has been, 'to this point'. To our knowledge, there has been no study that has concerned itself with the role of the media in the construction of gender relations in racing, and this is where this study focuses. This is, in turn, complemented by analysis of interviews conducted with various people involved in the racing industry, who were asked their views on the media and its impacts on females and racing, alongside the other broader barriers exist to the aspiring female jockey.

Methodology

Introduction

As mentioned, this study concerns itself with gender relations in the UK horseracing industry, in particular the opportunities afforded to the aspiring female jockey. As will be explained in more detail below, there will be two ‘arms’ to data collection. The first ‘arm’ is a review of newspaper articles from *The Racing Post*, the most popular daily newspaper dedicated to UK and Irish racing (Reid, 2021). The second ‘arm’ will be semi-structured interviews with people involved in the racing industry. The forthcoming chapter therefore outlines the methodological principles, sampling methods, data analysis procedures, and ethical issues underpinning these two data collection processes.

Research approaches: positivism versus interpretivism

In any academic study there are broadly two different epistemological approaches a researcher could take to reach a valuable conclusion: a positivist approach or an interpretivist one (Ryan, 2018, Irshaidat, 2019). There is often debate as to which paradigm best represents real ‘scientific research’, with scholars outlining the advantages and disadvantages of both approaches (Corry *et al.*, 2019). Although subscribers to either would argue that theirs is most effective, there are approaches that contradict both, most notably post-positivism. Subscribers to a post-positive epistemology acknowledge that purely unbiased results cannot be achieved, that researchers beliefs, opinions and theories will always impact on research methods and therefore results, and aim for objectivity by

acknowledging these biases (Manjikian, 2013, Bisel and Adame, 2017, Panhwar *et al.*, 2017).

A positivist approach lends itself to studies that concern themselves with hard facts (Caldwell, 2015). Positivist studies often associate with deductive logical reasoning, and start with hypotheses or initial theories, and then attempt to prove or disprove them (Park *et al.*, 2020). Positivism does not lend itself to fields of study that involve 'grey areas' (Corry *et al.*, 2019). A positivist study only concerns itself with data that is verifiable, and can be 'proven', for example Statistical and numerical sets (Berkovich, 2018). These data sets cannot be interpreted in more than one way, they are not subjective and can be calculated easily, and in turn allow for a more precise and controlled study (Ryan, 2018, Haardorfer, 2019). Many academics recognise positivist study as the 'typical science experiment' where one sets out with the ultimate aim to unequivocally prove or disprove a theory, using undisputable facts (Alakwe, 2017; Su, 2018; Zyphur *et al.*, 2019).

Contrary to this, interpretivism study is an epistemological approach that often involves a lot of 'grey' areas, and therefore lends itself to studies where theories cannot be proven with hard statistical data (Alharahsheh, 2020). Interpretivism is often the preferred method of those studying societies or communities, as a lot of the data collected to reach the conclusions required is much 'softer' (Pulla and Carter, 2018). An interpretivist researcher would generally concern themselves with assessing words, behaviours, mannerisms, and actions through methods including observations, case studies, and interviews (McBeath and Bager-Charleson, 2020). An underlying current through interpretivist research is the understanding that the reality being researched and the individual observing are inseparable, due to the fact a person's views, beliefs and opinions are obtained through

their own lived experiences (Ryan, 2018; O'Donoghue, 2018). Interpretivist studies generally allow for a richer data set, that often delves deeper than the hard facts on the surface and therefore a deeper understanding (Irshaidat, 2019).

Research approach of study

For this study it was decided the most appropriate approach would be an interpretivist epistemological stance. The study of people, and their emotions, feelings, beliefs and opinions lends itself more handily to this than a statistical positivist approach. This study concerns with the emotions, feelings, beliefs and opinions of various stakeholders within the industry. There are existing studies around the statistical data in racing (Cashmore, 2018; Williams and Hall, 2020). This study has built on the heard, numerical data, and investigated further into the motivations, emotions and beliefs of decision makers. It was concluded these rich data sets could only be achieved through interpretivist research, as scholars would argue that all research in sport is subject to the neoliberal society within which it exists, and any results concluded should be examined within this context (Andrews and Silk, 2012). Sparkes and Smith (2013) amongst others suggest that qualitative research is the most appropriate method to investigate sociological fields within a sporting arena, due to the rich data sets available (Gratton and Jones, 2014; Veal and Darcy, 2014).

Similar to above, the benefits of quantitative vs qualitative data were discussed. The conclusion was made that to gain rich, useful data then qualitative research methods were required. As previously mentioned Cashmore (2018) has completed a comprehensive quantitative study in this field, and the aim of this study is to gain further understanding of the emotions, beliefs and opinions of those involved in racing. It was concluded that this

could only be achieved through qualitative research. Qualitative research allows for richer data because they explore narratives, language and experiences, and these can be more impactful than identifying trends, which quantitative data does (Veal and Darcy, 2014, Petrovic *et al.*, 2017, Slade *et al.*, 2018).

As discussed, a qualitative research approach was the most appropriate for the data hoping to be collected, firstly through a media analysis. Throughout this process data was constantly analysed, and it was found certain areas were not covered extensively in the media, for example the working conditions in racing yards. From this I decided it would be beneficial to conduct semi-structured interviews with professionals within the industry, to gain some more insightful data I felt was missing from the original media analysis. The following sections will explain how data was collected for both the media analysis and interviews.

Data collection methods – media analysis

Media analysis methods

Macnamara (2005) writes that media analysis is “who says what, through which channel, to whom, with what effect (p.2)”. others further this, suggesting Media analysis is a comprehensive way of analysing forms of media, and drawing themes and codes from the content giving a broad data set from various sources, while being less labour-intensive than interviews, and not limited by specific variables (Altheide and Schneider, 2012; Berger, 2017; Neuendorf, 2017).

Through recording 'mentions' in text, qualitative content analysis can be obtained, and examines "the relationship between the text and its likely audience" (Macnamara, 2005, p. 5). It is argued that a significant majority of media texts are polysemic, in that they could carry various messages to various people, and impact them in different ways (Forman and Damschroder, 2007). For this reason it is too simplistic to simply count the number of times a word or phrase is mentioned, without understanding the context within which the publication is being consumed (Mayring, 2004; Macnamara, 2005).

For these reasons, the preferred media analysis method amongst qualitative researcher is thematic analysis. Braun *et al.*, (2016) claim about thematic analysis:

...can identify patterns in people's (reported) practices or behaviours related to, or their views and perspectives on, a certain issue. Or, in a quite different way, it can determine common ways an issue or topic is represented (e.g., in media), or explore the way(s) it is 'constructed' as an object of interest. (p. 5)

In the context of this project, the aim was to find rich data about stakeholders opinions and perspectives on female jockeys in racing, and how the media presentation of these jockeys impacts these opinions and beliefs. For these reasons a thematic analysis was employed, allowing a deeper understanding of context, target audience and narrative.

Sampling

It was decided that in this particular project only one print publication would be analysed, *The Racing Post*. As the main trade newspaper for the horseracing industry, *The Racing Post* gives a perfect insight into the workings of the industry, and the opinions, beliefs, values and norms of those involved. With a daily edition with articles from various authors

including numerous articles with people of influence in the industry, *The Racing Post* proved an invaluable source of content to analyse for this project. As the only daily print media providing content specific to horse racing. Other publications were considered. For example, *The Sporting life* is the closest competitor in terms of content produced specific to horse racing, however has not been a print publication since 1998, existing solely online since then (Simons, 2016). For this reason, and the fact *The Racing Post* sells over 60,000 copies daily, it was decided the latter publication was the most suitable for this project (Reid, 2021)

It was decided that 80 articles would be analysed (see Appendix 1), to give a sample comprehensive enough to gain an insightful, true data set (Altheide and Schneider, 2012). These are articles written around the content this project focuses on, namely the opportunities and results for female jockey, as well as factors that may impact upon these opportunities, including but not exclusive to trainers and owners opinions, successes and failures of both male and female jockeys, and working conditions within racing stables. Appendix 2 provides an exemplar article, with Appendix 3 an exemplar of a 'coded' article.

To gain an idea of how opinions have formed and changed, it was decided that articles from April 2018 through to April 2021 would give an appropriate sample of articles written over a substantial period of time. The reason this period was chosen was that a small window may lead to content being compromised, had an important event or occasion fallen within the window. For example, in the spring of 2021 Rachael Blackmore became the first female to win the jockey title at the Cheltenham Festival, as well as becoming the first female to win the Grand National. Had a small window been chosen that included these two occurrences, it is possible that print media could present a very different picture than

articles printed over a longer period. Within this period there has been other significant achievements for female riders, so this three year window is appropriate to gauge a solid understanding of the changing landscape. Data gathering was guided by evolving theories around the progression of female jockeys within the last 3 years. This data collection could be defined as theoretical sampling (Gentles *et al.*, 2015).

As previously mentioned in the literature review, the impact of any media product is only as beneficial or harmful as it is received by those consuming it. That is to say, it is how the consumer interprets what is published, rather than the publication itself, that has the telling impact (Bruce. 2016). To this end, it was always the intention to ‘tie-in’ the media analysis with the second arm of research, interviews with experts from within the racing field. as discussed below, various questions were asked around the opportunities for females in racing, but a conscious effort was made to understand how the media, namely *The Racing Post* was received by those within the field. from these questions in interview it could be ascertained to what extent *The Racing Post* impacted on the opinions and beliefs of the consumer, providing context for the above described media analysis.

Data collection methods – expert interviews

Interview methods

Following the collection and analysis of media publications, it was recognised there were ‘gaps’ in the understanding of female jockey's experiences that were not being addressed through the media articles of *The Racing Post*. To this end, interviews with professionals

within the field were used to gain more of an understanding of the relative impact of the media's framing of female jockeys in relation to other issues and barriers which may impact upon female jockeys above and beyond the media's role. The aim was to understand the motivations, beliefs and opinions of horse trainers and owners, as these are the people who are responsible for the amount of rides female riders are afforded. It is understood that the media will likely influence the beliefs, motivations and opinions of these people, and this has to be considered during analysis of these interviews.

The interviews were semi-structured, with as little input from the interviewer as possible, so as to gain the best qualitative data possible. The main significant advantage to using semi-structured interviews over more formal, question-answer methods is the freedom afforded to the researcher. If an interviewer is examining uncharted territory with significant potential issues, this method allows the interviewer freedom to spot potential leads and pursue them (Newcomer *et al.*, 2015). This was particularly important for this project. Towards the conclusion of the media analysis, it was felt there was something 'not being said', but could not identify what it was. Using semi-structured interviews allowed the interviewer the freedom to pursue various avenues as they were mentioned by interviewees.

There were discussions of other methods, including observations and case studies; however these proved problematic for this particular study. One issue outlined when using observations for research is that it is very difficult to gain 'true' data (Dźwigoł & Barosz, 2020). Roulet *et al.*, (2017) amongst others have argued that when an observer is present, individuals within the study will ultimately change their behaviour subconsciously, and therefore any data collected would not necessarily be accurate as 'real life', and therefore

less valuable to any study (Zainal, 2007; Easton, 2010). Case studies were also considered; however there are similar issues around influence factors on those involved. The other issue with case studies is that they are generally very labour-intensive for a researcher, and require a small sample size (Haines, 2017). As this project was a part-time study, and the aim was to gain an understanding of the whole racing industry, it was decided case studies would not be appropriate.

It is recognised that interviews as a viable research method also have ethical issues. There is a risk that an interviewer subconscious bias on a particular topic can influence the answers of interviewees. As well as this, the lack of anonymity in interviews is argued to lead to more difficult recruitment, and biased, untrue responses. Nonetheless, considering the benefits and drawbacks of the various methods, and the resources available, it was concluded that a series of semi structured interviews questions (see Appendix 4) would be the most appropriate research method for the proposed study, due to the freedom afforded to the researcher, and the opportunity to delve deeper into issue perhaps not foreseen prior to the interview.

Sampling and recruitment

It was agreed that the original sample would include as many people 'of influence' in the horseracing industry as possible, in order to provide a comprehensive understanding of the issues facing the industry. It was discussed that an ideal sample would be somewhere between 20-30 interviews, from both genders and varying in age and role. Those outlined as useful interviewees held position including but not exclusive to:

- Trainers
- Owners
- Jockeys
- Jockey coaches
- Stable staff
- British Horseracing Authority (BHA) staff
- Staff from the two British racing schools
- Racing journalists
- Racecourse officials

Recruitment was multidimensional. A combination of theoretic and snowball sampling was used to recruit through a variety of means. Theoretical sampling was a logical choice, as it is the specific opinion of those within the industry that were of interest for this particular project, and this targeted approach allowed the researcher to conduct the relevant research quickly and effectively (Skinner *et al.*, 2020). Some candidates were approached through personal contacts. Following on from this some that were interviewed suggested other contacts worth approaching, an example of snowball sampling (Johnson, 2014). Most were approached through work email addresses; however some attempts were made to recruit through contact via social media accounts. An academic poster was produced to provide an overview of the project to prospective participants (see Appendix 5). Initial response was positive, with over 20 people expressing an interest in taking part (see Appendix 6).

Ethical issues

It is acknowledged that although no recruitment process is without its own ethical issues, every attempt must be made to minimise these and make the recruitment process as fair and ethical as possible (Tolich, 2016). As mentioned some attempts were made to recruit

via social media; however those interviewed were all recruited by professional approaches to work email accounts. All participants were sent copies of the participant information sheet and the privacy notice (see Appendix 7 and 8). Every participant completed an informed consent form, and permission to record interviews was verbally reconfirmed before recording began (see Appendix 9).

Recruitment proved much more difficult than originally imagined. Interviews were scheduled from March 2020 for the remainder of that year, and the COVID-19 pandemic had a significant effect. Getting candidates to agree to interviews in a time where many had undue stresses in their professional and home lives ultimately led to many refusing to sit for interview, an issue that has had an impact on many areas of academic study (Townsend, 2020). Those interviews that were completed were also compromised by the pandemic. Plans to visit participants and conduct interviews face-to-face had to change to become interviews conducted via Zoom video link. This was chosen as it was felt video communication was essential, if face-to-face interviews were not possible. As discussed, the benefit of semi-structured interviews is that an interviewer can pursue avenues of enquiry as the interview progresses, and this is easier if a researcher can read the interviewees body language and create an effective rapport. Archibald *et al.*, (2019) wrote about the benefits of using Zoom for data collection, the record feature allows for data to be collected and stored without recourse to third-party software, as well as real-time encryption and user-specific authentication for added security. Using Zoom also allowed me to reach interviewees in areas of the country that would have been very difficult to arrange a face-to-face interview for, due to logistical reasons.

Although interviews were achieved and often very informative, it is the opinion of the researcher that had interviews been conducted face to face as originally planned, some richer data may have been obtained, due to being able to build a stronger rapport and a more relaxed setting (Nehls *et al.*, 2015). Ultimately six interviews were conducted ranging between 12 minutes and 66 minutes, with people in various roles in the industry. A summary of those interviewed is below:

Participant	Background and role
Charlie	Son of an ex-champion flat jockey, Charlie moved from Ireland to England to become a jockey himself. After some success Charlie retired from riding, and he now works for a trade union for stable staff.
Kerry	Kerry left education at 16 to pursue her love of horses. She became a stable 'lass' at a racing yard, where she stayed until she had children. She now works for the same trade union as Charlie, and still works part-time in racing yards.
Heidi	Heidi comes from a family heavily involved in racing. Her father was a trainer, her mother and her sister both rode in point-to-point races. Heidi never rode competitively herself, but often 'rode out' in her father's yard. She now works for the BHA, the National Governing Body for racing in the UK.
James	James does not come from a racing background. His experience is mainly in other sports; however 6 months prior to interview he began working for the British Racing School.
Matt	Matt was a successful National Hunt jockey for over 20 years. Following a career ending injury in the early 2000's, he now coaches young jockeys.
Lizzie	Lizzie was a jockey in both flat and National Hunt racing for over 30 years. Her husband is a trainer, and she assists him in the yard as well as riding out regularly. Lizzie is also a jockey coach.

For ethical reasons ages and ethnicities were not asked of interviewees. However it is the estimation of the lead researcher that all interviewees were aged between 30-65 years old, and were all white British or Irish.

Data analysis

Once data was collected in the form of the six interviews and various print media articles, the interviews were transcribed verbatim, and all data was analysed through coding to

identify themes for thematic analysis (see Appendix 10 and 11). Thematic analysis is the process of identifying reoccurring themes within a data set (Clarke and Braun, 2014). The reason for choosing this approach was that it is typically suited to large data sets, and with over 80 articles to analyse this was key. It is argued thematic analysis is suited to studies that go beyond a researchers lives experiences, and although a complex process, coding can 'make sense' of a lot of rich, complex data (Joffe and Yardley, 2004; Nowel *et al.*, 2017).

For this project, coding was completed manually by copying all articles into a Microsoft Word document, and adding 'comments' on sections deemed to be relevant. From here a simple keyword search in the 'find' bar then highlighted all the comments made that related to that keyword or phrase, making it easy to refer back to later. A similar method was used for interviews, where interviews were transcribed into word documents and comments were added.

Throughout this project Bourdieusian (1977, 2007a) theories of habitus, capital and field have been used to interpret data and help understand the context of this study. Theories of capital were used to identify initial themes for data analysis. For example a number of individuals within racing have string family connections in the industry, suggesting strong social capital. Secondly it has always been understood that racing is a sound example of a Bourdieusian 'field', which is a society with specific practices and norms, which has always been understood when contextualising both media articles and interviews.

There were key themes drawn out of the data collected that did not meet the typical Bourdieusian ideas discussed in sociology literature. These were not ignored, but sorted separate from other themes to be discussed during data analysis and conclusions. It is

understood that any quantitative study will draw out themes that often contradict each other, as is the nature of research involving human participation, and human analysis (Vaismoradi *et al.*, 2016). These contradictory themes should not be addressed as problematic, but as perhaps an indication to a number of differing views or opinions on the same issue.

Results and Discussion

Introduction

In the following chapter, findings from the media analysis and interviews will be analysed and discussed, in turn. The first area for discussion comes from the media analysis: it will be discussed to what extent *The Racing Post* is symbolically violent towards women in the industry. This will be done using Bourdieusian theories around symbolic violence, habitus and field (Leander, 2010; Schubert, 2014; Bourdieu, 2017). There will also be discussions around other phenomena found during analysis of *The Racing Post*, namely the use of sensationalist language and mentions of family ties within the industry, as examples of Bourdieu's notions of social and symbolic capital (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 2013; Asquith, 2019). Proceeding this will be a section on the interviews conducted, of which the first subsection will focus on how interviewees believed the media portrayed gender relations in racing.

The second part of this discussion will focus around interviews with various professionals from within the racing industry. Interviews were conducted with a British Horseracing Authority (BHA) professional, multiple jockey coaches, ex-jockeys, stable staff, aspiring jockeys, and employees from trade unions. A number of key issues were identified, including the outdated attitudes of those in power within the industry, the working conditions for females, and the lack of employment rights afforded to all stable staff. These will be analysed through a Bourdieusian lens, with a focus on theories of habitus and field, and Bourdieu's various forms of capital (Tomlinson, 2004; Bourdieu, 1977, 2018).

Symbolic violence in The Racing Post

Introduction

Symbolic violence can be summarised as structures put in place that maintain, reinforce or strengthen existing hierarchies within a certain societal field (Bourdieu, 2003). In this instance, an example would be systems or structures in place that continue to support the notion that female jockeys are not as capable, or are less deserving of opportunities compared to their male counterparts. From existing literature reviewed and data collected during this study, it is clear that a number of structures are still in existence in modern day racing that are symbolically violent towards women in the sport. The first structure to be discussed is the language used by racing specific media outlets, specifically *The Racing Post*.

