



How is this a job?

Understanding football player as a profession

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Aims



Understanding the development of football player as a profession



Mapping the workplace of footballers



Shedding light on contemporary issues

- a) Career transition
- b) Athletes' social security



Material

Evidence (reports and personal communication) from key stakeholders*

Scientific literature

Empirical data

Media sources

* FIFPRO (International Federation of Professional Footballers); JPY (Football Players' Association of Finland)



Understanding the development of football player as a profession



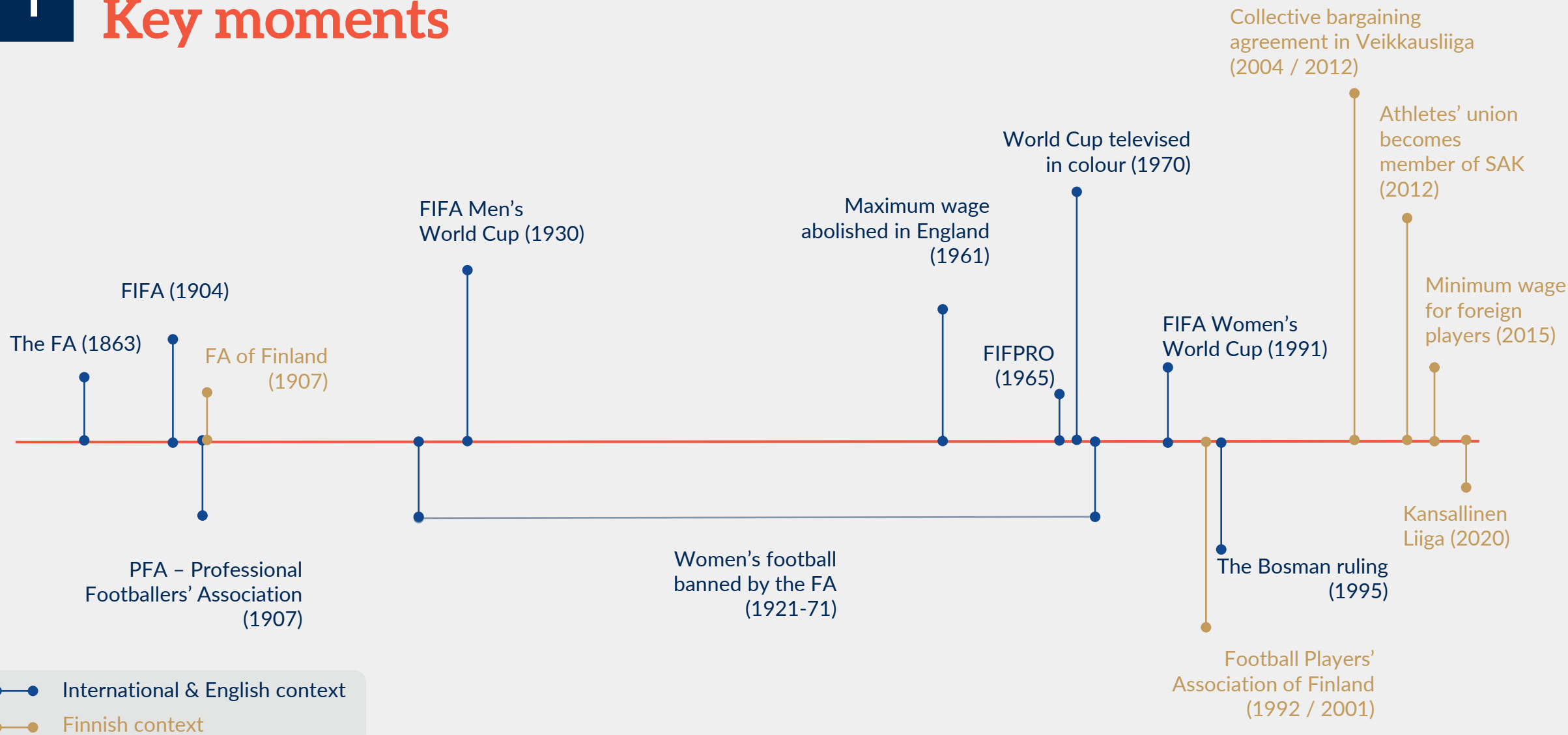
Background

- Football's participant base and its internationalisation created the prerequisites for players to become professional
- The timing and nature of professionalisation has varied from country to country
- Various conceptualisations/ definitions of 'professionalism' and 'professional player'
 - Income → Professional = Principal income from sports
 - Legitimacy → Overt vs covert professionalism
 - Use of time → Amateur – part-time (semi-professional) – full-time (professional)
- Amateurism and professionalism as a continuum



Football player as a profession

Key moments





Mapping the workplace of footballers



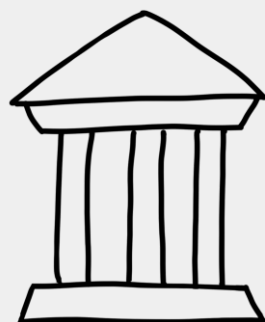
The world of work of players

Areas outlined by FIFPRO

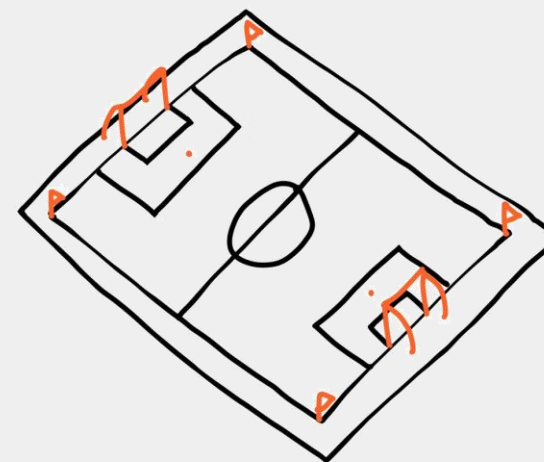
Player careers & conditions



Institutions of work & the game



Sustainable work in the football industry





Contemporary issues

Player career transition



A precarious occupation

The reality of the football career

“So you have a lot of free time off the pitch, than you would when you're in at the club. So it's more important to deal with what you're doing away. That's probably the biggest challenge for all football clubs now.”

