



Dual career pathways of transnational athletes

Tatiana V. Ryba^{a,*}, Natalia B. Stambulova^b, Noora J. Ronkainen^c, Jens Bundgaard^d,
Harri Selänne^e

^a Institute of Sports Science and Clinical Biomechanics, University of Southern Denmark, Odense, Denmark

^b School of Social and Health Sciences, Halmstad University, Halmstad, Sweden

^c Department of Public Health, Section of Sport Science, Aarhus University, Aarhus, Denmark

^d Active Institute, Aarhus University, Aarhus, Denmark

^e LIKES – Research Center for Sport and Health Sciences, Jyväskylä, Finland

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Available online 18 June 2014

Keywords:

Student-athletes
Career development
Migration
Cultural transition
Dual career support
Lifestyle

ABSTRACT

Objectives: Transnationalism, as part of the globalization processes, has transformed the lifestyle and the course of athletes' careers. This presents previously unexplored challenges encountered by student-athletes in combining athletic and academic pursuits. In this article, we propose a conceptual framework for the taxonomy of transnational dual careers (DC).

Design and method: Narrative inquiry from the life story perspective was used to elicit and analyze career narratives of six transnational athletes (3 male and 3 female), generating about five interview hours per athlete. The developmental transition from secondary to higher education was chosen as a key transition to classify the DC pathways. Additional insights into DC mobilization across international borders were gleaned by employing the typologies of sport migrants developed in the sport labor migration research. **Results:** Three patterns of transnational DC were discerned from the narratives based on the direction of geographic mobility and the core migration motive underpinning the storyline. Within the present dataset, the taxonomies are: (1) Within EU mobility: the sport exile DC pathway; (2) Mobility to the U.S.A.: the sport mercenary DC pathway; and (3) Mobility to the U.S.A.: the nomadic cosmopolitan DC pathway.

Conclusions: The identified transnational DC paths are not exhaustive, and highlight possibilities of individual development, unfolding through the matrices of social structures in a given location. Further research with a diverse set of transnational athletes is needed to test and expand the proposed taxonomy.

© 2014 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

In today's globalized world, the transnational migration of athletes has been increasing in a variety of sporting contexts, becoming a significant aspect of athletes' lives (Maguire & Falcous, 2011; Ronkainen, Harrison, & Ryba, 2014; Ryba, Haapanen, Mosek, & Ng, 2012; Stambulova & Ryba, 2013a). Ryba and Stambulova (2013) define transnational athletes as mobile subjects whose athletic and non-athletic development spans international borders. In this paper, we focus on mapping the dual career (DC) pathways of transnational athletes, considering how the sport-related transitions impact and overlap with non-sport-related transitions that are experienced concurrently in geographic mobility. Since the academic transition from secondary to higher education often coincides with the athletic transition from junior to senior sports, and

is therefore pivotal to successful development of both careers, we chose to categorize transnational DC pathways through this life transition.

The concept of DC refers to the challenge of combining a sporting career with studies or work, which remains a source of concern for most high-performance athletes. This issue has recently been acknowledged by the European Commission in an effort to promote sport development in a socially responsible manner (EU Guidelines on Dual Careers of Athletes, 2012). One section of the EU Guidelines deals with DC of transnational athletes calling for the "cooperation between national sport training centers and educational institutes from different Member States in order to support the development and availability of dual career policies for student-athletes from other Member States" (pp. 35–36).

The European, club-based sporting system, differs from the North American, school-based one, which better facilitates the dual careers of student-athletes through the institutional policies and

* Corresponding author.

E-mail address: sport_psych@hotmail.com (T.V. Ryba).

structural conditions. Previous research findings suggest that the unique nature of collegiate sport system in the U.S.A., where athletic scholarships are available to obtain a university degree while participating in sport at a high level, is very attractive for foreign student-athletes (e.g., Bale, 1991; Chepyator-Thomson, 2003; Love & Kim, 2011). Yet as Petitpas, Van Raalte, and Brewer (2013) recently summarized, a range of transitions occurring when student-athletes move away from home to participate in collegiate sport intersect and may create difficulties in athletes' lives. Petitpas et al. emphasized that intercollegiate athletes, who tend to devote much of their time and energy to sport, often display a high level of identity foreclosure, struggling to make career decisions and life choices reasonably and responsibly. Indeed, within the globalized culture of elite sport, athletes frequently prioritize athletic careers to the detriment of their academic achievements (e.g., Brandão & Vieira, 2013; Christensen & Sørensen, 2009; Cosh & Tully, 2014; Lally & Kerr, 2005; Ryan & Thorpe, 2013; Vuolle, 1978). Moreover, the research has shown that increased pressure associated with combining an academic and sporting career successfully, especially when a lack of DC support is available, may lead to athletes' premature retirement from elite sport (Aquilina, 2013; Wylleman & Reints, 2010).