For context, *the Racing Post* is the only widely available daily print publication that is dedicated solely to British horseracing. Since April 1986 daily print newspapers have been produced, and it has since moved online with a comprehensive website and mobile app. All three editions features that days and the previous days results, as well as other news and features form within racing. For many years *The Racing Post* has been a staple within the racing community, many reading the publication in one form or another on a daily basis. Therefore it is impossible to underestimate the impact that this publication has had and continues to have on forging the opinions and attitudes of those within the racing industry.

Before discussing the language used in *The Racing Post*, it is important to reiterate the impact languages and use of specific phrases or words can have in the reader, and how they inform opinions, attitudes and beliefs. There has been previous research into the amount of coverage afforded to women in sports, summarised by Boscomb and Matheson (2019), who concluded that things were improving for women with regards to the amount and nature of coverage in sports media, but there is still a long way to go. Indeed, their work identifies further areas of study, including work on the specific language uses when covering women's sports compared to men's - something this study has attempted to do in our specific field of horseracing.

There has been significant research into the amount of coverage afforded to women in sports media (Cooky *et al.*, 2015; Eagleman, 2015), and the nature in which women are portrayed as sexualised extremes of the physical body (Liang, 2011; Trojan, 2013). The idea that women are overtly sexualised is generally argued through the representation of their physical body, usually within still or moving images, rather than text. Through examining that words and phrases used within *The Racing Post*, this study will expose how some gender-specific language is used to construct gender stereotypes within racing, and therefore forge the opinions and beliefs of a significant number of influential people within the racing industry.

The pair danced a rumba around Kempton with such fluidity the fact they were jumping slightly left did not matter. The fact even Nicholls expected two or three to come past them up the straight did not matter... they had put everyone else in the hurt locker, but were so swept up in the moment they just carried on dancing. (Stuart Riley, *The Racing Post*, 26th December 2020)

The above was used in *The Racing Post* to describe the Performance of Bryony Frost, a female jockey who rode Frodon to victory in the King George VI Chase on Boxing day, 2020. A simple example of the language used by journalists to describe female riders, it would be hard to imagine a male rider being described with this same reference to 'dancing' and 'fluidity'. The race itself is not for the faint of heart: a 3 mile steeplechase with 18 fences jumped, each over 5 feet high. Run in freezing temperatures on Boxing Day every year, this race is one that often epitomises the hardy National Hunt (i.e. 'Jumps') jockeys as some of the toughest competitors in sports. To suggest that Frost and her mount 'danced' around the course, although flattering, does not do justice to the hardy traits required to compete in such an event.

Although the above comment does not on the face of it suggest that Frost is anything but a well accomplished and skilful jockey, it is the subtle connotations of what is being said that are an example of Bourdieu's theory of symbolic violence. Schubert (2014) observed that the language used within certain fields is a structure in itself, in as much that it reinforces the subtle differences between one group and a subordinate one, in our case male and female jockeys. Likening Frost's race-riding to a dance, and using words like 'fluidity', Fernandez (2016) would argue the author is subtly, and perhaps subconsciously, reinforcing that this was a female riding the horse, and a man would have produced a different performance. Although in this instance Frost and Frodon won the race very impressively, the words and phrases used subtly reminds the reader that she is a female rider, in a sport that is hegemonically and systematically programmed to accept male riders as the norm.

Although more commonly attributed to Antonio Gramsci (1971, 2009), hegemony aligns with Bourdieu's concepts of habitus and doxa (Eagleton and Bourdieu, 1992; Light and Wedgewood, 2017). The doxa in our racing field is the understanding that men are the more able race-riders - this is the 'unquestioned truth'. By being symbolically violent like the instance above the author is subtly implying that Frost, a female rider, may be more suited to dancing than she is to race-riding.

Although not common and rarely this blatant, it is still evident that there are instances in which *The Racing Post* will use language that is symbolically violent and harmful towards female riders. This in turn reinforces the doxa that males are stronger race-riders, and informs the reader base's opinions as such. The evidence below demonstrates how *The Racing Post* describes the riding style of Richard Johnson, on his retirement.

The then 21-year-old won the stayers hurdle aboard Anzum, a horse he practically carried up the Prestbury Park hill.[...] that was the thing about Johnson. The concept of giving up never entered his head. He was both tireless and fearless, often asking horses for jumps that terrified the watching audience. He would push, scrub and kick for longer and harder than most could possibly manage, even when late into his forties, which he already was when lifting the Cheltenham Gold Cup for the second time. (Lee Mottershead, *The Racing Post*, 4th April 2021)

What is first apparent is that in this quote when compared to the one describing Frost's win is that the author is quick to praise the rider, claiming it was Johnson who was the main catalyst for the horse winning the race. Comparing this to the earlier quote of Frost winning the King George Chase, where the emphasis is very much on the horse and jockey as a pair,

this again illustrates a subtle form of symbolic violence, as defined by Pierre Bourdieu (2003).

Thapar-Bjorkart *et al.* (2016) wrote about symbolic violence, in particular misrecognition - the reason or catalyst behind a certain success or failure are misrecognised, with the intention of reinforcing hegemony within a certain field. It can be argued that these two quotes demonstrate this phenomena. Frost's excellent ride to win a gruelling race was recognised as a joint effort by horse and rider, suggesting she is not deserved of all praise for the win. Contrastingly Johnson is recognised as the catalyst behind Anzum's win, which suggests of the two riders he is the superior jockey.

Although subtle, Bourdieu's (2003) work around symbolic violence and doxa suggest that when examples of inconsistencies in reporting given occur regularly, they will impact on the reading audience. Their opinions and beliefs will be informed to reflect what they have read in what is an industry-leading publication. It is argued that when this symbolic violence impacts so much as to affect the doxa (behaviours or norms) of a field, then it is clearly harming to a subordinate group. For example, horse racing owners and trainers will often read *The Racing Post* daily, and if the articles inform their opinions, it is likely they will form negative opinions around female jockeys.

From reviewing articles from *The Racing Post* over a three year period, it became apparent that the frequency of the gender bias demonstrated when discussing the riding style of female jockeys compared to males was not as common as first hypothesised. In fact, it has to be conceded that when discussing the performance of female riders 'on the track', *The Racing Post* very rarely differentiates its language based solely on the gender of the jockey.

It is hypothesised that this is because there is a certain respect afforded to jockeys from others within the racing field, to an extent regardless of gender. Doxa within the field dictates jockeys are tough individuals, taking on the often unenviable task of trying to control a half-tonne, highly-strung animal at speeds of up to 40 miles per hour. It could be argued that once female jockeys have 'made-it', and proven that they can perform to the same level as their male colleagues, they are generally afforded this same respect (read: capital) and navigating the field does become somewhere easier for them. From the review of articles there were other emerging patterns however. One of which was the sensationalist language that was commonly used when discussing female successes in the saddle. This suggested that such successes, while they are few and far between, are unexpected by the general racing public, and therefore reinforcing beliefs (read: habitus) that men are more capable race-riders.

The partnership

Another observation from the media analysis is the significance of deflection of success when discussing female riders:

Few jump jockeys anywhere right now are blessed with such an exalted array of emerging stars to ride as Blackmore. She had to go without A Plus Tard here after he was withdrawn from the Dublin Chase, but it is a mark of the firepower she has at her disposal that she could lose such a mount and still illuminate such an illustrious programme. (Richard Forristal, The Racing Post, 1st February 2020)

Examples like the one above attempt to defer from the skill and power shown by successful women jockeys, suggesting there are other factors that lead to their success. The above quote is discussing the horses planned to be ridden by Rachael Blackmore at the 2020

Cheltenham festival. It is evident that she has a number of highly regarded horses to ride. This could be construed in a manner to suggest that any success Blackmore may achieve at the meeting is not entirely her own, and is at least in part due to the calibre of horse she is riding. Through a Bourdieusian lens, this deflection is an attempt to deprive Blackmore of the symbolic capital that would come with being successful in the field (Bourdieu, 1989, Bourdieu and Wacquant, 2013). This lack of symbolic power and deflection of success will perpetuate the habitus of the field: the understanding that men are the more capable race-riders (Bourdieu, 2017, 2018):

Trainer Paul Nicholls was always meant to win this year's King George... Frost was not. She was partnering a 20-1 shot – her "best mate" Frodon. But Frost and Frodon go together like Christmas and presents. Both are good in their own right... But as a combination they are pure magic. (Stuart Riley, The Racing Post, 26th December 2020)

The above further describes Bryony Frost's victory aboard Frodon in the 2020 King George VI chase. What is first evident here that corroborates the point made above is that there is a significant focus on Frost and Frodon as a partnership. The mention of the trainer is also significant, suggesting once again that this victory is less and less about the riding ability of Frost. It is also mentioned that Frodon was a 20-1 outsider for this race, which makes it all the more impressive he and Frost won. What could have been a piece discussing the excellent riding skills of Frost to obtain victory aboard a horse that before the race was not considered a likely winner, has actually downplayed her abilities by attributing the win to various other factors. This is typical of a field where the habitus does not recognise females as being able to be successful in this sphere, as such will attribute their successes to other factors to deflect from them. In turn, this further ostracizes women on the racetrack, and perpetuates the masculine habitus that exists within racing (Wacquant, 2016).

What is evident from the examples given thus far is that it is rare to see female jockeys recognised credibly for their achievements on the track. Further to this, it was observed that when they are recognised it is often overstated and in many ways to their own detriment.

Sensationalist language in the Racing Post

For on this day at Aintree, [...] a feat was accomplished that will have caused heads to spin all around the world. Here in the 173rd running of the world's greatest and most famous horserace, something that for so long had seemed possible only in bold fiction became enshrined in glorious fact. (Lee Mottershead, *The Racing Post*, 10th April 2021)

The above was written in *The Racing Post* after Rachael Blackmore became the first female jockey to win the Grand National in April 2020. This sensationalist journalism, rightly praising Blackmore for her feat, only continues to reinforce the gap in some people's minds between what male and female riders can achieve. The fact that a female rider winning the race will cause 'heads to spin' suggests that they have no right winning such a race. If a female winning the Grand National is such a surprise to everyone it only strengthens the opinion that only men are capable of winning. This language with an undercurrent of disbelief was present in almost all of the written media surrounding Blackmore's Grand National win. In itself it is an example of the symbolic violence evident within *The Racing Post*, and other media outlets reporting on British racing. By describing a female victory in such sensational fashion, the author is subtly reinforcing the notion that these victories are few and far between, and such perpetuates ideas that men are more likely, because they are more capable.

A woman has ridden the winner of the Grand National and her name is Rachael Blackmore. She is the woman – she is the jockey – who changed everything. (Lee Mottershead, The Racing Post, 10th April 2021)

It is a fine balance that needs to be struck: celebrating female jockey's successes without sensationalising them to the point journalists are ostracizing the people they are trying to praise. It is fair to say that through reviewing articles over a three year period from *The Racing Post* much of what is written about female jockeys is still written in sensational language with a hint of surprise running through entire pieces, suggesting that the authors themselves believe that male jockeys are generally more capable. This could be as a result of their own opinions and beliefs being informed by the doxa of the racing field (Deer, 2014; Thomson, 2014). Bourdieu (1994) argues that symbolic violence informs the habitus and therefore doxa of a certain field, in our case UK racing. In turn, those journalists who work within the racing field perpetuate these doxa by reinforcing them through their writing:

Young girls had to make do with the 1944 film *National Velvet* in which Elizabeth Taylor's character finished first past the post. Even then she suffered the ignominy of being disqualified for being an ineligible jockey. (Lee Mottershead, The Racing Post, 10th April 2021)

The above is a further comment made regarding Blackmore's win, and it could be argued that the above quote is harmful to female jockeys for a number of reasons. Firstly it once again highlights how rare any female success is in British racing, although in reality young females have been gaining more and more success throughout the 21st century. The suggestion that the only role models for aspiring females is a made-up character in a movie is harmful and simply untrue. Although there is still a disparity in the number of successful

female jockeys, in recent years Bryony Frost had won the conditional jockeys championship, Rachael Blackmore herself had been the leading rider at the Cheltenham Festival. As well as this there had been success on the flat for Hollie Doyle and Megan Nicholls, amongst others. To suggest that there are no 'real-life' female success stories is harmful and only subtly perpetuates then underlying habitus that men are more capable riders (Bourdieu, 2017).

The last sentence mentions a female jockey being disqualified due to her gender, once again a subtle reminder that a female is not as welcome in a horserace as a male jockey. Although innocent on the face of it, these few sentences once again reinforce the notion that women do not belong on the racecourse. This is again evidence of Bourdieu's (2003) notion of symbolic violence, where subtle interactions within a specific field inform the habitus of those within that field (Wiegmann, 2017).

A 'glass' ceiling?

A number of the articles analysed focused around female riders winning significant races, or achieving other notable feats. These almost all included mentions of shattering 'glass ceilings' or breaking down 'gender barriers':

A Hollywood fantasy turned into reality when Rachael Blackmore became the first female jockey to win Britain's gruelling Grand National, breaking down one of the biggest gender barriers in the sport. (James Burn, The Racing Post, 12th April 2021)

The fact that it is believed that these 'ceilings' still need to be broken in the 21st century is problematic enough, however it is argued that by mentioning these ceilings or barriers at every possible opportunity, authors are perpetuating or perhaps even reinforcing them (Faniko *et al.*, 2017):

On the back of Minella Times she was utterly sublime, just as she had been at the Cheltenham Festival, where success aboard Honeysuckle was her highlight in the meeting she dominated. Yet as wonderful as that was – and it was – what happened here was off the scale. (Lee Mottershead, The Racing Post, 10th April 2021)

They will win fame and a place in sporting history. More importantly, they will become an inspiration for countless thousands of young girls who will see another glass ceiling shattered. (Tom Kerr, The Racing Post, 12th April, 2018)

The Randox Grand National transcends everything else in this sport. Right now, so does the extraordinary rider who in front of a global audience smashed through the tallest of glass ceilings. (Lee Mottershead, The Racing Post, 10th April, 2021)

The above are some examples of various pieces analysed that reference a ground-breaking moment or event that apparently prove unequivocally that females can indeed be competent race riders, and as such changed a number of people's opinions around the abilities of female riders compared to their male peers. This is a small snapshot of a number of articles with quotes in this vein, of which there were many across the sample of articles analysed, as illustrated below:

The most successful female rider in the history of jump racing continues to smash glass ceilings. This was her eighth Grade 1 in less than 12 months, and in Honeysuckle she has a blue-chip ally who could yet challenge for the sport's ultimate honours. (Richard Forristal, The Racing Post, 1st February 2020)

Like trailblazers in the fields of science, medicine, sport and politics before them, the first woman to win the Grand National will be held up as a heroine striking a blow for equality. (Tom Kerr, The Racing Post, 14th April 2018)

Prior to this behind-closed-doors Grand National, Katie Walsh's 2012 third on Seabass was the closest we had come to a watershed revolution. (Lee Mottershead, The Racing Post, 10th April 2021)

What is first problematic is that there is still the opinion that females need to 'prove' themselves - to make these breakthroughs before they will be accepted as equals on a racetrack. In a wider racing field where females are commonplace, including in roles as trainers and in particular stable staff, it could be questioned as to why a 'glass ceiling' exists at all. As with many industries where females are marginalised, the answer likely lies perpetuation of hegemonic masculinity (Griffin, 2018; Kennedy and Russell, 2021). To align this with Bourdieusian theory, the habitus of the racing field has been manipulated as such to ostracize women, primarily for the preservation and perpetuation of men within the field.

The second issue with this recurring theme is the damage it does to the morale and aspirations of females within the industry. Bourdieusian theory (2003) would argue that this periodical mention of a 'glass ceiling' being broken is once again a subtle form of symbolic violence, reinforcing doxa that these female successes are few and far between. This subtly informs any aspiring females within the industry that they will need to be the brilliant exception rather than the rule, in order to be successful within racing. By continuing to mention these barriers and ceilings that are supposedly being broken in the sport, these articles are successful in reminding the reader they exist, and reinforcing them within the doxa of the field, which in turn influences the habitus of those within the same field. (Burawoy, 2012; Bourdieu, 2003, 2018):

That day will come, make no mistake... but before the involvement of women riders becomes so commonplace it is not worth mentioning, there must first come the pioneers who go where no one has gone before, who achieve what no one has achieved... They will win fame and a place in sporting history. More importantly, they will become an inspiration for countless thousands of young girls who will see another glass ceiling shattered. (Tom Kerr, The Racing Post, 14th April 2018)

The above seems to acknowledge the points argued about continuously perpetuating the ideas of ceilings that need to be broken, without taking responsibility for creating them. In a field that is constructed to maintain the dominant practices of men and maintain masculine hegemony, one could ask how many glass ceiling needs to be shattered before women are considered equal in this field? There have been many 'pioneers' in the past; however in 2021 the ceilings still exist. It could be argued that a field that does not inherently want to acknowledge female successes will be resistant to change, and as such the habitus will remain imbalanced for the foreseeable future (Pfister, 2010; Berry and Franks, 2010).

The changing landscape in the media

It was evident from the articles reviewed that there is still often a reference to glass ceiling and female successes are often over-celebrated and sensationalised, ultimately to their detriment:

Ruby Walsh was also full of praise for Blackmore and believes her victory was a wonderful advert for racing... "It's amazing to think Rachael Blackmore can go out every day of the week – as can Bryony Frost and Tabitha Worsley – and compete for the same pay and prize-money as the men she rides against. (Jonathan Harding, The Racing Post, 10th April 2021)

Having said this, there are examples where women are treated as equals in the saddle, and are being recognised as, first and foremost, very competent jockeys. The below is a quote where former Jockey Ruby Walsh discusses the skills of Rachael Blackmore:

"Confidence and tactics. Brilliant from the top of the hill. She moved up on the outside of Bravemansgame down to two out, pushed Harry Cobden [...] back in and made sure Paul Townend [...] didn't get the run [...] She's doing all the right things all the time. She's incredible." (Sam Hendry, The Racing Post, 17th March 2021)

It could be argued that Walsh' praise of Blackmore as an equal peer to male riders is a result of changing opinions of female jockeys. During the interviews (discussed later) it was clear that attitudes in British racing have improved over time. The changing attitudes are becoming more obvious, and are likely attributed to the success of individual females within the sport, rather than a conscious change in attitudes by those with high levels of capital. Bourdieusian theory (2018) suggests habitus is the underlying attitudes, beliefs and emotions of the field, and are resistant to change. It is argued that those with significant capital can influence the doxa of the field, which in turn influences the habitus of those who exist within it (Bourdieu, 1979; Bourdieu and Wacquant, 2013). In our instance Ruby Walsh carries huge symbolic capital. Born to a racing family, in his riding career Walsh was 12-time Irish champion jockey, and to this day has the most Cheltenham festival winners. The capital Walsh possesses means his praising of Blackmore as a peer of her male colleagues will likely have an impact on the habitus of those within the field.

The second reason given for this changing of habitus within our racing field is the success of the female riders themselves. Below are some examples of how women in the sport have taken the opportunities they have been afforded, and forced others to take notice:

Turner, who was the first female to reach 100 winners in a calendar year in 2008, said: “I would like to see her [Hollie Doyle] do it [...] and I think she can. You can see how hard she has worked over the years, putting in so much graft and getting better every year”. (Bruce Jackson, *The Racing Post*, 23rd November 2019)

As Frost hurtled towards the 175th and biggest win of an already impressive career – one that includes three Grade 1s, two Cheltenham Festival winners but only one Frodon – Frost told her mount to concentrate one last time. (Stuart Riley, *The Racing Post*, 26th December 2020)

Doyle, fresh from finishing a fine third in the BBC Sports Personality of the Year awards on Sunday, has enjoyed a glorious 12 months, during which she has set a new record for most winners by a female jockey in a British campaign and recorded her first top-level success... at Ascot. The 24-year-old was crowned female jockey of the year and also Flat jockey of the year, while she won a special recognition award as well. (James Burn, *The Racing Post*, 23rd December 2020)

It is impossible to ignore the progress being made by female jockeys in recent years, with Blackmore and Frost becoming household names in National Hunt racing, and Hollie Doyle amongst others on the flat. Doyle has recently broken her own record for most wins in a calendar year by a female rider, and came third in the *2020 BBC Sports Personality Of The Year* competition. These feats and similar successes would afford Doyle, Blackmore and others with significant symbolic capital according to Bourdieusian theory (1979). It is argued in turn these successes of those who carry high levels of capital will slowly change the habitus of the field. Attitudes will begin to change and as such afford a change in the doxa, or behaviours (Eagleton and Bourdieu, 1992). These changes in behaviours may manifest in a more balanced style of reporting than was evident. To this end, it is hypothesised that a similar media analysis using a later time frame than the one in this study may produce slightly different results. As attitudes of the field change, media produced as a product for consumption must also adapt to maintain relevancy.