“And it's great saying 'd'you know what? If you fill this grant form in, we'll pay £1500 towards a course for you'. **But how those boys know what they want to do? Because all they've ever known is football.** The proactive ones like me will know what they want to do. But the majority...”



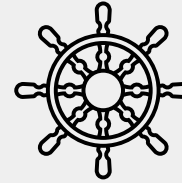
Circumstances impacting on the transition

How does the football industry shape players' career transition?



Strengths

Increasing awareness of player well-being



Weaknesses

(Lack of) control over and understanding of the transition process: Are players ready for various scenarios?



Opportunities

Learning opportunities that prepare for the transition and the life after football



Threats

Sudden transition probable
Limited pathways for transitioning out



Contemporary issues

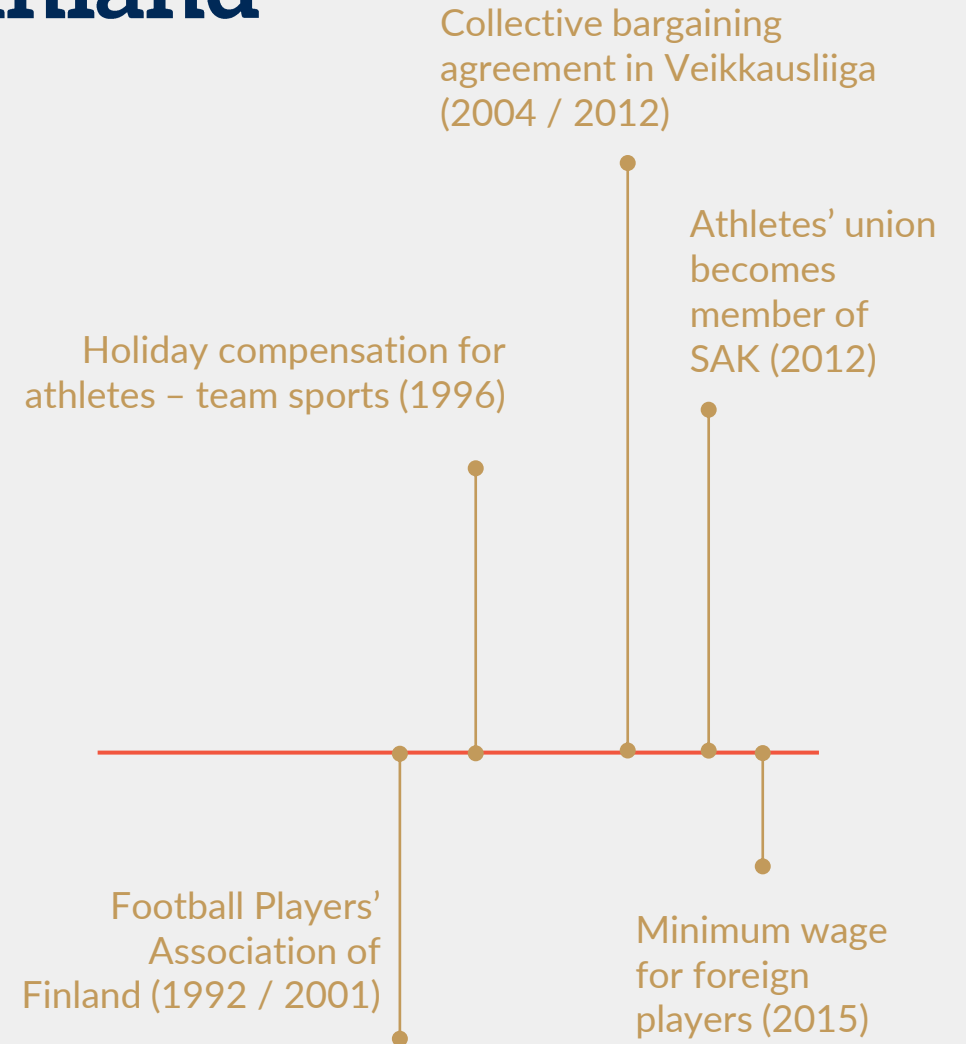
Athletes' social security



Athletes' social security in Finland

Issues highlighted during the pandemic

- Earnings-related unemployment allowance (ansiosidonnainen päiväraha)
- Adult education subsidy (aikuiskoulutustuki)
- Accrued pension (eläkekertymä)
- Insurances
- Employee vs Self-employed athlete





Concluding thoughts

- The concept of **professionalisation** keeps offering intriguing research topics in sports
- The establishment and the activities of **player unions** indicate the spread of football player as a profession
- Mapping **footballers' (increasingly complex) workplace** is crucial to understanding issues that affect their status and rights
- In Finland, the status of professional football players **is not on the same level** as that of 'ordinary' employees



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