'it's patronising, sometimes' - Perceptions of the media by those within the field

It has been argued above that *The Racing Post* has a significant impact on the doxa of our racing field. It has also been demonstrated that a lot of the coverage of females within the publication is most likely written with the best intentions, however the underlying themes and language could be harmful. During the interview process participants were asked their opinions on how the media, in particular *The Racing Post* represented women, and aspiring female jockeys:

Second, I think is the publicity and the way its portrayed. So touching on the Racing Post for example. [...] when *Women In Racing* presented their report on Racing Home, which was about being a parent in the industry, the Racing Post didn't even cover it. [...] But in the two-week period that it was released, there was two pieces on Rishi Persad, and the Black Lives Matter, diversity and equality. And then one on Rainbow Laces, which is the pride event that racing does. So three things in the space of two weeks that focus on diversity and equality, and women in racing [...] wasn't even covered. (Kerry, trade union)

This quote illustrates the importance and the reach of *The Racing Post*. It is read by most people who are involved in racing, and has also complete exclusivity in that there are very few other publications that dedicate their entire newspaper to racing. To this end it cannot be underestimated how influential what is published in the paper can be. 'Racing Home' was a piece written by the *Women In Racing* steering group focusing on how the racing industry can improve the working conditions and opportunities for women who are pregnant and young mothers. Latest research shows that at least 50% of staff within racing stables are female, so this report would have impacted a huge number of people within the industry:

So parents, women, mothers, are we not equal? [...] does our plight in racing matter less than someone who is Muslim, or black? Or gay? Or bisexual? Or transgender? [...] A women who's got children, is she less? Does her story mean less to the industry than those other things? (Kerry)

'cherry-picking' which topics to cover and which to omit suggests that there is an underlying intention to ignore the issues facing women within the industry. It could be argued that this is a conscience effort to maintain the 'status quo', where women are often seen as 'second-class' within the industry. This does not directly impact opportunities for women to ride in races of course; however it does reinforce opinions that women are not as welcome in the racing society as they should be. Once again this is a clear example of symbolic violence, where structures within the industry subtly reinforce doxa that women are not as valuable as men within racing, manifesting itself in the habitus of individuals which in turn affects connections decision about who to put up². (Bourdieu, 2003, Fernandez, 2016).

When discussing the success of female riders, it was mentioned that the media is guilty of positive discrimination, as it has been mentioned when discussing sensational language previously:

Yeah I'll use that phrase that I hate, positive discrimination. Because it's a good story, if Hayley Turner rides a group one winner, because it's not commonplace, not only have you got the coverage because it's a group one race or Royal Ascot you've also got coverage because it's a female jockey. And the sport and the industry rejoices her. (Charlie, trade union)

It sometimes makes me feel uncomfortable [...] if a female jockey has a winner [...] they'll write a piece [...] it's almost patronising, sometimes. It's almost like

² 'Connections' are anyone who has a vested interest in that particular horse, usually the owner(s) and the trainer. When they decide who is 'put up' this is referring to who is chosen to ride the horse on raceday.

‘this female jockey’s had a winner and she had no right to win the race’. (James, Racing school)

The above echoes a common theme across interviews, and confirm much of what was said previously regarding the sensationalist language used within media; when discussing female jockeys. By discussing it in such a manner that it is almost unbelievable, *The Racing Post* manipulate the opinions of the reader to conclude that it is not common, and the reasons for this must be that the female riders are not very good. In Bourdieusian (2017, 2018) terms, the media influences the habitus of individuals by perpetuating ideas that male jockeys are superior to females. These habitus’ are then displayed in the field, which in turn affects the doxa, perpetuating a field that ostracizes women (Burawoy, 2012; Der, 2014).

During the media analysis the ‘partnership’ was discussed when reporting on female successes, and how the media are quick to deflect from the individual and celebrate the horse and jockey as a pair. The below from a former female jockey is an interesting reflection on how failures were reported:

...it was written press when I was riding, but if you got beaten and you were female, you got beat because you were female, regardless of the horses ability. If you were 50/1 and you got beaten by a favourite, ‘the best jockey won’ [...] Rather than the horse. Now, I never see it in writing. So whether they’re legally not allowed to do that anymore, I don’t know. Or whether they just word it better, I don’t know, [...] but I’m sure on social media you’d see everything. (Lizzie, ex-jockey)

It could be argued that this, in direct contrast to how successes are reported, is designed to ostracise the jockey and lay all the blame on her for failing to win on a horse that

realistically was deemed to have very little chance in the first place. The fact that a 50/1 horse getting beaten happens every day is neglected as an excuse to further demonstrate how incompetent it is believed female riders are. This is arguably an example of the doxa of the field influencing how the media report on events, and a media that is in place to perpetuate these ideals further, maintaining hegemony within the racing field (Hesmondhalgh, 2006; Bourdieu, 2007a; Gramsci, 2018). Although this example is historical, it will be discussed later how many influential figures in racing are enduring and maintain their positions within the field for a significant amount of time. It could be argued that many within the racing field today would still have been exposed to this more blatant and unapologetic violence towards woman, and as such their habitus will reflect it.

The second part of the above quote discusses how Lizzie believes the media have sanitized their approach towards women, demonstrating less obvious forms of symbolic violence as previously discussed. It also suggests the emergence of social media has led to a new platform that influences the opinions of people within the industry (Bourdieu, 2003). Bossio and Bebawi (2016) discuss the emergence of social media as a platform for freedom of expression like never before. It could be argued that as more and more young people are being influenced by what they consume on social media, the influence of traditional media platforms like *The Racing Post* may diminish (O'Sullivan *et al.*, 2017). Bradshaw and Howard (2017) go further to analyse the emergence of 'trolls' and how it is easy for an individual to influence a large audience. The parameters of this study did not allow for analysis of social media; however, anecdotal evidence suggests this may be worthwhile in future.

This media analysis and the comments from industry professionals has approached some of the issues surrounding how women are portrayed in *The Racing Post*. It is argued that the significance of *The Racing Post* should not be underestimated, as easily the most popular publication dedicated almost solely to racing. It has been outlined how the publication manipulates the opinions of its readership through the language used, the way achievements are recognised and the reporting (or lack of) on key issues within the industry. A Bourdieusian (1994, 2003, 2017) lens would describe *The Racing Post* as a key tool for symbolic violence, where those with high levels of capital within the field use it to harm those who are subservient by influencing the habitus of readers, perpetuating a harmful doxa (Eagleton and Bourdieu, 1992).

Above and beyond the media impact: further observations from interviews

Introduction

Aside from the impact *The Racing Post* has on those within the field, there are other aspects observed that make horseracing a difficult field for women to navigate. The first of the two key themes identified concern with various forms of power or as Bourdieu (1986) would describe it: capital. Secondly there is a discussion around the working conditions within the industry, and how they impact on the aspirations of and opportunities for women. A key sub-theme of this discussion is the presence of 'banter' and where, if at all it sits in a positive working environment. Throughout these discussions there appears to be an emerging current of symbolic violence, which has been previously discussed in the analysis of *The Racing Post*.

Social capital as defined by Bourdieu (2011) is the way our relationships with others afford us 'capital' or power within a certain field. This is evident in all walks of life, but while researching it was clear that racing is a field in which social capital carries huge significance, and can afford one opportunities:

...my father was a racehorse trainer when I... well, ever since I've known, and then he retired and my mum took over the racing license and is currently a licensed trainer. So I've grown up around racing, around horses my whole life. (Heidi, BHA)

...my father was a jockey, quite successful actually, twice champion, rode five classic winners, probably his best one would be [...] who is well known in the industry because he went on to become a very good stallion. So growing up, like a lot of kids, I wanted to do what my dad did. (Charlie)

The above two quotes show how that both individuals interviewed have social capital through their family connections. Of those interviewed two thirds had some form of family connection to horseracing while growing up. The importance of social capital can also be discussed when talking about Ruby Walsh' analysis of Rachael Blackmore. I'd argue these examples as well as many others anecdotally are clear evidence that social capital would afford any aspiring jockey, male or female, with greater opportunities for success than those without those connections. This aligns with Bourdieusian theory dictating the more successful and 'useful' social connections one has, the more 'capital' they are afforded within that field (Lin, 2017; Asquith, 2019). Matt explained how an aspiring jockey with strong family connections may find themselves at an advantage:

Young lads say ‘how am I gonna get going?’. I say ‘well look, you need to go pointing³ really, to get experience and show people you can ride over fences and then you can get into racing quicker’. They say ‘how am I gonna get horses to ride?’[...] It's not easy, it's tough, it is tough for them. Whereas you get some kid... born into a good family, his dad buys him a good pointer, he wins a hunt race and then progresses. It's a lot easier. (Matt, Jockey coach)

Although not hindering the opportunities for females specifically, these observations around social capital begin to demonstrate how the racing industry is self-preserving; it ‘looks after its own’. Those with high levels of capital aim to maintain the power it affords them and pass it on the next generation, or those close to them. Therefore it is logical to deduce that upon transferring this power, the habitus of these individuals will remain much the same as those that have come before. Bourdieu (2017) argues that Habitus is formed from our earliest experiences and is constantly influenced by those around us. If one’s strong social connections’ habitus includes an opinion that male jockeys are more capable than females it is likely that one’s own habitus will reflect this. So as long as those with high levels of social capital often find themselves in important and influential positions, they will always perpetuate a doxa that reflects this habitus. Therefore the doxa of the field will continue to be one where females are believed to be less capable, and therefore are afforded less opportunities.

Cultural capital

Bourdieu (2007b) describes cultural capital as a ‘currency’, that helps us navigate fields, and is made up of our cultural knowledges. Often described as symbolic power, it is essentially a culmination of everything about an individual that gives them ‘worth’, specific

³ Point-to-point racing or ‘pointing’ is an amateur level of racing that does not fall under the jurisdiction of the BHA. It is where a lot of young riders get their first experiences.

to a particular field, in our case racing (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 2013). The below is an example of cultural capital of one person interviewed:

...so, I was a professional jockey for 30 years, had my first ride in 1979. [...] So I rode professionally for 30 years, I'm now assistant trainer and work rider, and I'm a jockey coach, and I also an assessor for the licensing for apprentice jockeys and conditional jockeys at the [Racing school]. (Lizzie)

As demonstrated, Lizzie holds a number of roles that would afford her cultural capital within the field. Each of these individually would be afforded some cultural capital, however having all these 'strings to the bow', would arguably mean Lizzie is afforded a significantly more cultural capital. Through Bourdieusian theory, Lizzie is much more likely to be accepted by, and in turn reinfluence the field, compared to someone who displayed less cultural capital (Pret *et al.*, 2016). Matt discussed how a lot of the young people he coaches come from backgrounds in racing, and how that cultural capital they have accrued has afforded them an 'easier ride' into professional racing:

Most of them would be very young but I'd know a fair few of them through pony racing. That's their kind of gateway in there, you see. Male and female young riders, I get to know them quite well at a young age... then when they become apprentice jockeys, amateurs and such like, they know me. I can help 'fast-track them' if you like. (Matt)

Cultural capital, was a key theme in all interviews, as James explained when discussing the people who would usually attend a jockey licensing course:⁴

⁴ The jockey licensing course is one that all aspiring jockeys must complete. It is a two-week course covering all aspects of race-riding and being a sports person. The curriculum includes, but is not exclusive to, race riding skills and tactics, nutrition, condition, personal conduct, and media training. Every jockey must complete this course and the corresponding assessment before they are awarded their apprentice (flat) or conditional (national hunt) licence. They cannot ride 'under rules' without a licence.

So the typical [...] are from horsey backgrounds, they've grown up in the sport. There'd be quite a few who are sons or daughters of trainers, as well. I've seen a few of those. We have had the odd one come through that isn't from a horsey background, and that's great to see [...] Trying to diversify those who come on the license courses is a big focus [...] because it's very heavily in favour of people coming from horsey backgrounds. (James)

Amongst others within the industry, James is aware of the symbolic capital being from a 'horsey' background gives people in the field, and some, including him, are actively trying to combat it. It is worth noting that James is not from what he called a 'horsey' background himself. Discussed this in interview, he said that although he had not felt any hostility yet, he had only been in the job a short time and had little interaction with people from outside the school due to COVID-19:

I haven't yet interacted with racehorse trainers as a whole, I haven't interacted with staff on racecourses, I haven't interacted with professional jockeys [...] I'm under no illusion that there are certain cultures and practices within the sport that will not be as [...] will not look on my attitude and opinion on things as kindly as the people I've been working with so far. (James)

The caveat of those with more cultural capital maintaining more power within the field is that those who possess less capital are almost exclusively heavily exposed to and influenced by the doxa of the field itself (Bourdieu, 2007b). Deer (2014) argues that the doxa that is evident within the field will in turn influence the habitus of those who exist within it. As it is clear that the existing doxa within racing is damaging to females and their opportunities, it is predictable that individuals with high levels of cultural capital are influenced and their habitus reflects this. Bourdieu (2010) explains how the outcome is that those in power hold the same damaging beliefs of those that have become before,

there is little done to challenge the doxa, and as such it is perpetuated for future generations (Burawoy, 2012).

One of the more cynical motivations for not challenging doxa is that of self-preservation.

One interviewee describes below how he used his position of influence to try and effect change:

When we move into wider society we know, and we don't act that way at all. It's the strangest thing ever, and that's coming from someone who's worked in racing yards for thirty plus years. I would say "don't speak to someone like that" and they would go "what's wrong with you?". I wrote a column once, in our newsletter that basically said 'it's not banter, it's called sexual harassment'. And the reaction was 'fuck sake [Charlie] don't be so serious'. (Charlie)

This individual held significant cultural capital, and attempted to use it to affect change to the doxa of the field, as is evident it was met with disdain and a reluctance to change. It is feasible that had this individual continued to disrupt the doxa and upset others with capital, his own capital would be diminished to the point it was damaging for him (Bourdieu 1989). Therefore many in racing who perhaps do believe some of the doxa is wrong are reluctant to challenge it, for their own preservation. Wacquant (1993) describes a field where those within it value their own capital to the extent that they consciously do not challenge the doxa that do not fit their habitus, in fear of losing their own capital. As long as these perceptions that challenging doxa will result in negative retaliations exist, the field is unlikely to see change.

That's the way we like it! Symbolic violence from those holding capital

The above quote leads nicely on to the next observation from the interviews conducted, that is that even in the 21st century many in racing still hold a number of outdated views and opinions regards women in the workplace, let alone on the racehorse, and that constantly impacts on the cultures and practices within racing. This is again aligned with Bourdieu's (2003) ideas that the habitus of those with capital within any field will be manifested through various forms of symbolic violence, which perpetuate a damaging doxa (Schubert, 2014; Fernandez, 2016). The same individual as above was asked how he would describe the attitudes and day-to-day cultures within racing yards:

One word? Prehistoric. We tend to confuse what we in yards would call 'banter' with what in any other walk of life would be complete and utter discrimination and sexual harassment on a daily, hourly basis, [...] it's so engrained in the industry. (Charlie)

This is just one example of how most felt that the cultures and practices in racing yards to this day were incredibly damaging to women:

You kind of get along with the banter, there are probably practices that are completely inappropriate but you do what you feel you have to in order to fit in. for example [...]male members of staff asking women what underwear they're wearing today and 'show us your underwear'. Or [women] being slapped on the arse with riding crops and whatever it may be, I've heard worse stories as well but I don't want to go into them now! I think there is definitely a culture which can be improved. (Heidi)

This kind of 'banter' was highlighted by all of our interview participants. There seems to be a culture where what in some workplaces would be deemed inappropriate at best (and sexual harassment at worst) behaviour is accepted within racing yards as the norm. A Bourdieusian (2007a) sociologist would argue the doxa within the field is such that this kind

of behaviour is allowed to go on unchecked and largely unchallenged, which informs habitus and perpetuates doxa (Tomlinson, 2004; Thomson, 2014; Bourdieu, 2018). Acceptance of this behaviour is another form of symbolic violence towards women. Interestingly many women conform and accept these behaviours, in order to maintain the capital they do have, similar to what Thorpe (2005) recognised in snowboarding. Anyone who doesn't conform is afforded less cultural capital within that field, which in turn makes it difficult to navigate the field itself (Bourdieu, 2003, 2007b; Bourdieu and Wacquant, 2013).

We're stone age. I can remember when I was younger riding a piece of work with someone who then came past me and cracked me across the backside with their stick as they galloped by me. I've been thrown on the muck heap and had shit put down the back of my trousers and my pants you know, it's all deemed this funny, stupid behaviour. At some point you've kind of got to go well actually if you worked in Tesco's you probably would have been sacked. There's no place for it anywhere else so why are we in racing still allowing this behaviour to happen? (Kerry)

Wholesale changes in doxa within the field comes from those with capital affecting it. That is to say, it takes a significant amount of people within the horseracing industry to stand up and say that these sexismes are not acceptable before practices will change. Unfortunately it does not appear that this is likely to happen. Some changes have been affected by unions, although these are not specific to the treatment of women, more changes on the working conditions for staff on the whole:

...we've come probably further in the last five-ten years than we have in the last hundred. We now have a 40-hour working week. When that initially came out, trainers said 'you can't work that way in racing' and I said 'well it's 40-hours, work it whichever way you like. You don't have to have a weekend off. You could have a Monday and Thursday off but you've got to start achieving a work-life balance or you will not have staff. (Charlie)

The changes mentioned above are not radical, merely bringing racing in line with most other industries with some basic workplace legislation. As can be seen from the quote it did not go down well with trainers in the industry. This is evidence of someone from within the field attempting to challenge the existing doxa and those with capital reluctant to change in order to maintain a hegemony and preserve their position of power within the field (Eagleton and Bourdieu, 1992; Friedman, 2009; Burawoy, 2012).

Once it is understood that those with capital do not lightly change their views, and as such doxa is very difficult to change, it becomes clearer how the opinions of those within the industry affect opportunities for females. It is often said horse racing is a game of opinions, which is problematic. There are many variables outside the jockey that determines the outcome of a race; unlike for example a 100m sprint, where the first athlete over the line is accepted as the most talented.

“Their bottoms are the wrong shape”: physical capital and the female jockey

Physical or embodied capital is the way in which our bodies afford us power or capital relevant to a specific field (Shilling, 1991). Hexis is one part of physical capital, and concerns with the way in which one holds or uses their body in a certain way, for example an accent or posture (Bourdieu, 2004, 2020). In our instance the physical capital discussion centres very much around the fact that gender makes up a part of that capital, and as such a woman is already at a disadvantage before any other aspects of their physical being (height, weight, build etc.) are considered. What is curious is that based purely on a physical comparison, it could be suggested the ‘ideal’ figure for a race-riding is closest to a female

physique. The below discussion with an ex-jockey-turned-coach discusses the importance of being lightweight, which she argues girls find it easier to achieve:

Physically, people are getting bigger. So from a weight point of view there are more girls who are the right weight. That's one thing that's helping them, because they're already the right size so they don't have the weight issues that the boys have. I've seen that's actually happening and I think that's going to continue to happen, because people aren't going to get smaller. (Lizzie)

The above discusses how females generally find it easier to achieve the weights required to ride racehorses, which in theory should afford them more physical capital than males. This theme was common throughout interviews, and the below discusses how else the 'ideal' rider may be closer to a female figure:

We know you can't make a racehorse go faster than god allowed it to, than Allah or whoever you pray to. If that horses natural top speed is 35 miles an hour, it's 35 miles an hour. Doesn't matter who's on board, or if god comes out of heaven himself [...]. What a jockey can do is get it to its maximum speed, and sustain it for as long as possible.[...] It's not about strength, so you actually have better opportunities for females than males. They generally have softer hands, quite often more affinity. (Charlie)

Charlie's argument outlines how a feminine figure on the face of things would be beneficial to ride a racehorse. What is curious is that it is argued that strength is not important when trying to win races. However as the quotes from *The Racing Post* above discussed, many jockeys were praised for 'powerful' rides and showing strength when riding. Anecdotally discussions with those in the industry showed a belief that there is a 'threshold' of strength required to maintain one's balance and position throughout a race, however that threshold is achievable for most, regardless of gender. James supported this position:

The parameters of strength and condition you need to be a successful jockey... a well-conditioned female and a well-conditioned male are equal in those parameters... you're not doing deadlifts, you're pushing a racehorse. It's about timing, it's about momentum, it's about balance... if you get those right, whether you're male or female, you can be as effective as the next person, doesn't matter what gender you are... it doesn't matter how much weight you can lift in the gym, or how fast you can run 100 metres... if you get your technique right, you'll be as effective as someone else, no matter what your gender is. (James)

It is curious that the doxa promoted in the industry is that men are stronger and therefore more suited to riding racehorses, however the above arguments that suggest actually women should carry more physical capital. It could be hypothesised that the doxa has been manipulated and constructed in a way that ignores the 'true' physical capitals that are beneficial and promotes false traits as the favoured ones within the field. Bourdieusian (1989, 2018) theory would argue that this manipulation of doxa influences the habitus of those within the industry, and as such maintains capital for those who have already been afforded it, in our case male jockeys:

They were held back by a prejudice mindset from a more elderly, quite often white but many Asian, very, very rich men. They just didn't see it like that. Even now, confidentially, owners will give Hayley Turner a ride on pancake Tuesday, for no reason other than to tick that box. She wouldn't ever ride in a group one or a derby for them because they just think she's a female. Some of these owners from Saudi Arabia thought they were the best thing since sliced bread because they let women drive cars. If you've got those kinds of owners in the UK, what on earth makes anyone think they are likely to give a young female jockey an equal opportunity to a male? (Charlie)

The fact that this is sadly the underlying view of many individuals with influence in the field, despite the physical capital that should be afforded as discussed, suggests that these struggles are likely to continue. These views appear to be deeply engrained within cultures, rather than a conscious decision or observation by those within them. This could be

recognised as an example of what Bourdieu termed 'misrecognition' (James, 2015). Similar to Marxist ideas of 'false consciousness', misrecognition is understood to be a collection of social processes born from a culture that anchor assumptions. What is key is that misrecognitions are understood to be born from a cultural level, rather than any conscious understanding from individuals (Navarro, 2006).

In the case of Arabian horse owners, who are almost exclusively involved in flat racing rather than National Hunt; it could be argued it is misrecognition, rather than conscious doxa that informs their habitus suggesting women are less able than men. It is commonly recognised that Arabian cultures do not hold women in the same regard as some western cultures do (Song, 2019). What is outlined here and has to be understood when discussing Bourdieu is that many of us interact with various fields on a daily basis (Leander, 2010, Thomson, 2014). The owners in this instance will possess habitus that has been structured by, and affords them to navigate various fields. Their upbringing in Arabic countries will undoubtedly have shaped their habitus, and impacted their opinions on what is appropriate for each gender. They may also have their habitus impacted by a modern day racing field, which it is suggested is slowly coming to terms with some sort of gender balance. Their habitus in turn will affect the doxa of the fields in which they exist, especially those in which they carry significant capital (Bourdieu, 1994; Leander, 2010). Since UK flat racing is somewhat reliant on income from Arabic countries, there is huge capital afforded to those owners within the field. Therefore, their habitus and negative opinions about women impacts the doxa of the field (Cassidy, 2002).

An interesting observation through interviews was the idea that this prejudice has led to flat racing actually being less accessible to women than National Hunt racing, which in theory is the more physically demanding of the two codes:

That's moving away, all the time, because we've seen your Bryony Frost's, and we've seen a lot... it's no coincidence that the more successful female jockeys are on the National Hunt scene, which actually requires more physicality than the jockeys on the flat. There's a very easy answer, the people who own National Hunt horses are not the super-rich elderly... men. They might be a little bit older, but they're much more family orientated. They wouldn't have the same historic concepts of prejudice. (Charlie)

This argument outlines the impact that the opinions or habitus that those with capital possess has on opportunities for others. In theory flat racing should be much more accessible to women than National Hunt. Flat jockeys are generally lighter in weight, and the 'danger' element is significantly less. However, the doxa within the field has been constructed as such that it is not as accessible as it should be (Bourdieu, 2018). Once again this doxa has been created by men, for men. Those with significant capital ensure that by continuing to ostracize women they perpetuate and reinforce those damaging doxas (Deer, 2014).

Working conditions

It has been discussed how symbolical violence is born out of hegemonic structures informed by the habitus of those with capital (Bourdieu, 1986, 2007a; Schubert, 2014; Weigmann, 2017). The final example of this subtle form of violence to be discussed are the working conditions for females within racing, and how they impact on their morale, motivations and aspirations.

Maternity is a topic for discussion in almost any industry, so much so that there is significant literature on various industries policies and how they impact the physical, social and mental health of women throughout pregnancy, and once they become mothers (Forbes, 2009; Fagan and Norman, 2012; Epifanio and Troeger, 2020). There has not been as yet any studies relating directly to maternity and/or parenting in horse racing; however, it was discussed in interviews:

I'm very lucky in the role that I'm in now, that [Charlie] who you're gonna have an interview with, he gives me the freedom to speak up about [...] the elephant in the room, racing does not do this well, it does not do paternity, maternity or parenting at all, it's just a non-starter. For me, I just think that there is very much a mindset in racing "we've always done it this way". You have this whole sector of the grassroots workforce who leave racing when they have kids because it doesn't work for them to come back. (Kerry)

As can be seen from the arguments above racing is not considered to be a particularly 'parent-friendly' working environment. The hours are long and unsociable, the work is physical and the culture is not the type that many would want to raise a child in. Once again this is an example of symbolic violence, where the field has structures in place that do not outrightly ostracize women, but make subtle hints that they are not welcome (Bourdieu, 2003; Thapar-Bjokert *et al.*, 2016). The last line of the words above suggest that maternity (or lack of) is one of the main reasons females drop out of the sport early on, which in turn leads to less females 'in the system'.

It is not difficult to understand that the less women at the bottom of any sporting pyramid, the fewer we are likely to see at the top. To this end the fact that women drop out of racing to have a child, where in many other industries there are structures in place for them to

return to work, proves problematic and in itself damaging. When the industry essentially says to young women “if you want to have children there is no place for you here” it is not overtly surprising that those same women deem the industry too difficult to navigate, and head elsewhere. To apply Bourdieusian (2018) theory, we observe a field lacking in formal support, which in turn is a social structure in itself, one that implies to its subjects that it is going to be incredibly difficult for them to navigate this field and forge a career in racing. Once again this is another example of the subtle, intricate ways in which a field can be harmful to a specific group, which Bourdieu (2003) termed symbolic violence.

Another interviewee went on to discuss how individual trainers (the industry’s most common employers) viewed maternity:

Without a doubt maternity, it's seen as a viable reason for dismissal. I've had that in emails from employers “well she was pregnant”, like are you serious? We also have something in the industry known as pool money. That's a quarterly bonus, 5% of any winner trained by your yard goes to the staff working in the yard. When you've got a female on maternity leave, quite often they're left off the pool money list. And when you ask why, it's the same old answer. “She wasn't here”, “well why wasn't she there?”, “well, she's had a baby, she's on maternity leave and that's the reason she's not on the pool money list.” I mean, you can't get any more straightforward discrimination. (Charlie)

This shows the audacity of those employers within the racing industry, to blatantly ignore the needs of women and in turn diminish their opportunities, aspirations and motivations within racing. What is described above as ‘straightforward discrimination’ could in Bourdieusian (1977, 1989), language be described as structures within the field, which restrict agency and therefore reduce capitals afforded women (Joseph, 2020). Those reduced levels of capital make the field even more difficult to navigate, which only

perpetuates the strength of physical capital possessed by men, based on nothing more than their Y chromosome (Bourdieu 1986, 2018; Storr *et al.*, 2021). The message this sends to young aspiring women in the industry is particularly damaging. If there are barriers that exist in racing at the lowest levels that exist in almost no other industry, it does suggest there is little hope for women hoping to reach the top echelons of the sport, and become professional jockeys. This unspoken, nuanced message is once again an example of Bourdieu's symbolic violence, where women are exposed to harming and damaging doxa from the moment they begin a career in the racing industry (Thapar-Bjokert *et al.*, 2016; Burawoy, 2019).

The idea of 'pool money' not being shared is once again another example of trainers and the wider industry demonstrating that symbolic violence towards women. The fact that they essentially do not earn the same as a male because they become pregnant and have to have time off is incredibly harming to the capital of women within the field. The fact that men can have children and continue working means that they can earn more. Which affords them more economic capital, and also symbolic capital, by suggesting they are 'worth more' (Bourdieu, 1986; Tomlinson, 2004; Burawoy, 2019). It is not only the maternity period itself where women find themselves ostracized in the racing industry. The below is an argument that demonstrates the struggles women face when returning to work:

But also, there's no returning to work process. When I had my first son, it was very much like 'OK so you've had a child, you've had a C-Section, you've had six weeks, here's 4 lots⁵'. it was like 'wait, but my body is not remotely able. I'm not able bodied to just come back and ride 4 lots, I've had my stomach, every

⁵ 'Lots' are horses to be ridden out on any given morning. A stable hand riding four lots will exercise four different racehorses, one after the other.

layer of my stomach cut open,'. There's no process for returning to work after you've had a child. (Kerry)

As demonstrated, the lack of empathy towards women from those within the industry shows at best an uneducated cohort of employers, at worst a conscious effort to make things as difficult as possible for anyone wishing to return to the industry. The truth probably lies somewhere between the two, but regardless is extremely damaging to the aspirations and motivations of women. Bourdieu (2003) would argue that the fact the current structures in place are very difficult for women, is another example of violence that will discourage them from entering, or re-entering horse racing as a viable career choice (Burawoy, 2019). It is therefore unsurprising that many women choose not to go back into racing after taking a break to have children, which in turn reduces the overall numbers, and as stated earlier: the less in at the bottom, the fewer rise to the top. Not only this but as the industry sees women who have children almost always leaving the sport, it reinforces doxa that this is the 'correct' path, and perpetuates the idea that the racing industry is not a place for women.

It is recognised that this section discussing working conditions and the impacts of capital and those possessing it do not impact exclusively on aspiring female jockeys, but all women in the industry. It is suggested however that in order to improve the opportunities and prospects for those jockeys, the field has to address its wider issues around the place of women within the sport. It is not plausible to expect echelons of young women to aspire to be jockeys, where the whole industry where they will find themselves working for years beforehand is designed to restrict and obstruct them.

Conclusion

In the introduction, this thesis laid out two main research questions, namely:

What barriers exist in the industry today that restrict women from progressing to become successful jockeys?

What impact does the media, in particular industry-specific media, have on the cultures of the industry, and in turn the opportunities afforded to aspiring female jockeys?

It is demonstrated that both questions have been answered. Arguably the most harmful barriers facing women in the racing industry today is a culture and doxa that promotes a hierarchical structure, with men ultimately in power. This is manifested and practised through various examples of Bourdieu's (2003) symbolic violence, the small inferences and micropolitics in everyday interactions that reinforce men as those with more capital within the field. Secondly, through analysis of *The Racing Post* and questions put to experts in interview, it is clear that the industry-specific media reinforce these doxa and carry many more examples of symbolic violence, once again damaging the opportunities for aspiring female jockeys.

Summary of findings

The first issue to understand is that women are generally under-represented in the media, and even more so in sports reporting (Kane, 2013). Cooky *et al.*, (2013) discusses how women are excluded in media, so researchers must understand that this is not unique to racing. Meier (2015) argued that positive female role models are incredibly important to encourage young women into sports, logic dictates that a lack of coverage is already detrimental to women within the industry, before a word has been printed.

Of the recent coverage of women found in *The Racing Post*, there were a few evident key points. The first is that often the language used to describe females is exactly that – feminine and compared to males, it accentuated their feminine traits and made it clear they were ‘different’ from the riders one would usually see. This is the first example of a common theme throughout findings; what Bourdieu (1979, 2003) would term ‘symbolic violence’. The gradual, subtle violence is evident throughout the racing industry, and constantly harms women in an attempt to ‘wear down’ their aspirations and restrict their opportunities. Many scholars found similar to our study, in that the media attempts to exaggerate femininity of female athletes, to remind everyone that they are women, and to subtly question their place in the sporting environment (Harris and Clayton, 2002; Fink, 2015).

The second phenomenon observed during media analysis was the promotion of ‘the partnership’ when women in racing were being discussed. When female successes were discussed in *The Racing Post*, there was shared praise between the rider and the horse, deflecting from the achievements of the rider. Comparatively, when male riders were being

discussed the focus was very much on the achievement of the rider. It subtly denotes that male riders win races by themselves, but females win races 'alongside' the horse. Once again, this is a subtle form of violence that discredits female successes, and reinforces the habitus that men are the more capable race riders (Wacquant, 2016)

The next observation made was the sensationalist language used when females were successful in 'big' races, examples of two recent female wins in high profile races were given as examples. The language used was so sensationalised that it reinforces the understanding that these victories are not common, again perpetuating the belief that these females are less 'worthy' of their position astride a racehorse. Although not common in wider research, it is argued that this is another way of deflecting from women's success in a sport, in our case racing, aligning with research suggesting female sport stars in media are distanced and deflected from anything that recognises them as credible athletic performers (Kane *et al.*, 2013, Fink, 2015).

The final argument of the media analysis was the observation that *The Racing Post* often referred to a 'glass ceiling' when discussing women in racing, and termed successful women 'trailblazers' or similar. All this achieves is once again reinforcing the understanding that women do not 'belong' in races, again echoing wider research as discussed above. This is, again a further example of what Bourdieu (1994, 2003) would term symbolic violence.

The second part of the results and discussion was devoted to the interviews conducted with industry professionals. These included ex-jockeys, coaches and trainers, as well as staff from trade unions and the BHA, the gender split of participants was 50/50. The first point analysed was their perception of how media represents women in racing. The key points

drawn out of interviews discussed included ignorance towards key issues, positive discrimination, and once again the language used.

The first observation is that those interviewed thought *The Racing Post* neglected a number of key issues that affected women. The main example given was the neglect to mention a key report from an equality group discussing maternity leave, or lack thereof, within racing. It is proposed that this was a conscious decision by the newspaper, because those who make decisions felt the story not worth reporting, which would suggest a further example of symbolic violence. The alternative suggestion is that those at the newspaper felt their readership would not take kindly to a report investigating the practices of yards. To challenge the way in which trainers conduct their business would be to challenge the doxa of the field quite severely, and it may be those at the newspaper are not willing to do that, with fear of losing capital themselves.

Those interviewed voiced their feelings that the racing media were guilty of positive discrimination towards women, aligning with earlier arguments around sensationalist language. This was a theme that seemed to resonate with what had been researched around wider sports media, where women were often patronised by sports reporting, to the extent it had a negative impact, perpetuating the opinion that they 'did not belong'. It was noted that when women riders lost races, reports suggested they were 'to blame', in stark contrast to how victories are reported, as mentioned earlier.

Separate from the media, interviewees also recognised a number of issues within racing they felt were detrimental to the opportunities of female jockeys. The first of these was the observation that those with capital in racing often held on to it and kept it between

themselves (Bourdieu, 2011). The various forms of capital (social, physical, cultural and symbolic) were all evident and discussed, and the underlying argument is that in some way or another men possessed more capital than women. Even when discussing physical capital, which on the face of it would afford women more overall capital, the doxa has been manipulated to ensure men are afforded this capital as well. This all accumulates to make the field a problematic one for women, especially early on in their career before they accrue any symbolic capital. At this point it appears poignant to discuss the intersectionality between gender and social class. Aligned with a lot of Bourdieu's (1991) work, racing would appear to be a field that is dominated by the bourgeoisie. The money and leisure time required to become involved in racing, ensured it is a practice generally reserved for the upper classes. The working classes are permitted in the periphery, in roles in yards and as paying punters on race tracks, but not in the coveted roles of owners and trainers. Although this study focuses on the disparity in opportunities dependant on gender, there is equally scope for a similar study discussing modern day racing's relationship with social class, and how that impacts opportunities from various backgrounds.

Another point discussed was the opinions of those with capital (generally males), and the practices allowed to go on and often encouraged within yards. Examples were given of abhorrent behaviour towards women, in what would be considered, at best sexual harassment or workplace bullying in any other industry. This was again aligned with Bourdieu's ideas of symbolic violence (2003), a notion of constant and unrelenting violence towards women, conducted in a subtle way that may go unnoticed.

The last issue discussed was the working conditions throughout racing, and how they affect women. It was recognised that although they do not directly affect the opportunities of

women hoping to race-ride, unfair working conditions do make the industry itself less accessible to women and make every 'step' along the way more difficult than it is for their male colleagues. The maternity issue was raised: that many yards do not pay maternity pay and rarely provide any back-to-work processes, making it a problematic place to work for those hoping to be mothers. Again an example of symbolic violence, which is discussed in gender relations in various industries (Weininger, 2002; Roumbanis, 2019). Morgan and Bjorkert (2006) observe that symbolic violence towards women exists in almost every walk of life, besides the workplace.

Methodological and theoretical reflections

Reflecting on this project has been difficult; throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, there have had to be constant changes and adaptations to ensure this thesis achieved its aims (Donthu and Gustafsson, 2020). It is well-documented the impact the pandemic has had and continues to have on all industries, so it would be naïve to suggest this thesis has not been affected (Belitski *et al.*, 2021)

The crux of this thesis sat in a media analysis of *The Racing Post*, where articles were analysed for key themes as to how they represent women in racing. It has been acknowledged the media analysis discussed in this thesis is fairly narrow in terms of both time frame and publications covered. *The Racing Post* was chosen as the logical option, being the most popular daily publication in the UK devoted to racing. A period of three years was chosen to give a broad enough scope to gain a meaningful data set, without being unmanageable; upon reflection there is scope for a broader, more extensive media

analysis on this topic. Coverage of both industry specific and mainstream publications should be analysed, as well as online publications.

To this end interviews conducted included discussions around media and gender representations. The original plan had been to interview more people from within the racing industry, however the timing of the pandemic was particularly catastrophic for this project. The first interviews were scheduled for March 2019, with over 20 participants verbally confirmed to take part. Once the UK was put into lockdown and sport stopped this caused huge issues within racing. Unlike other sports, the day-to-day running of yards could not halt. Horses still needed exercising, feeding and caring for; this coupled with staff shortages due to isolation meant a very chaotic few months for the industry. This in turn meant over half of those who had agreed to be interviewed could no longer take part in this study (Omary *et al.*, 2020).

Given the lack of data due to the reduced participants, it was decided to supplement the interview data with the media analysis process outlined to compliment the data collected through interviews. As the original research questions were focused around the media, and this had always been a key theme in interviews, logic dictated a media analysis be added to the research. This allowed a comprehensive data set which could be analysed effectively

Various theorists were considered for this thesis, including Goffman (1978), for his work around presentation of self. Gramsci's (2009) work around masculine hegemony, later Furthered by Connell's (2020) gender order theory may also have been appropriate. Ultimately a Bourdieusian lens was chosen it was predicted that the main arguments of his work would present the arguments most effectively, as much would align with his work on

social class. The phenomena of capital are really evident at play, and racing is an example of a unique field. Perhaps the most prominent Bourdieusian theory though is symbolic violence. Evident through most points made during data analysis, women are harmed a subtle and intricate way in racing that to the casual observer it may go unnoticed. Bourdieusian theory sits particularly well when discussing the behaviours and practices in racing yards on a daily basis, where examples of 'banter' could be replaced with the term 'symbolic violence'.

Tomlinson (2004) explains how a Bourdieusian lens is often used when discussing power struggles in sport:

Sport cultures do change, new sport cultures do emerge, and Bourdieu was always utterly clear that they can. But sport cultures and practices have continued to be shaped by human agents drawing on their various reserves of different types of capital, in the construction of class and gender-influenced habituses that have characterized the field of sporting practices. It would be churlish not to recognize Bourdieu's major contribution to the sociological study and understanding of sport, and the centrality of his major concepts to the continuing analysis of sport's place in contemporary culture. (Tomlinson, 2004, p. 171)

Examples include Back *et al.*, (2002), who use Bourdieu's theories to analyse a single football player as a form of embodiment of class values and cultural capital. Bourdieu's work is preferred to other scholars for the way it explains the 'unwritten' forms of power afforded, what he termed 'capital' (White and Wilson, 1999; Bourdieu, 2011).

If this study were to be conducted again, it would be prudent to ensure that there is more flexibility around interviews, in order to gather more data. Although a global pandemic could not be predicted, the time parameters for collecting data meant that some interviews

were not possible, meaning perhaps data was missed. It could also be suggested that more mainstream media could be analysed in a similar fashion to the way *The Racing Post* was. As an individual researcher I was limited by logistical restrictions, however there is scope for a broader media analysis in future.

Recommendations and future research

It has been recognised from the media analysis and discussions in interviews that the industry is slowly changing, and things are improving for women. More women are riding than ever before, and are proving their worth on the racetrack by often outperforming their male peers. As will be discussed, it is recommended that the BHA hold an enquiry into the day-to-day practices in racing yards, and the cultures this creates that resonates throughout the industry (Scargill, 2021).

For example, in December 2021 jockey Robbie Dunne was banned for 18 months for harassment and bullying of fellow jockey Bryony Frost (Coverdale, 2021). This story could be observed in two ways: the first would be to suggest that racing is coming down hard on those who are committing these offences. Contrary to this and most likely closer to the truth is that this is the tip of an iceberg. Since this original story was reported a number of female jockeys, trainers and other professionals have come forward with similar allegations. What is interesting is that following events as an observer, it would appear the industry is divided. Although a number of people agree this is unacceptable in any industry in the 21st century, many claimed Frost should not be reporting these events and that this is just 'what goes on in racing'. This is justification in itself that those with a jurisdiction over the sport need to step in and hold their own enquiry, to ensure everyone understands what

is expected of them. There is feeling the sport is on the verge of what could be a very turbulent time with regards to gender relations. It is therefore suggested that immediate further research would not be advised, as it could turn out to be outdated before it is printed. Once it is established what the racing landscape looks like 'post Frost-Dunne', it is suggested a similar study to this one is conducted to gauge beliefs of those within the sport. From this observations can be made about what (if any) impact these recent allegations have had on the sport, and what it has done to remedy the issues it faces.

Since racing is one of the only sports where women compete alongside men, there are not a lot of parallels that can be drawn for wider research in the wider sporting community. It is however argued that a media analysis similar to the one conducted here, on a much bigger scale covering a range of sports could provide valuable insights into how the British media portray sportswomen. From this suggestions could be made to make British sport a fairer landscape in general, which should in time cascade down into all sports, including racing.

This thesis has thoroughly outlined the issues surrounding gender relations in UK racing. It would, however, be problematic to suggest these issues are exclusive to racing. Females are still today ostracized in a wider sporting industry that supports and perpetuates a masculine hegemonic narrative (Hovden, 2021). There are parallels to be drawn from this thesis and its arguments around capital, symbolic violence, and the presentation of women within the media. These arguments are similar to those that could be made for women in a variety of sports (Woods and Butler, 2020). The same barriers discussed here around opportunities, the opinions of those in power, and working conditions (including maternity) are evident in contemporary literature discussing various sports (Roper and Polasek, 2019;

Mount, 2021). However, it is through research like this thesis that highlights these issues and the need for change that those changes occur.

Indeed, it has to be acknowledged that gender relations in UK racing are at the best they have ever been, with more females riding than at any point in history (Cashmore, 2018). This was supported by a number of interviewees, who acknowledge circumstances for females had improved drastically, especially over the last 40 years. It is the opinion of the researcher that although opportunities are better than ever and things appear to be heading in the right direction, there is still significant work to do to achieve gender equality in the sport, hence the justification for research projects such as this. Burton (2015) analysed the impact that academic research had had on the opportunities for women in sport to date. Nonetheless, despite crediting scholars for their work in the advancement of gender relations in sport, there is also acknowledgement that there are still areas to be researched. Bruinvels *et al.* (2017) share the same opinion, arguing that there is still plenty of work to be done by academics to achieve fair gender relations in sport worldwide. Although this thesis may be narrow in that it focuses on one sport, the theoretical conclusions and findings from this work resonate throughout this wider sporting landscape, and thus endeavour to make a small contribution towards this goal.

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Appendix 1- List of articles reviewed

05/04/2018	Frost so excited about tilt at Grand National history on 'awesome' Milansbar
14/04/2018	Grand National history girls Walsh, Frost and Blackmore out to rock the world
27/04/2018	Frosts out to make more headlines as proud dad Jimmy watches on
28/04/2018	Out on a high: Carberry retires following emotional victory on Josies Orders
29/04/2018	Walsh defied perceptions of female jockeys' limitations to leave lasting legacy
29/04/2018	Ted and Ruby Walsh pay tribute to Katie following her heroic farewell triumph
01/05/2018	Katie Walsh calls it a day as she goes out on a winner
11/07/2018	Rachael Blackmore: if you had told me I'd be top in July I'd have laughed
06/08/2018	As it happened: Turner takes top honours on unique all-female jockeys' card
06/08/2018	All you need to know on a busy day of action as female jockeys star at Carlisle
06/08/2018	Cox thrilled after finishing fifth in female riders' competition in Sweden
10/08/2018	Female jockeys' prize on hold as JCR considers new initiative
12/08/2018	Cup winner Hayley Turner says women do not need an allowance in Britain
11/09/2018	Girl power! Blackmore bidding to continue female domination on 2015 winner Angel
21/09/2018	Former leading female jockey Cathy Gannon among those celebrating
28/10/2018	Bryony Frost shines as Frodon takes the Old Roan Chase
13/11/2018	Bryony Frost rides out claim at Kempton after 75th winner on Marienstar
20/11/2018	Female riders to be given weight allowance in Japan from March
15/12/2018	Fantastic Frodon and Frost bag the Caspian Caviar Gold Cup at Cheltenham
18/12/2018	The touch of Frost: how Bryony gets the best out of her horses
26/01/2019	Frost and Frodon going for Gold after serving up winter warmer in Cotswold Chase
11/02/2019	Nanako Fujita breaking new ground for female jockeys in Japan with Group 1 ride
14/02/2019	Josephine Gordon goes freelance after relinquishing key role with Hugo Palmer
08/03/2019	Racing celebrates female jockeys on International Women's Day
14/03/2019	Dad and brother fight back the emotions after more brilliance from Bryony Frost
15/03/2019	Bryony Frost: 'Frodon grabbed me by my hand and said: don't you dare give up'
12/04/2019	Harrington and Blackmore back lucrative Ladies Cup at Leopardstown
15/04/2019	Andrews delighted as she sets season's record for point wins by a female rider
27/04/2019	Bryony Frost back from injury and reunited with her 'old friend' Black Corton
11/06/2019	Female riders predict Royal Ascot success will flow despite lack of rides
21/06/2019	Kelleway hails Turner success as 'a really important moment for the sport'
27/06/2019	Female jockeys offer better value over jumps, reveals major study
05/07/2019	Lively debate around safety, media coverage and the role of women in racing
05/08/2019	The latest going and market movers as Carlisle hosts its all-female meeting
05/08/2019	Megan Nicholls relishing strong book of rides at unique all-female fixture
10/08/2019	Hayley Turner the leading rider but fails to rule the world at Shergar Cup
17/09/2019	Scrap use of outdated 'Ms' honorific for female jockeys says Australian body
05/11/2019	Frost confident luck can change on Present Man in Badger Beers hat-trick bid
22/11/2019	It's ladies' day at Fairyhouse as Katie Walsh and Sandra Hughes reign supreme
23/11/2019	Turner believes Hollie Doyle has what it takes to break more records
05/12/2019	Record breaker! Hollie Doyle rides most winners in a year for a female jockey

08/12/2019	Nanako Fujita becomes first female jockey to land Graded race
22/12/2019	Record-breaker Hollie Doyle picks up top female jockey award at the Lesters
01/02/2020	Honeysuckle and Blackmore deliver in pulsating Irish Champion Hurdle
04/02/2020	Southwell to recognise International Women's Day with all-female meeting
13/02/2020	Female jockeys to break new ground at inaugural jockeys' challenge
28/02/2020	Lisa Allpress makes history as first female jockey to win in Saudi Arabia
07/03/2020	Southwell celebrates International Women's Day with card for female jockeys
30/06/2020	Royal Ascot heroine Hayley Turner dislocates collarbone in Kempton fall
09/07/2020	Three of the best: Lizzie Kelly's greatest moments in the saddle
09/07/2020	It's been a dream' - Lizzie Kelly quits the saddle to start family
17/07/2020	Lizzie Kelly reveals she was 'terrified' in early days of groundbreaking career
19/07/2020	Turner times it right as Onassis pays handsome tribute to late Noel Martin
30/08/2020	Already a year to remember for Hollie Doyle with triple figures again in sight
30/09/2020	Two female apprentices confirmed for upcoming season in Saudi Arabia
10/10/2020	Skvarilova-Rezacova bids to become second female jockey to land Velka Pardubicka
15/10/2020	Hollie Doyle beats own record for most wins in calendar year by female jockey
01/12/2020	Racing is Everyone's Sport': jockeys to wear rainbow armbands for campaign
01/12/2020	'A huge privilege' - Hollie Doyle nominated for Sports Personality of the Year
15/12/2020	#VoteHollie - racing urged to support Hollie Doyle for Sports Personality
21/12/2020	I lifted it for the whole industry says Hollie Doyle on her Spoty third
23/12/2020	Another coup for Hollie Doyle as rider is honoured with three Lesters
26/12/2020	'I can't believe we're King George winners!' - Frodon and Frost light up Kempton
02/01/2021	It's not the 1800s' - married jockeys unhappy at being coupled in betting
13/01/2021	Bryony Frost out to stop Tiger Roll on mount reminiscent of former National hero
23/01/2021	Whisky for the jockeys and port for the stewards - a clerk's tale of yesteryear
23/01/2021	Emotional Bridget Andrews dedicates Grade 2 win to Mohaayed after sad loss
08/02/2021	'I felt pretty intimidated' - Hollie Doyle complains about treatment by stewards
16/03/2021	Wonder women! Rachael Blackmore makes history with stunning win on Honeysuckle
17/03/2021	'She's incredible' - Ruby Walsh heaps praise on Blackmore after Ballymore win
18/03/2021	'Brilliant' Blackmore and De Bromhead on top once again with Telmesomethinggirl
21/03/2021	Rachael Blackmore made racing 'smile again' says ITV's Ed Chamberlin
04/04/2021	A sport could not have had a finer role model
10/04/2021	Katie Walsh: Rachael Blackmore is an inspiration to males and females alike
12/04/2021	How empty stands helped Blackmore realise National dream was becoming reality
12/04/2021	'Hollywood fantasy turned into reality' - global media hails Blackmore history
12/04/2021	They just don't miss' - Skelton hails De Bromhead and Blackmore dominance
12/04/2021	Kavanagh hails Aintree stars Blackmore and De Bromhead after 'fantastic result'
13/04/2021	A breakthrough moment' - Clare Balding hails Blackmore's National triumph
20/04/2021	It would be incredible' - Henry de Bromhead on Blackmore's title bid
25/04/2021	Rachael Blackmore takes over Envoi Allen ride against Monkfish at Punchestown

Appendix 2- Example of uncoded article

Record-breaker Hollie Doyle picks up top female jockey award at the Lesters



Hollie Doyle: honoured at the Lesters
Edward Whitaker (racingpost.com/photos)

1 of 1

By Tom Ward UPDATED 6:28PM, DEC 22 2019

Hollie Doyle's remarkable 2019 continued on Saturday evening when she picked up the lady jockey of the year award at the Professional Jockeys Association's Lesters Awards.

Doyle broke the British record for the most winners in a year by a female jockey this month, overtaking Josephine Gordon's previous record of 106, and she currently sits on 112 winners.



Hollie Doyle pictured riding her 107th winner Class Clown at Southwell
Tony Knapton

Richard Johnson was named jump jockey of the year after securing his fourth championship while Oisin Murphy, who won his first last season, scooped the Flat equivalent.

Cieren Fallon won the apprentice jockey award and Jonjo O'Neill jnr was named conditional jockey of the year. O'Neill jnr registered a first Cheltenham Festival winner aboard Early Doors in the Martin Pipe Conditional Jockeys' Handicap Hurdle.

Recently retired weighing-room giants Pat Smullen and Noel Fehily were both honoured with the special recognition award at the ceremony hosted by Sky Sports Racing's Jason Weaver and Luke Harvey.

Jump ride of the year went to Mattie Batchelor for his remarkable effort aboard 33-1 shot Noble Glance in a novice hurdle at Fontwell on August 22.

Paul Hanagan picked up Flat ride of the year for his efforts in guiding Dutch Decoy to the unlikelyst of victories in a nursery at Hamilton in August.

[Watch: Batchelor and Noble Glance battle to victory at Fontwell](#)

[Watch: Hanagan brings Dutch Decoy from first to last](#)

PJA chief executive Paul Struthers said: "The Lesters are always a special occasion for the jockeys so we can't thank Sky Sports Racing enough for agreeing

to host this live special with Luke and Jason, as well as Racing TV for assisting us with the rides of the year footage.

"We're delighted for all the winners and hope they enjoy their early Christmas present. Particular congratulations go to Pat and Noel, as joining the illustrious roll of honour of special recognition recipients clearly demonstrates the regard in which they are held by their peers.

"We are currently trying to source a sponsor for the event and very much hope that it will be back next year for another fantastic evening of celebration of our members."

Appendix 3- Example of a coded article

Female jockeys offer better value over jumps, reveals major study



Bryony Frost enjoyed Cheltenham Festival success this year aboard Frodon
Mark Cranham

1 of 1

By Richard Birch UPDATED 7:41PM, JUN 27 2019

Punters who exclusively backed female jump jockeys would have fared better in four of the last five years than those supporting only male riders.

That is the conclusion of Racing Post data, which supports the result of a study conducted by the University of Liverpool which suggests female jump jockeys are underestimated by punters.

In terms of return on investment, Racing Post figures show that over the last five jump seasons female riders outperformed male jockeys in all but the 2016/17 campaign.

A University of Liverpool statistical analysis of over 1.6 million rides covering an 18-year period indicated that a jumps horse ridden by a female jockey at odds of 9-1 has the same chance of winning as a male-ridden horse at 8-1.

The findings are particularly noteworthy in the context of the 2019 Cheltenham Festival, when 14.3 per cent of wins came from female riders – two for Rachael Blackmore and one apiece for Bryony Frost and Lizzie Kelly – despite receiving only 9.2 per cent of the total number of rides available.



Thomas Pill



Females more successful over jumps

Reply



Thomas Pill
statistics



Reply



Thomas Pill
does not fit the doxa



Reply



Thomas Pill
quantitative data



Reply



Vanessa Cashmore, author of the University of Liverpool research, said: "This analysis seems to suggest there is a significant difference between the material performance of female jump jockeys and the public perception of their capability."

"The betting public consistently underestimate these jockeys. This could be an indicator of negative public opinion about the ability of female riders, but also ensures there is value to be found in backing horses ridden by female jockeys in jump races."

"I hope this research can move us another step closer to altering attitudes towards female jockeys and more importantly, driving behavioural change."

Analysis found that when riding a horse who starts at even money, for example, a female jockey can be expected to win the race 52 per cent of the time.

Rose Grissell, British Racing's head of diversity and inclusion, said: "It is interesting to understand how the betting public may perceive female jump jockeys."

"The progression of female jockeys in both codes has been agreed as a key priority for the Diversity in Racing Steering Group and that includes exploring how we can change both conscious and unconscious attitudes."

"We already know from Vanessa's previous research in this area published last year that female jockeys are just as capable as their male counterparts."

"We want to look at every stage of a female jockey's career to see where barriers can be removed or better support can be implemented. Whilst the number of rides going to females is increasing, we still have a long way to go."

"As an example, an audit of female jockey facilities at each racecourse is currently being carried out by female jockeys themselves, so we hope to learn where improvements can be made on the racecourse."

Tallulah Lewis, Women in Racing chair, said: "Riding a racehorse requires a high level of skill and strength which are abilities that can be developed by both sexes, with opportunity being the crucial final component."

"Vanessa's research makes clear that if women have the same opportunities as their male counterparts, they can compete very successfully as jockeys, just as they can in any other sphere in racing."

This project has been supported by Women in Racing's bursary fund and the Racing Foundation.



TP Thomas Pill
public perception=doxa
female jockeys challenging
the doxa

Reply

TP Thomas Pill
gamblers underestimate
female jockeys

Reply

TP Thomas Pill
perceptions about ability

TP Thomas Pill
example of habitus being
formed

Reply

TP Thomas Pill
shows how important sound
research can be

Reply

TP Thomas Pill
contradicts the doxa once
again

Reply

TP Thomas Pill
suggests the bettors
underestimate female
jockeys, an example of
formed habitus informed by
the field

Reply

Appendix 4- Interview questions

1. Firstly, can you tell me a little bit about your background in racing?
 - a. Were your family or friends involved?
 - b. Why/how did you get involved in racing?
 - c. What are the main motivation for people involved in the industry?
2. What attributes do you think make a successful jockey?
 - a. Which do you think is most important?
 - b. Do you think these are accessible to all?
3. Do you think female jockeys are as capable as male jockeys?
 - a. If no, why not?
4. Statistically females get much fewer opportunities than males, why do you think this is?
 - a. Is it justified/fair?
 - b. What do you think needs to change?
5. How would you describe the culture in racing yards, and then in the sport as a whole?
 - a. Do you think its inclusive?
 - b. Are there aspects that could be detrimental to opportunities for female riders?
6. Do you think female riders are respected the same as male riders in racing?
 - a. If no, how/why not?
7. How do you think the racing media, in particular The Racing Post, portray female jockeys?
 - a. Is it fair/justified?
 - b. If no, why not?
8. How do you think the NGB and other organisations in racing support and promote women within the sport?
 - a. Could they do more?
9. What, in your opinion are the most important things that need to change to encourage more female jockeys to turn professional?
 - a. How does the racing industry go about making these changes?
 - b. Who is responsible?
10. Anything else you would like to add?

Using social theory to identify and investigate opportunities for aspiring female jockeys in British racing

An academic study by lead researcher Tom Pill, due for completion Summer 2021. The overall aim of the project is to use social theories, specifically those outlined by Pierre Bourdieu, to better understand the attitudes and opinions of those who work within the British racing industry. The focus will be on the attitudes, beliefs and opinions of those within racing towards female jockeys, and how this can impact the opportunities for women entering the industry. Following data collection and analysis it is hoped that a number of clear conclusions can be reached to help advance the opportunities available to women aspiring to become jockeys.

Approach

This project will aim to find some clear conclusions to help advance the opportunities afforded to young women aspiring to be jockeys in British Racing.

The study aims to achieve these goals by doing the following:

Literature review- A comprehensive review of what academic work has already been completed in this area.

Data collection- Data will be collected by conducting semi-structured interviews with various stakeholders within British racing. These interviews will be including but not exclusive to:

- Apprentice, conditional and professional jockeys
- Stable staff
- Owners and trainers
- Jockey coaches and tutors
- BHA staff

It is predicted that by interviewing a wide range of people across the industry a comprehensive collection of data can be analysed, providing evidence that is representative of the entire industry, rather than a specific sub-group.

Analysis and discussion- Following data collection researchers will apply Bourdieusian social theory to identify how attitudes and opinions of various stakeholders form wider opinions within the racing industry. From this it is hoped that a number of clear conclusions and suggestions can be given to enhance the opportunities within British Racing.

Participants

Although this project is concerned with the opportunities for female jockeys, it is understood that a much wider cross-section of people is responsible for these opportunities. For this reason, we seek anyone who has been or is currently involved in British racing to get in touch and take part. A full project information document including privacy policy and ethical approval is available before taking part. If you are interested or would like more information, please contact lead researcher Tom via email.

Social Theories in sport

This project will use the theories of Pierre Bourdieu, a French philosopher and sociologist, and apply them to a racing context. Bourdieu's theories would argue that British racing is its own sociological 'field' (1992). Within a certain field a specific set of beliefs and dispositions will exist, Bourdieu termed these 'habitus' (1990). These habitus are constructed from individuals within the field, each of which will hold their own 'capital'. This capital, or power, will be made up of one's social status, industry specific knowledge's and experiences, and wealth (Tomlinson, 2004). As these theories are applied to a racing context, Bourdieu's notions of capital will be used to analyse how individuals (men and women) impact on the overall 'habitus' of the industry. These habitus quickly become the 'Doxa' (opinions, beliefs) of those within the industry, and therefore affect decision making. Put simply, those with high levels of capital in any specific industry carry a great responsibility on forming the opinions of others. This could have a direct (although possibly subconscious) impact on the opportunities for any specific group, in our case women hoping to become jockeys.

Lead researcher - 14068593@brookes.ac.uk - **Tom Pill**
Project supervisor – swhigham@brookes.ac.uk - **Stuart Whigham**

Appendix 6 - Original participant list (redacted)

Participant	Role
[REDACTED]	Journalist
[REDACTED]	Jockey
[REDACTED]	Trainer
[REDACTED]	BHA
[REDACTED]	BRS
[REDACTED]	Yard secretary
[REDACTED]	Trainer
[REDACTED]	Trainer
[REDACTED]	Stable staff
[REDACTED]	Trainer
[REDACTED]	Stable Staff
[REDACTED]	Trainer
[REDACTED]	BHA
[REDACTED]	Trainer
[REDACTED]	Trade union
[REDACTED]	Trainer
[REDACTED]	Trade union
[REDACTED]	Trainer
[REDACTED]	Ex Jockey
[REDACTED]	Trainer
[REDACTED]	BRS
[REDACTED]	Trainer
[REDACTED]	Ex jockey, coach
[REDACTED]	Trainer
[REDACTED]	Jockey coach
[REDACTED]	Trainer
[REDACTED]	Coach
[REDACTED]	Trainer
[REDACTED]	Racing Post journalist
[REDACTED]	Trainer
[REDACTED]	Racecourse manager
[REDACTED]	Trainer

Appendix 7- Participant information sheet

A study into the opportunities afforded to aspiring female jockeys in British horseracing, and analysis of social factors that may affect opportunities.



You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide whether or not to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully.

What is the purpose of the study?

This study is designed to investigate the opportunities afforded to aspiring female jockeys in British Horseracing. Running from September 2019 until July 2021, this study intends to understand the culture within racing stables, and how this culture affects opportunities for young male and female jockeys.

Why have I been invited to participate?

You have been invited to take part in this individual study due to your work within racing, and your first-hand experience of the field and the culture of horseracing in the UK. A number of participants have been asked to take part in this study, including (but not exclusive to) stable staff, owners and trainers, jockeys, coaches, BHA and BRS staff.

Do I have to take part?

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. If you decide to take part you will be given a privacy notice along with this information sheet that will explain how your data will be collected and used, and be asked to give your consent. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any point and without giving a reason.

The purpose of this study is to critically evaluate practices and cultures within British horseracing, and as such provide suggestions for improvement to best practice in future. By participating in this study you will help further our understanding of the topic, and allow us to make more informed, evaluated suggestions to improve practices in British racing.

What will happen to me if I take part?

If you choose to take part in this research study we would ask you agree to sit for a recorded interview with our lead researcher, at a time and venue that suits you. Interviews will last between forty-five minutes and one hour, and will be audio recorded on at least one electronic recording device. Permission will be sought from participants before any recording, via a consent form.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

There are very few disadvantages to taking part in this study, the only disadvantage outlined by researchers is the loss of time taken to sit for interviews. Some participants might find the topics discussed upsetting, in this case the interviews can be stopped and participation can be refused. All participants sit for interviews on a voluntary basis.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

This study intends to outline how the industry can improve best practices, and therefore offer suggestions as to how the industry can improve opportunities, and become more inclusive. Therefore these benefits will directly affect those who agree to take part in this study.

Will what I say in this study be kept confidential?

All information collected from participants will be held with the strictest confidentiality. At no point during data collection will names or specific details of participants be recorded. Data will be collected through interviews, where participants will be recognised by their role and gender only (e.g. female trainer). This same terminology will be used in the write up of data collection, and at no point will any participants be named. All data collected through interviews will be kept on password protected laptops, to which only the lead researcher has access. At the end of the study all data collected will be destroyed.

What should I do if I want to take part?

If you would like to take part in this study please contact lead researcher Thomas Pill at 14068593@brookes.ac.uk or on 07827 323563.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

Results will be published in a thesis by the lead researcher, and will be made available to all participants. The study may also be published in academic journals and/or conferences, at which point all participant will be made aware where the study is being published.

Who is organising and funding the research?

Research is being conducted as part of a Masters degree by research by a student at Oxford Brookes University. Research has been organised by the Sport department, Health and Life Sciences faculty at the same university. This study is funded by the lead researcher through Student Finance England.

Who has reviewed the study?

The research has been approved by the University Research Ethics Committee, Oxford Brookes University.

Contact for further information**Lead researcher:**

Thomas Pill
14068593@brookes.ac.uk
07827 323563

Supervisor:

Stuart Whigham
swhigham@brookes.ac.uk
01865483857

Thank you for taking the time to read the information sheet.

Appendix 8 - Privacy Notice



Privacy Notice

Oxford Brookes University (OBU) will usually be the Data Controller of any data that you supply for this research. This means that we are responsible for looking after your information and using it properly. The exception to this is joint research projects where you would be informed on the participant information sheet as to the other partner institution or institutions. This means that they will make the decisions on how your data is used and for what reasons. You can contact the University's Information Management Team on 01865 485420 or email info.sec@brookes.ac.uk.

Why do we need your data?

This study is designed to critically investigate the opportunities afforded to aspiring female jockeys in British horse racing. By collecting data from participants researchers intend to gather a deep understanding of the horseracing industry, its cultures and its practices. From this researchers will evaluate opportunities for young female jockeys compared to their male colleagues, and make suggestions for best practice of further research in future, if necessary.

OBUs legal basis for collecting this data is:

- You are consenting to providing it to us; and / or,
- Processing is necessary for the performance of a task in the public interest such as research

If the university asks you for sensitive data such as; racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade-union membership, data concerning health or sexual life, genetic/biometric data or criminal records OBU will use these data because:

- You have given OBU explicit consent to do so; and / or
- Processing is necessary for scientific or research in the public interest.

What type of data will Oxford Brookes University use?

OBU will use data from participants including but not exclusive to gender, age and occupation. As well as this any information shared in interviews with researchers will be deemed as data collected for this research study.

Who will OBU share your data with?

No-one.

Will OBU transfer my data outside of the UK?

No.

What rights do I have regarding my data that OBU holds?

- You have the right to be informed about what data will be collected and how this will be used
- You have the right of access to your data
- You have the right to correct data if it is wrong
- You have the right to ask for your data to be deleted
- You have the right to restrict use of the data we hold about you
- You have the right to data portability
- You have the right to object to the university using your data
- You have rights in relation to using your data automated decision making and profiling.

Where did OBU source my data from?

OBU will source data from participants themselves through interviews, as well as online horse racing records and academic papers.

Are there any consequences of not providing the requested data?

There are no legal consequences of not providing data for this research. It is purely voluntary.

Will there be any automated decision making using my data?

There will be no use of automated decision making in scope of UK Data Protection and Privacy legislation."

How long will OBU keep your data?

In line with Oxford Brookes policies data generated in the course of research must be kept securely in paper or electronic form for a period of time in accordance with the research funder or University policy.

OBU and the researchers of this study will keep your data until the completion of this study, schedule for July 2021, it will be stored on a computer that is password protected. Upon completion all data collected from participants will be destroyed.

Who can I contact if I have concerns?

You can contact the Information Management team.

Postal Address: Information Management Team, IT Services, Room 2.12, Gibbs Building, Headington Campus, Gypsy Lane, Oxford, OX3 0BP

Email: info.sec@brookes.ac.uk

Tel: 01865 485420 in UK

+44 1865 485420 outside the UK.

Appendix 9- Consent form



CONSENT FORM

A study into the opportunities afforded to aspiring female jockeys in British horseracing, and analysis of social factors that may affect opportunities.

Name, position and contact address of Researcher

Thomas Pill
MA (Res) Student
Oxford Brookes University
Headington Road
OX3 0BP
14068593@brookes.ac.uk
07827 323563

Please initial box

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving reason.
3. I agree to take part in the above study.

Please initial box

4. I agree to the interview being audio recorded
6. I agree to the use of anonymised quotes in publications
7. I agree that an anonymised data set, gathered for this study may be stored in a specialist data centre/repository relevant to this subject area for future research

Yes	No
☐	☐
☐	☐
☐	☐

Name of Participant

Date

Signature

Name of Researcher

Date

Signature

Appendix 10- Example interview

Kerry interview transcript

TP: OK. So, erm... [REDACTED], first of all could you tell me a little bit about your background in racing? How you got into it, and how its shaped your career so far?

K: so I came into racing when I was 18, in the proviso that my mum said when I left school if I wanted to work with horses I had to get some qualifications first! I went to college, I did two years at college doing various qualifications around horses, erm... then when I was in my second year I did a week's work experience at a point to point yard, which I absolutely loved. I always knew I wanted to work with horses, I've ridden since I was about 2, but I didn't really know down which avenue I wanted to take it so the point to point yard was the turning point in my career if you like. After I'd done a week there I was like 'yep, this is what I want to do every day, I want to go fast and work with thoroughbreds every day'. So I then applied to the racing school at [REDACTED], I was overqualified to do the course they run normally, having done the qualifications at college. They were actually running an NVQ level 3 course a couple of months after I applied which was a 4 week kind-of 'fast-track' course, because I had a lot of knowledge of the other side of things, it was just learning to ride racehorses properly. So I went and did that and then, yeah, that was that. So I've done, when I first came into racing I did a stint at a stud for a foaling season, I did a yearling sales prep season, and then worked in racing full time. So yeah, I've been doing it a really, really long time! I have had various jobs, I've been a travelling head girl, I've had senior roles, not so senior roles since I had my kids, erm...yeah. So I'll have been at [REDACTED] 3 years in April, and it really was just a case of I was just at burnout point. Working full-time in the industry with two kids and being single parent so I actually didn't know about the job. It was a friend of a friend that said this could be a really good fit for you. The thing is I was still enjoying my time in racing so it's not like I would have jumped out to do something completely different but I felt this was a good avenue to go down. I still ride out on a Saturday normal time, COVID time, cos we're working from home and the kids are home schooling it means I can actually ride out first lot before I have to start work and the kids have to start school, so I've been riding out first lot during the first lockdown we had last year and then this lockdown again so I try and keep my hand in. I still love it as much as I did 17 years ago, the horse, the equine side of it. So yeah, that's me really, I'm a bit of an addict to the thoroughbred, to be honest. The horses, rather than the industry, the people, it's the horses that are the pull for me.

TP: Fantastic. So I think what I picked up from a few different people is that a love for the horses and the equine side of things is really essential, and you wouldn't last very long in the industry without it. Would you agree with that?

K: Absolutely, without a shadow of doubt. I mean it's the only thing... I've been a single parent for ten years, when my first son was born, my second son sorry, my youngest, I had to take a break. I had to go and live where my parents were because sadly their dad left me when I was pregnant with the younger one. Which meant that I needed to be at home with my parents, my family for the support, having a 16-month old and newborn is erm... not for the faint-hearted, even if you're with the father. So it meant that I had to move away from where I could be involved, I think I took a year and a half off, and then came back. So

I've been a single parent in the industry for ten years, and yeah, the only thing that keeps you in it is the horses. There's not much support, there's not much empathy, it's only the equine stars of the show that keep you in it really.

TP: OK, that kind of leads me onto my next question. Speaking of the support and that kind of thing, how would you describe the culture in racing yards first of all, and then in the wider community as a whole?

K: so if you're lucky enough to work for someone that's understanding of the fact that you have children, that's great, and it can work. But they're far and few. For the most part you're made to feel like a bit of a burden really, not just by the trainer but also by the staff, by your peers. Say for example you have a sick child and you have to stay off work a couple of days because you know, there's no one else to take care of them, the culture is very much like "Oh, for goodness sake, I had to ride yours out yesterday and I had to muck out your boxes yesterday" you're almost made to feel guilty for having to do what you know... and I always felt very much... I didn't want other people riding my horses anyway, so I was like "I'm not wanting to take the time off, I don't have any other option" and the mentality of that is that it's not just about being a parent. If you're sick yourself, it's that same mentality. You have to literally be dying for them to be like "that's fine, have a couple days off". There's many issues in the industry like concussion is a real sticking point, and we see it a lot in our side of things from the union side. It's not recognised, people don't recognise it. You've got concussion by coming off a horse at work, you've done it at work, and yet you're expected to come back to work a couple days later because you haven't broken a bone or you haven't had to stay in hospital or whatever. It's almost like it's not... because it's not seen it's not recognised. That generally is the mentality.

I've had awful things said to me in my time in racing, being a parent, you know. I've gotten quite involved with Women in Racing, and it really stemmed from the fact that last year they started a project called racing home which is actually through Oxford Brookes, they did the research for the project. They spoke to a lot of people in the industry, obviously it was when COVID happened so had a few webinars rather than actual workshops, but they ended up asking me if I would sit in on a few of them because I was not afraid to speak up about my experience. Actually then it gave other people the confidence to speak up too. They then asked me off the back of that to be part of their committee, because they didn't really have anybody representing the grassroots level in racing, regarding anything. I'm very lucky in the role that I'm in now, that [REDACTED] who you're gonna have an interview with, he gives me the freedom to speak up about... you know... because it's a taboo, it's kind of the elephant in the room, racing does not do this well, it does not do paternity, maternity or parenting at all, it's just a non-starter. For me, I just think that there is very much a mindset in racing "we've always done it this way". You have this whole sector of the grassroots workforce who leave racing when they have kids because it doesn't work for them to come back. But actually I was very lucky that the first job I had when I came back from having my second son, the boys were probably 2 and 3 I think, I could come in after I dropped them at pre-school at 9. Because it was a very small family run yard, it was very flexible. It didn't mean that I rode less lots, I might ride an extra lot afterwards. So for me, you know there's this thing 'well it doesn't really work' well actually you could have ten staff coming in at 9 o'clock, they'd still ride out 3rd, 4th and 5th lot, or 3rd and 4th lot and then pull manes or do whatever needs doing. It can be done, it's just because of this mindset of 'well it doesn't work for us, we've done it this way so we're not changing it' the

industry is losing quite a large number of women who don't come back after they've had kids. There are the exceptions to the rule, where some women just don't have the confidence they once had before they had children, they don't want to ride the same type of horses, some of them don't want to ride racehorses anymore. Which is absolutely fine and I do understand that.

But also, there's no returning to work process. When I had my first son, it was very much like 'OK so you've had a child, you've had a C-Section, you've had six weeks, here's 4 lots.'. it was like 'wait, but my body is not remotely able. I'm not able bodied to just come back and ride 4 lots, I've had my stomach, every layer of my stomach cut open,.'. There's no process for returning to work after you've had a child, and that's if you've just had a straightforward labour and everything else, you're just expected to come back. If you end up using your full maternity after you've had the child, yes you've got months after, but even then you still haven't... there's no process in place so I know that Women In Racing are... one of the things they are trying to do from the findings of the racing home project is to get a process in place for women returning to work in racing, once they've had a child. Which I think would give a lot of women more confidence to return, knowing that they had the support and help, you know. Because I think if you've had all that time off and you come back and you're just expected to ride the same sort of horses that you were riding before and you don't feel confident with your own body, you probably will just give it a week and go "you know what? Actually this isn't for me." Sorry I've digressed!

TP: That's fine, it's really good to get a feel for what's really going on 'on the round' if that makes sense.

K: If I'm brutally honest, there is a real lack of support, there is a real lack of empathy, and I can't imagine, obviously I'm not working full time in racing currently, but I can't imagine how hard it's been for parents who work full time in the industry to have their kids at home during COVID. I don't know how they've managed it.

TP: Absolutely. My next question, I think we've kind of touched on it. Do you think that racing cultures in yards are detrimental for aspiring female jockeys in the sport?

K: I think that's really changed since I started to how it is now. I mean I look at the work I'm doing now and actually the statistics that I work on cos I do a lot with data to prove that point. When it started 17 years ago or whatever it is, the amount of women working in racing was much less. It was heavily male dominated, even in the yards. Now we've seen that done a flip, there's more women working in the industry now than men. I also think that thanks to some of the absolutely phenomenal women jockeys we currently have in the sport, both over jumps and on the flat, that hugely helps. I think that thanks to Women in Racing, and also just as culturally, in every walk of life things are massively changing for women. I think it's easier now than ever it was before. We go back and forth on this on the office all the time, we've all been in the industry a long time, and we all have different opinions. We go back and forth on the male/female jockey thing quite often and if there's a big headline or whatever we'll have a bit of a debate. I do think it's easier now, I think you're always gonna have that factor of becoming a mother, or wanting to become a mother. I think that that's always gonna be really hard. I don't know if you've heard of her, Jessica Marcialis, she's riding in the Saudi cup, she's the French... no wait, she rides in for

France for her Husband. Last year, it was on Arc day, she won the group 3, I think. She has a 2 ½ year old son, don't quote me, he's a toddler, anyway. She's the first female jockey we've ever seen that's had a child and come back, and actually been successful. I think it will take a big name to go away, have a child and come back to change the mentality. And other women to say then 'you know what? Actually it can be done. I don't have to choose between having a riding career and starting a family. I could have both.' I mean, who's retired recently to have a baby? Jumps jockey?

TP: Lizzie Kelly.

K: Thank you. She obviously knows, you know she's lucky enough that she's got the training, bloodstock, pre-training aspects to fall back on or fall into and that's obviously an interest to her, so giving up riding obviously, you know, she's not too concerned about. For those who feel they would have to choose, we really need somebody to do it, to change that mindset, that it can be done. There's no reason why it can't be, there's just this mindset around it that... I mean Jessica, the French lady, I tried to do an interview with her, cos I really really wanted to publish something in our newsletter about her, and about the fact that she'd had a child and she'd come back and she's riding as well as ever and riding group winners and in the spotlight too, on Arc de Triomphe day. She said yes, but then I tried to get the engagement for the interview and she just kind of, didn't really, and I was quite disappointed because I thought that would have been a really really great way to shine a light on somebody that has done it.

TP: I think, what we've just spoken about, having children, coming back and being successful, we could be talking about racing, we could be talking about business, or another sport, it's a cultural thing that's not necessarily specific to racing, although it manifests itself in a slightly different way in racing. Just taking a bit of a step back from that and thinking the actual ability of jockeys, female compared to male. In your personal opinion, are female jockeys as capable as male jockeys?

K: Don't quote me! Haha I think... I probably make myself very unpopular, and I do in the office. There are a handful of incredible female jockeys, incredible. Hollie Doyle, the jump girls Nina Carberry, Katie Walsh, obviously they went away, had a family and didn't come back and I think that's the difference between jumps and flat, I think it's easier to come back to the flat when you've had a child because I think over the jumps you know, who's gonna look after your kids if your laid up with two broken legs or a couple of collarbones? Or ribs? So I think there also is the difference between the two, the jumps and flat. Erm... yes, there's a handful of amazing female jockeys out there, it depends on the horse also. Because I think some horses will run better for a woman than they will for a man, because I think quite often, and I can name male jockeys that aren't this way but, quite often a male jockey will make a horses mind up for them. whereas a female may just kind of coax it out of them, does that make sense?

TP: Yep

K: So... I think horses like that are going to run better for a female. It would solely depend... if I was an owner and I was looking at it from that point of view, it would solely depend on my horse. Physically we know men are stronger than women, we know that, it's not a secret. I think yes, it definitely depends on the type of horse you have, and the way in which

you want it ridden. Because you know like Tony McCoy, best jump jockey of all time for me personally, but there are some owners and trainers that wouldn't use him. They didn't like his aggressive style, they didn't like the fact that if he saw a stride coming into a fence it was his stride or no stride. Whereas there are some other jockeys who are slightly more forgiving and will ride a bit less aggressively and I think, yeah, I don't know, I'm talking myself round in circles, because I don't want to answer the question! Erm... I don't think... so if I had Hollie Doyle and I had... Luke Morris, both good on the all-weather, both had lots of winners on the all-weather at this time of year. I wouldn't pick one or the other because of their gender. I would pick their riding style, for my horse as an individual, and that would be what would make me choose which jockey I wanted to use. For example the derby, if Hollie Doyle had ridden as many derby winners as let's say Frankie, for example or whoever, I would still choose who I thought was going to suit my horse better as an individual, rather than the gender of the jockey. Does that make sense?

TP: Yeah, yeah, yeah. It absolutely does, I agree. Knowing what you know about cultures in racing yards, do you think that some trainers and/or owners, make their decisions based on gender?

K: Owners? Yes, I think. Trainers less likely, cos I think the trainers have the horseman aspect, so for them they're looking at who's gonna ride their horse as an individual better? I think owners are still stuck on 'men are stronger than women' and actually it's not even necessarily... people have to understand with this is that it's whoever's fashionable. Owners are stuck on 'I want Ryan Moore on everything' you know. And yes, he's the best flat jockey in the world, for me, I get that. But he may not be the best suited to ride your horse. So I think trainers and owners, I'll probably make myself unpopular, are very fickle. They want whoever is riding winners. If you're riding the most winners on the all-weather right now you're gonna be the person they're gonna choose. That's why at the moment, and you know I'm delighted for her, that why Hollie Doyle can do no wrong right now. To ride in the big races and to ride the good horses and to ride a lot of winners you've got to be riding winners. And that's why there is so many, sadly, there's so many journeyman jockeys, who are good jockeys in their own right, but they're not fashionable, so they won't get looked at.

TP: OK, that's really interesting. One thing that I've kind of picked up is looking historically, because racing has typically been a man's world for the last however many years, if you think of the best, whether it be flat or jump jockeys of all time, they're all blokes. Because historically it's been the blokes that have ridden the horses. So I think from an owners point of view, like you say there's the whole strength issue but also: who are the best of all time? Tony McCoy, Ruby Walsh, whoever, they're blokes. So therefore you're probably more inclined to go for a guy than a girl, for that reason as well.

K: Absolutely, yeah. For me, I mean, over jumps, Nina Carberry is the best woman of all-time, we've never seen better. But she wouldn't have had as many opportunities as Tony McCoy. Even if she'd been based in the UK I don't believe she would have done. And that's why when you think of the best of all time, you think of Tony McCoy. Whereas if someone said to me who's the best male jockey of all time, over jumps, and who's the best female, I would immediately think of her. But because he's had so much more success because he's had so many more opportunities, you always just think he's the best of all-time, if you see what I mean?

TP: Yeah, that's kind of what I'm getting at, I think. Opportunities spread from success, or perceived success and it's a bit of a cycle isn't it.

K: Absolutely, mmmm.

TP: My next question, kind of moving away from the ability side of things, how do you think industry media portrays female jockeys? Do you think it's a fair and correct representation of them?

K: is this pre-Hollie Doyle or since Hollie Doyle?

TP: err... bit of both I guess?

K: OK. So... for me, I almost sit the other way now. Since we've really jumped on the female jockey bandwagon and now everybody is talking about it, if I was a seven pound claiming male, I'd be upset. Because I'd be thinking to myself "OK so I rode two winners last week, and such-and-such female jockey rode two winners last week, but she getting a story in the Racing Post, and I'm not." My issue is that as an industry we have to be very, very careful, of the line we're walking with it. Because if we're not careful, it's almost going to go too far the other way, and then people are gonna start saying "well hang on a minute, you know, I'm not getting these opportunities, I'm not getting interviewed on ITV racing", you know? And then you've almost put the men, unless you're Ryan Moore or one of the top jockeys, where the women were. It's a really, really fine line I think. Before we started getting on board with the female jockey side of things, it was awful how little publicity they got. I think probably in the last 3 to 4 years that's started to change. You know, I think Katie Walsh and Nina, the last couple of years of their riding careers, they got a lot of publicity at Cheltenham and Aintree, things like that. You've got Racheal Blackmore now, and you had Lizzie Kelly and I think on the jumps side of things that really changed, quicker than it did on the flat. Because there just wasn't anyone really on the flat that kind of... set the world on fire, do you know what I mean? There was a handful of you know, decent female jockeys, obviously you've got Hayley Turner but I'm personally not a huge Hayley fan, I think she always got probably... I always thought it was probably a little bit unfair that she got a lot more publicity than any of the other females, at that time. You sort of had a handful of mediocre female pilots and I'd put Hayley in that bracket I think she got on to some good horses and I think that's put her where she has got to but I... I don't rate her as much as she is rated. And they didn't get anything. They got no publicity really, at all. It was only ever Hayley. I think back to, I used to work with Cathy Gannon, years ago. For me, pound for pound, one of the best female pilots. Just never got a break. And then she kept getting injured, she had injury after injury and came back after having a child, and then she got injured again and was just like "this isn't working out". There just never was anything, really, that put her out there. I suppose Hayley's been the one that's sort of paved the way on the flat for the publicity side of things. And then of course you had Hollie come along, and she's you know, turned the whole thing around. Turned it on it's head, almost. Now she's, well sports personality of the year, finishing third in that was no mean feat. I think, and we discussed that in the office, I think sports personality of the year almost came a year too soon for her because I think if you're a racing fan, we all knew who she was and how great she is, and how brilliant she is for the sport. But if you were a Joe Bloggs, you'd never have heard of her. Whereas I think if she'd have been put up next year, she may have

had a bigger following outside the sport. And people would have been like "Oh, you know what, yeah she's done a lot for racing, we know who she is, we'll give her our vote." And I think maybe she could of you know, finished higher up if she had a bigger following, it almost came a little bit too soon for her.

TP: yeah, I completely agree. I think another big summer on the flat, a few rides at the big festivals and like you say her profile would have been much bigger outside of racing. That's a really interesting point. My last question then, I think, is probably thinking over the last few months about the stories that have come out regarding Bryony Frost and accusations of some bullying in the weighing room, that sort of thing. What do you make of that? Just from my opinion it may well have been manifested through her very, very popular media personality. Erm... and maybe there's a little bit of resentment there from other jockeys, what's your kind of opinion on that?

K: so, may take on it is, first point is exactly what I was saying to you before. Female jockeys are now getting so much publicity, they're always being interviewed in ITV racing on the big days, and I think for some of the lads in the weighing room who have been doing this for a very long time and they've never had that kind of recognition. You could understand why they could be potentially upset by that. I get it, I do. That's why I think we're walking a really fine line and I think, you know... we need to just be very careful how we walk that line. I'm also not shocked by it, by the mentality of the weighing room. I've been in racing a really long time, one of my best friends is a female jockey, she's not riding in the UK anymore because she just couldn't financially make it work, so she's gone abroad now. The fact that women still have to share a sauna with male riders who don't wear a stitch in the sauna, you know, things that could be deemed as banter, and also I think as a society now we've really headed into the wrong direction with this whole banter thing because I think that people can say anything and then just go "woah, it's just banter". And you're like "it hurt my feelings, it's not banter", you know, you can't dress everything up as a joke or as banter and I think there is that real kind of, erm... banterry behaviour in the weighing room. That wouldn't fit for everybody, and I couldn't imagine that Bryony would actually buy into that. I think she's incredibly brave, for taking on the boys, and for saying "you know what? Actually this behaviour's not OK and I'm not prepared to be spoken to like that, in that manner". I think it's about time, if I'm honest, that someone... because it's not even just the race-riding side of things, it's just the whole industry. We're stone age. I can remember when I was younger riding a piece of work with someone who then came past me and cracked me across the backside with their stick as they galloped by me and I've been thrown on the muck heap and had shit put down the back of my trousers and my pants you know, it's all deemed this funny, stupid behaviour. At some point you've kind of, got to go well actually if you worked in Tesco's you probably would have been sacked. There's no place for it anywhere else so why are we in racing still allowing this behaviour to happen? I think that she's incredibly brave for standing up and saying "you know what? I am your equal, and I expect to be treated as your equal. If you've got an issue with something I've done or the way I've ridden then we do this the right way. You're not going to bully me in to you know, saying nothing or you know, you're not going to intimidate me or whatever". I think it's been a long time coming, women have always been inferior in racing, for the longest time. I mean I remember... I think it was last year [REDACTED], and she's... she's a questionable... she's marmite, you either love her or you hate her I think, do you know what I mean? And she doesn't hold back, she says exactly what she thinks. Last year she tweeted a picture of a letter she'd written to a local trainer where she lived in the late 70's,

and basically had been told by this trainer “as you’re a girl I suggest you look for other forms of employment, I wouldn’t suggest horseracing”. That was only 40/30 years ago. So... I mean we’ve made huge progress in that time, erm... and I hope we will continue to carry on making progress but it shouldn’t have taken this long. My concern is that... I think... female riders now have much broader opportunities than they had 10, 5 years ago even. I think that, you know, the likes of Hollie Doyle are now paving the way for the ones that will come behind. I think that’s a huge positive. But also I think one of the biggest problems in the industry we face is not just the riders, it’s all female staff, and especially the ones who have children, or would like to have children. How they’re treated is one of the biggest problems.

TP: OK. I guess we’ve kind of touched on it through some of the questions but the last thing I wanted to ask was what are... in your opinion the biggest erm... issues and hurdles for females in the sport, especially jockeys, and what needs to change to overcome them? kind of a summary really.

K: So... I think the culture, and the mindset is the biggest hurdle. I think that that is something that is changing all of the time, and I think it will continue to change, and I think it will become less of a hurdle. Erm... and I think that’s not just to owners and trainers but again, touching on Bryony Frost, it’s your weighing room counterparts, it’s... it’s the whole industry. The mindset and the culture, that has to change. That’s the biggest hurdle every woman in the industry faces I think. Second, I think is the publicity and the way its portrayed. So touching on the Racing Post for example. It’s the most popular racing newspaper that anyone who’s anyone, or anyone who’s interested in racing will read. So... when Women in Racing presented their report on Racing Home, which was about being a parent in the industry, the Racing Post didn’t even cover it. They didn’t get anything in the Racing Post. But in the two-week period that it was released, there was two pieces on Rishi Persad, and the Black Lives Matter, diversity and equality. And then one on Rainbow Laces, which is the pride event that racing does. So three things in the space of two weeks that focus on diversity and equality, and women in racing, the Racing Home project wasn’t even covered. So Parents, women, mothers, are we not equal? Do we not? Does our plight in racing matter less than someone who is Muslim, or black? Or gay? Or bisexual? Or transgender? Does a women who’s got children, is she less? Does her story mean less to the industry than those other things? Those other topics? You know. I was really upset by that because I just felt like if we’re trying to move forwards, to be diverse and everyone’s treated equally in this industry, then why on earth would that not be covered? Because actually, some of the quotes which, some of them belong to me anyway, in the report were damning. That’s the problem, the Racing Post has its own agenda. It’s all about racing politics for them. if it’s a story they deem to be positive that will give them a good spin, they’ll put it in. but if it’s something that’s like mildly... it is a frustration and I thought that was really terrible that they didn’t put anything in about that at all. So as far as anyone else knows, it’s not happened, it’s only the stakeholders at this stage, which have had any involvement in that project so far. So for every woman working in racing with a child who participated on that report, it looks to them like nothing is happening.

TP: That’s a real shame. Separate of our interview, if you’ve got anything of that you can send I’d be really keen to read it, if poss?

K: Sure, yeah. I can, I think I have the report saved on my laptop maybe, I can always ping that over to you.

TP: Brilliant, thank you very much. That's everything I'd like to ask, was there anything you'd like to add about the cultures? Opportunities for female jockeys at all?

K: Again I think that, also it's very tricky because... so one of my best friends, like I said is riding abroad now, but she was attached to a yard for a long time, for 15 years I think, she had a license for probably 8 of them. she did not get the opportunities, the owners did not want to give her the opportunities, erm... big owners. You know, I think... she's of that era now where you'd walk away from British racing going you know, 'if your face fits' and you know, whatever, at that point where we were with female jockeys so I think it is worth noting that it has come an incredibly long way. In probably the last 5 years alone if not a little bit less maybe. So I do hold hope that it will become easier. But I also think, and I probably, you know, it's a personal thing I think, also, I think we need to step away from the obsession of the female/male, they're all jockeys. They're all jockeys and I think we get so bogged down with it all and not just in racing but in every walk of life, and I think now you kind of, I have two sons they're 14 and 12, and I feel quite protective of the fact that actually, you know, no one is shouting about them, anymore. We're almost going too far the other way. I think it's a really tricky one because... you know... I think men need as much support and as much help, racing is brutal. The boys dad, he was a jockey, he never made it to professional, he gave up and went abroad when he was a 3 pound claimer because it was so hard. I've got a couple of really close friends who are journeyman jockeys in the north, and it's so hard for them. for them, they've almost got to be scratching their heads because they never saw the female riders as being any different to them. but yet suddenly the female riders are getting a leg up with all this publicity and stuff, and they've been doing it for 15 years and never once had a write up in the Racing Post, you know. So I think its... like I said before it is a really tricky topic, and it has to be handled just right. So that the male riders who have been doing it a long time but don't get the opportunities don't become despondent too. Do you see what I mean? I know what I mean but its hard to explain it.

TP: I think in an ideal world, we wouldn't see male or female, we'd see jockeys or we'd see racing staff and it would be a completely level playing field. Erm... unfortunately, again not just in racing but in many walks of life that's not quite the case. So yeah, I completely agree, it has to be handled very carefully, I think.

K: I'm on the Women in Racing committee and I sometimes sit on it and I, you know I'm listening to what they're saying and obviously I'm the only one that's from the grassroots aspect of racing and sometimes I just sit there and I think "oohhh, I don't know!" and they're all like "yeah, this is a great idea" and I'm like "oh I just, I'm not sure, that we're not going a little but too far", you know. It's definitely a difficult one. But I think also, you know, as the generations come into racing and as the new generation of trainers take over I hope that, you know, those mindsets will change. We definitely, I mean, as a union, definitely are seeing... not the gender inequality, but just in general, better practice, better employment practice, you know. As the older trainers are starting to retire, and you've got the newer lot coming in, we are seeing a change in that mentality. And I can only hope that, you know, in ten years it will be in an even better place. Not just regarding the male/female divide, or whatever you want to call it, but also just working practices, and the general

treatment of staff. We've got a long way to go. I said to [REDACTED] the other day, sometimes working for the union is really tough, people don't realise how tough it is because you get all these horrible cases come in and you're just like in the 21st century, how on earth is this still happening in our sport? You know? And some of it is related to the way females are treated, because some of it is sexual assault, you know, the way... and I also think what we see is obviously, kids nowadays, they're so much more savvy, they're so much more switched on to what is appropriate and what isn't appropriate. So you know, we'll quite often get parents ringing us saying my daughter had this said to her in her yard, and that's not appropriate and blah blah blah, and I think whereas when I came in years ago, if someone had said something to me like that I'd have been like "OK", and I wouldn't have told anybody. Whereas now, young women coming into the industry are like "hang on a minute, you can't say that to me". So again it's another mindset change, and cultural change and that will have a big impact in racing because you've got all these young women, it is predominantly young women coming into the sport now, and they've been given the power, if you like to stand up and say "you can't treat me like this because I'm a female, you can't speak to me differently because I'm a female" whereas in years gone by people were too frightened to say anything.

Appendix 11- Example of a coded interview

Charlie interview transcript

TP: OK, so first of all Charlie, can you just tell me a little bit about your background, how you came to be involved with the National Association for Racehorse Staff, your kind of background in racing and how you got to this point?

C: errrr, my father was a jockey, quite successful actually, twice champion, rode five classic winners, probably his best one would be [...], who is well known in the industry because he went on to become a very good stallion. So growing up, like a lot of kids, I wanted to do what my dad did. I left Ireland to do so, came over to [...] in England, started as an apprentice, my first ride was for the Queen. But at 17 with no parental guidance, at the point my parents were in Dubai, you could call it the perfect storm and train crash. You're very young, at the same time you're very young you've got no parental guidance, and at the same time as you've got those two combinations you've got more disposable income than you've ever had in your life. Whatever paper round you were on before, or whatever pocket money, you'll be paid an awful lot more in racing. That then coupled with the fact that there would be free access to multiple sources of alcohol and recreational drugs if you so want, makes for the perfect storm. The very fact that racing, by its nature, almost certainly requires you to leave home at a young age, and then as I say it gives you everything else, you have the access to alcohol and drugs, and there's no one to tell you that you can't.

I definitely would have drunk too much in my younger days, I was too heavy, I went to a national hunt yard where you could be heavier, but realistically with the right advice I would have lived a more healthy lifestyle. Moving on a few years at the age of 21 I literally woke up one morning and thought 'Jesus, is this it?' there's no career. All I could do was be a head man, or a travelling head man. The yard I was in at that time was [...]. I can tell you now that was probably thirty years ago, the head man is still the head man today. So I'd have been still there now, thirty years on, waiting for my chance. There was very little career progression, and that's what planted the seed in my head. We need to do more within this industry, there are transferable skills, but we were previously seen as an industry where if you weren't a jockey you were a failure, and the only progression was to become a head man, you can now be a van leader or a travelling head person, we've come a long way in recent years. That's where I started, we had an association called the SLA, Stable Lads Association, the ultimate chocolate teapot if ever there was one. Although, as we are, they're a registered and certified trade union, they've never held an AGM, never published annual accounts, didn't have a working executive. The icing on the cake was probably, it was completely ineffectual, most didn't know it existed and if anyone called them they'd say 'sorry can't do much about that, unlucky mate'. To add insult to injury, the boss was accused of embezzling in the region of £120,000. It went to court, but he was 75. The court thought 'we don't wanna throw an old man in jail, and the figures are very confusing' because they didn't keep accounts. They weren't audited, it was a shambles.

They realised they had to do better than this and I stood for the position of chief executive back then, I was beaten by a chap called [...] who was my predecessor. What that did was give me a five year apprenticeship. I stayed within the industry, I held another position, applied for my trainers license, which I never wanted to do. Why you'd want to work 7 days a week, 52 weeks a year and everything that goes wrong is your fault but you have very little control



Thomas Pill
social capital



Reply



Thomas Pill
No guidance for young riders



Reply



Thomas Pill
No career progression



Thomas Pill
paints the picture of a very
harsh environment or field



Reply



Thomas Pill
Very little help for stable staff
and young riders fro trade
unions



Reply



over an awful lot of it. I served a five year apprenticeship, stood for this position, won it by a landslide, I think I had 4 times more votes than the other two candidates put together, and for my sins, here I am.

TP: OK, fantastic, thanks for that. The position you're in now, as chief executive of the trade association, what are your main aims and goals? A quick mission statement, what do you hope to achieve and improve about racing?

C: the mission statement is very straightforward: we are charged with improving the social and economic outlook of our members, in every way, shape and form. And I think with cooperation from the industry, and from the trainers, we've come probably further in the last five-ten years than we have in the last hundred. We now have a 40-hour working week. When that initially came out, trainers said 'you can't work that way in racing' and I said 'well it's 40-hours, work it whichever way you like. You don't have to have a weekend off. You could have a Monday and Thursday off but you've got to start achieving a work-life balance or you will not have staff'. We have a 40-hour working week, we have recognised overtime. We have an MoA, which is a Memorandum of Agreement signed by the trainers association and the national trainers federation. Other trade unions that I talk to are very envious of the agreements that we have achieved by working cooperatively, by and large. We have our disputes, but we've come an awfully long way. It's underpinned by the fact most of the people get into it like me. You like the thrill, you like working with horses, you're outdoors, less academically minded. It's reasonably well paid too. There's a lot going for it, and I think we've developed the career progression as much as we can do so. That's it's in a nutshell. We want to work on career progression in the industry, but outside of it as well, if that's what you want. But whilst you're working in it, to improve your social and economic outlook. That could be anything from sports days, to national quizzes, to newsletters, to national town councils, which is their wages, terms and conditions negotiations.

TP: OK, in terms of that career progression, what do you think are the main challenges facing aspiring jockeys, both male and female, but female in particular at the moment?

C: just separate the jockeys out from staff, because they are different criteria. The challenges facing jockeys, particularly female is that there was amongst the owners, bigger owners that are traditionally older and male, they don't possibly see a female jockey being quite as good as a male. Not withstand the fact that someone who has worked in the industry, we know you can't make a racehorse go faster than god allowed it to, than Allah or whoever you pray to. If that horses natural top speed is 35 miles an hour, it's 35 miles an hour. Doesn't matter who's on board, or if god comes out of heaven himself, it's 35 mile an hour. What a jockey can do is get it to its maximum speed, and sustain it for as long as possible. which is why your Keiran Fallon's of this world are so good. Riding racehorses is about balance, technique and breathing, and that applies to the horse as much as the rider on top. It's not about strength, so you actually have better opportunities for females than males. They generally have softer hands, quite often more affinity. But historically they were held back by a prejudice mindset from a more elderly, quite often white but many Asian, very very rich men. They just didn't see it like that. Even now, confidentially, owners will give Hayley Turner a ride on pancake Tuesday, for no reason other than to tick that box. She wouldn't ever ride in a group one or a derby for them because they just think she's a female. Some of these owners form Saudi

TP Thomas Pill
Trainers didn't like unions challenging the way they do things
Upsetting the doxa of the field

TP Thomas Pill
example of those with capital attempting to perpetuate doxa

Reply

TP Thomas Pill
most conform to the doa of the field, in a hope to build their own capital

Reply

TP Thomas Pill
Habitus of owners tells them that females are not as good

Reply

TP Thomas Pill
actual skills required to make a horse go fast
not about strength, more about balance and tempo
women have better core skills than males

Reply

TP Thomas Pill
Prejudice views of rich owners
Habitus and doxa

Reply

Arabia though they were the best thing since sliced bread because they let women drive cars. If you've got those kinds of owners in the UK, what on earth makes anyone think they are likely to give a young female jockey an equal opportunity to a male?

If you move to staff it's different. They would employ a Martian, green as you like with one eye in the middle of their forehead, if they thought that male or female Martian could improve their horse a pound, and would turn up on time, and do a days work. There's very little prejudice in terms of employing people in the industry. The prejudice may come in when you're actually moving into elite sportsmanship levels. That's moving away, all the time, because we've seen your Bryony Frost's, and we've seen a lot... it's no coincidence that the more successful female jockeys are on the National Hunt scene, which actually requires more physicality than the jockeys on the flat. There's a very easy answer, the people who own National Hunt horses are not the super-rich elderly white men. They might be a little bit older, but they're much more family orientated. They wouldn't have the same historic concepts of prejudice. It's better on a working basis, do be careful to separate out jockeys from staff. And do be careful to separate out apprentices and conditionals. Until they've ridden 100 plus winners they're not a professional jockey, and they would be under my remit. They would still be classed as racing staff, or stable staff. So they're employed position probably doesn't have the same level of prejudices than the equivalent sportsperson position has. So in a really bizarre twist they can be treated as equal from 6am in the morning until half-eleven or whenever that morning finished, and then go to the racecourse, and suddenly they're treated as unequal. The easiest example of that is to look at what we call the weighing room, the changing rooms. Some of these places are now pretty good for the male jockeys. Female jockeys, I'm not kidding you on some racecourses it is an unused broom cupboard, and I'm not exaggerating. Because it's like "ah Jesus Christ, have we got three girls coming today? Where do we put them?". Two years ago someone showed me, it's a bit embarrassing really. He opened the doors to a draughty closet. I said "what the fuck would this be for?" he said "storage" I said "do you think that's OK?" and he was quite off. He said "well it's the best we can do, we haven't got money, we can't just build another place." I said "to be honest with you mate, you shouldn't have a licence to operate then." He was horrified. He justified that level of failure and that utter disadvantaged position that a female might find themselves in, based on the fact that he didn't have enough money. Don't operate then.

TP: That's really interesting actually. The opinion I've picked up just from speaking to other people is that things like that example you just gave is an example of racing giving a bit of a disservice to some very able, very capable young females who are trying to make their way in the industry, which historically has just not been designed for them. would you say that's fair?

C: Oh, 100 percent. You've put it lot more mildly then I'd probably put it!

TP: Yeah, absolutely. You mentioned the difference between flat and National Hunt racing there. Thinking probably more about flat racing here, what in your opinion needs to change to get somewhere near a level playing field?

C: It depends whether you're looking for an agent for change, or what change would look like. The agent for change is opportunity. And the change itself is a female riding multiple group one winners. Hollie Doyle's done superb now, and she's probably by herself, both had the



TP Thomas Pill

the prejudice does not affect those who are staff, just those who want to become jockeys

Reply

TP Thomas Pill

Difference between NH and flat

Reply

TP Thomas Pill

different for apprentices and conditional than it is for professionals

Reply

TP Thomas Pill

working conditions on the racecourse

Reply

TP Thomas Pill

what needs to change all thats needed is opportunities positive discrimination weight allowance

Reply

agent for change and had the opportunity to do that, and suddenly everyone says "oh yeah." But I'll tell you now, Godolphin, and Hamdam al Maktoum are not putting her up, they're not signing her up as their stable jockey. That's probably where you are on the flat. They just need better...I wouldn't say better, they need equal opportunities. About 18 months ago there was a lot of talk in the racing industry at BHA level about giving about giving female jockeys an additional allowance. Whether you were professional or not, you would ride that horse with less weight than the handicapper allocated it in every race, and some said every race up to group one level, some said up to group 3. The concept was based on the fact that you were female you carried less weight, and that was an incentive for trainers and owners to use you. Within trade union circles, that's known as positive discrimination. Which is the biggest crock of shit you'll ever hear. Discrimination is discrimination. Calling it positive is just a way of justifying a form of discrimination. And a lot of female jockeys were also quite anti. They said "no, I don't want this based on the fact that I'm female, I want to be known as a jockey, not just a female jockey." That's a them that has come through quite a lot. Hollie Doyle doesn't want to be known as the best female jockey, she want to be the best jockey.

TP: I find that really interesting because the actual social theory that I'm going to apply to my project talks about something called symbolic violence which is essentially what you've just described to me. By allocating females a weight allowance, a bit like they do in Europe and other places around the world we essentially reinforce the opinions that they are not capable therefore they require a weight allowance. Whereas if we think they are just as capable, why on earth do they need 3 pounds, or whatever it may be? So that really interesting. In terms of the cultures in racing yards and the wider community, how would you define the cultures, the practices and opinions towards females within the yards themselves?

C: One word? Prehistoric. We tend to confuse what we in yards would call 'banter' with what in any other walk of life would be complete and utter discrimination and sexual harassment on a daily, hourly basis, and that hasn't improved greatly. It's so engrained in the industry. I can tell you now, I'll give you two examples, they're both male the two that jump to the fore of my mind. One colleague who's called Patrick, I think he's from, he might be bohemian. Patrick is as black as the ace of spades, and as such he's been known as 'black Pat' all his life, to this day. His name on the board isn't Patrick, its 'black Paddy'.

TP: Right, OK.

C: There's another one. This fella, he's a friend, he's called Shane. He worked for a trainer called Henry Cecil, and there was another Shane in the yard. So they called this fella, because he looked quite female, and he's got quite a delicate way of going about him, he's known as 'gay Shane', to this day. If you said Shane they'd go "gay Shane?" you'd go "no, just Shane, Shane [...]" "yeah that's what I said, gay Shane".

Jesus you know, really? There is something within racing that I term, I describe it as what I call the baked bean story. I will guarantee at some point today in a racing yard someone has gone in, they've had a look at the board, seen their name, seen their allocated lots, three or four. Somebody today has gone in and they've tacked up their second lot, instead of their first lot, just because they're rushing. They've just got mixed up, somewhere in the country that has happened today. They've pulled up, the trainer or the head man or woman has seen they're



TP

Thomas Pill

attitudes and cultures within yards
Doxa

...

Reply



TP

Thomas Pill

working conditions
harsh workplace
misplaced banter
doxa within the field

...

Reply

on the wrong horse. What happens? "Oh, you fucking idiot, Jesus Christ, can you not fucking read? What is wrong with you?" they'll go "Jesus I gotta go back, put the horse away, take the tack off it." Meanwhile, the senior person is still going "right, if we're twenty minutes late today lads, don't blame me. It's his fault, fucking can't read the board". Your man comes out on the right horse, he stressed out. Straight away the abuse starts again, and on we go. Now, let's go to a supermarket, they're called replacement assistants, I know because I was one. This guy is stacking a shelf, and he's got Heinz baked beans here, and the own brand here. The store manager said we want the own brand at eye level, so people see them, and he wants the Heinz, just down there. It's just a scientific thing they use in supermarkets. No this fella has gone and done it the wrong way round hasn't he? A bit like the lad that mixed up the horses. I gave this talk to the BRS (British Racing School) and I said "could you imagine walking down the aisle in your local supermarket, and seeing the manager go 'oh you fucking idiot, you've got them the wrong way around. Jesus fucking Christ, we're gonna be late now. Change the two of them over' and give loads of abuse". The lads, because they're quite a robust group of people would probably go "woah steady on a bit mate". So what they perceive as being acceptable in the workplace they equally would perceive as being unacceptable as soon as they move out of that workplace.

We have a mentality that is either switched on or switched off, in the workplace. And then we switch it on or off, when we move out. What we understand as being prejudice, unacceptable, discriminatory behaviour, we feel or we act like it's OK because we're in a racing yard or we're at work. When we move into wider society we know, and we don't act that way at all. It's the strangest thing ever, and that's coming from someone who's worked in racing yards for thirty plus years. I would say "don't speak to someone like that" and they would go "what's wrong with you?". I wrote a column once, in our newsletter that basically said 'it's not banter, it's called sexual harassment'. And the reaction was 'fuck sake Charlie, don't be so serious'.

TP: Yeah, I absolutely understand where you're coming from. Who in your opinion is responsible for making sure those cultures, practices, whatever we call them are a comfortable place to work in? Is it the trainers? The BHA? Yourself? Who is does the buck stop with?

GM: It has to come from the top, so its got to start with the trainer, and it's got to be enforced by the BHA, and neither do so. If I have conversation with a trainer where I have a member who will actually say "I'm sick of being treated like this" you natural move is to raise a grievance, either officially or unofficially. You will get the same response "ahh Jesus, she's just being awkward again." And the NTF do nothing other than lip service to say you know 'we shouldn't behave like this'. We've got a policy called dignity in the workplace that touches upon it, covers all that it has to cover, but its lip service. And as for the BHA, they do not want to rock the boat. They would put it back the NTF, and to NARS but you know we can't get individuals to change their behaviour. We can try and educate, but we don't even have CPD within the industry. You train or you coach kids at the lowest level, under 6's or under 10's at football, or a rugby club, you have to undergo continuous CPD. But you can be a racehorse trainer and employ 200 people: nothing. Once you've eaten enough corn flakes, and you've saved enough tokens, that's you with a licence. It's never under review, its fine.



TP

Thomas Pill
industry reluctant to change

...

Reply



TP

Thomas Pill
who is at fault?
lip service from the NTF
don't want to upset the doxa
no CPD for trainers at all

...

Reply

TP: OK. In terms of staff raising grievances and issues, do you think there are things that don't get raised simply because those involved don't think it's worth it? Because there is just lip service paid?

C: absolutely. There's an element of fear about that, but that's not unique to racing, that's pretty much anywhere. It's a two sided street, that one. When they do raise it, it has the desired effect on the employer, because it's so unusual. Most try do deal with it 'in house' shall we say, then you have the added issue of in the UK if you don't have two years of continuous service, then you basically don't have any employment rights. You can be sacked one year, 51 and a half weeks into your employment, they do not have to give a reason. You have no right to an employment tribunal. You are gone, end of story, good luck and thank you. No come back. So it's quite a big step to raise a grievance, if you haven't got that two years of service. We're a transient employer, not many have... probably 50% don't have two years continuous service. Which mean 30,000 do, but 30,000 don't. so it has the desired effect, but there is a reluctance to 'rock the boat' or raise what may be legitimate grievances.

TP: OK, thank you. What are the most common concerns or issues that you hear about, with regards to the gender in yards? Whether that be discrimination or anything else.

C: without a doubt maternity, it's seen as a viable reason for dismissal. I've had that in emails form employers "well she was pregnant", like are you serious? You do get it. We also have something in the industry known as pool money. That's a quarterly bonus, 5% of any winner trained by your yard goes to the staff working in the yard, and that is distributed according to that yards rules. When you've got a female on maternity leave, quite often they're left off the pool money list. And when you ask why, it's the same old answer. "she wasn't here", "well why wasn't she there?", "well, she's had a baby, she's on maternity leave and that's the reason she's not on the pool money list." I mean, you can't get any more straightforward discrimination. When you point it out, they're still horrified, and they think you're an arsehole. "well, she hasn't been here!", they don't like it. They actually turn round to the other staff and go "blame that Charlie, it's his fault", like I've done something wrong. That is fairly consistent. Outside of that there's not so much. Career progression is there for females as much as it is for males. There will be more females in senior positions going forward, because there are more females in the industry than there are males, going forward. The reason why you might not have as many of them in terms of ratios at the moment, is because it's actually very early on in the struggle. The head man at [...] is still there, thirty years on. But until he retires, it doesn't matter if you're male or female, that position is not open. So there's that historic element. They would have been males, they're in the position until they retire or die, there.

TP: OK. I just want to step away from yards and ask you a little bit about how you think the media, particularly industry media portrays female jockeys. Do you think it's a fair representation? Especially recently, over the last few years.

C: Yeah I'll use that phrase that I hate, positive discrimination. Because it's a good story, if Hayley Turner rides a group one winner, because it's not commonplace, not only have you got the coverage because it a group one race or Royal Ascot you've also got coverage because it's a female jockey. And the sport and the industry rejoices her. I myself, I've got a television



Thomas Pill

bad working conditions lead to people not submitting grievances is this symbolic violence?

Reply



Thomas Pill

working conditions for females maternity no pool money when they are on maternity Blame NARS

Reply



Thomas Pill

media coverage of racing positive discrimination don't cover the opportunities or lack thereof for women

Reply



in the corner of my office. When we're watching racing you know, the Grand National. I'm roaring for any female jockey going to win, because it looks great on our sport and our industry. There could be a female and a male jockey fighting out a finish, I'd probably prefer the female to win. I don't know either of them, particularly but its better kudos for our sport.

I think that the coverage is positive, but what they don't say very much is you know, why don't they get more opportunities? So they're covering the opportunities, they did run a piece a few years ago where they looked at the lack of opportunities at the big meetings. That goes back to my earlier point. Your Royal Ascot's, your Glorious Goodwood's, your big name yards that are supported by Arabian owners traditionally do not see females in the same light they see males.

TP: OK, thinking about some of the real popular role models we've gone at the moment, your Hollie Doyle's, Bryony Frost's, Rachael Blackmore's, those kinds of guys. How important do you think they are to aspiring females in the sport at the moment?

C: you couldn't price that importance, you cant buy it. It's quite literally priceless. They are now paving the way for others. Without them, other females you know would likely think this is not the sport for me, or you know, I'm not gonna get a chance because I'm a female. Looking at the wider picture, let's look at sky sports, anytime they're advertising stuff now. They're particularly keen on promoting female sports, particularly netball, because vitality have a tie-in with sky sports and they sponsor the netball league, so they have that there. But in the longer version of their ad, they have female jockeys. They're only snapshots, probably because sky sports cover a bit of racing as well. Even then, the mainstream media just seem to have this concept that racing, you know... on one hand they think we're all terribly cruel, and on the other hand they think we're all terribly elitist. We can't all be cruel and we're certainly not all rich, but that tends to be the concept that comes across. So mainstream media isn't as favourable to us. But when you touch upon the like of Rachael Blackmore and Hollie Doyle, for me there's an even bigger emphasis on promoting them. If you look at people outside of the industry that think our sport is cruel, and you show them Hollie Doyle. You say "OK, you think this person, all 4'9 of it, all 8 stone, can beat this thing that's half a tonne up?" get real. It's fairly hard for someone to argue with that. Again, they just don't associate female's with physical violence. So when you've got people saying its brutal because we're whipping horses, I say 'if they were boxers they wouldn't be allowed in the same ring!' one's half a tonne, the other's eight stone, Jesus that's not fair. Put them on the horse and suddenly it's one of the cruelest things ever.

TP: I absolutely understand where you're coming from actually, I've had a few conversations recently with people about that exact topic, and I'm completely on board with what you're saying. I don't understand how you expect someone who is very very small in comparison to bully an animal, but there you go.

That's everything that I had to ask you, thanks very much. Just in terms of opportunities for female jockeys, is there anything you'd like to add before we finish?

C: No, I think it's going in the right direction, and its only going to get better, and it's good for the sport. I think it's good within the sport and outside of the sport in terms of promoting it, what we do and actually what we're about. We're probably in a lot of ways a little bit behind the curve, but in terms of employment within the yard we're both a very diverse employer, and fair in that respect. Apart from the complete misunderstanding of where the line needs to be drawn, what is sexual harassment and what is banter. In terms of opportunity for employment, there isn't an issue I can identify with. In terms of opportunity to succeed, particularly on the flat, that's where we need to do some more work.

TP: OK, fantastic, thank you very much.



TP

Thomas Pill

importance of rolemodels slowly changing the doxa, and the habitus of those within the field

Reply



TP

Thomas Pill

acknowledges things are improving

Reply