This article is based on the data gathered for the research of transnational athletes' career development and transitions in the Nordic¹ countries. Participants in the reported study experienced DC alongside the transnational mobility; therefore, we were interested in exploring further this period of their development when educational, athletic and cultural transitions coincided. The overall project has been conceptualized within a cultural praxis of athletes' careers framework, recently articulated as a set of challenges for career researchers/practitioners to approach career theories, research, and assistance as cultural praxis (Stambulova & Ryba, 2013b). These specific conceptual and applied challenges include: (a) a merge of the holistic lifespan and holistic ecological perspectives in career research and assistance, (b) reflexive situatedness of career projects in relevant sociocultural contexts, (c) an idiosyncratic approach with specific attention to diversity in career patterns/trajectories, (d) an increased attention to transnationalism in contemporary sporting culture, (e) multicultural and transnational consulting, and (f) participatory action research implying collaboration between researchers, practitioners, and athlete-participants. This research is an attempt to meet some of these challenges by unearthing culturally specific meanings of main career concepts from the perspective of transnational athletes, which subsequently guided our interpretation of their career decisions and life choices.

Transnationalism, paths of development, and cultural transition

From theoretical and experiential perspectives, transnationalism refers to living everyday life across numerous physical and discursive borders (i.e., geographic, linguistic and socio-political), being simultaneously embedded in multiple cultural locations and social networks, and having a fluid mobile identity (Glick Schiller, Basch, & Szanton Blanc, 1992; Vertovec, 2001). The transmigrants' experiences of living in two or more worlds quite simultaneously highlight the fact that transnational engagement is not limited solely to public sphere activities. As Glick Schiller and Fouron (1999) emphasized, transnational activities include family members residing in more than one country, who maintain steady

relations with each other across borders providing economic, social and emotional support. Therefore, it is important to understand transnational athletes as agentic individuals, who make decisions and take actions "within a field of social relations that links together their country of origin and their country or countries of settlement" (Glick Schiller et al., 1992, p. ix).

Transnational DC pathways encompass several normative types of transitions: athletic, academic/vocational, psychological, social and cultural. Wylleman and Lavalley's (2004) holistic lifespan perspective emphasizes the importance of considering the interconnectedness of the variety of transitions in the broad context of athlete development in order to better anticipate transition outcomes. For the purpose of this study, developmental path is defined as "a process of transformation through participation in cultural practices" (Rogoff, 2002 as cited in Richardson, 2012, p. 90). Socialization experiences of young athletes are interlocked with everyday practices, which are inherently cultural, supplying youths with meanings for the "ways of knowing, striving, feeling, and acting with respect to [them]selves and others" (Bruner, 1994, p. 52). From the cultural developmental psychology perspective, individuals actively construct their life projects, but the possibilities for their career trajectories to take shape are intertwined with their situatedness in a particular socio-cultural landscape (which structural matrices can be both supportive and constraining of agency). As Richardson (2012) argues, there is a tendency in vocational career discourse to overemphasize personal choice, discounting the cultural forces that limit individual options. In a similar vein, Cosh and Tully (2014) recently raised questions about elite athletes' agency in decision-making about sporting and educational commitments, providing the accounts of student-athletes' discursive construction of time as an external barrier to integrating sport and education, which frequently resulted in sacrificing academic outcomes. Hence, we believe that athletes continuously make choices about how they spend their time and effort, but these choices are realized in interactions with such socializing agents as family and peers, as well as framed by social expectations and (sub)cultural norms of a certain group or society.

In the case of transnational athletes, whose athletic and non-athletic development unfolds in a fluid, shifting, and often culturally ambivalent social field beyond national borders, an increase in the complexity of transitions underpinning a career pathway must take place. While athletes' development admittedly encompasses the athletic, psychological, psychosocial and academic/vocational domains described in the Wylleman and Lavalley's (2004) model, central to understanding a transnational (career) development is the cultural transition against and alongside of which a range of simultaneous transitions takes place in DC mobilization of transnational athletes.

Building on Schlossberg's (1981) ideas about lifetime transitions in human development, Ryba (2013) conceptualized a cultural transition as a psychological process of conceptual transformation of meanings and reconstruction of subjectivity. The way people experience and interact with the world is fundamentally cultural (Bruner, 1990). Cultural transition opens a new realm of experience and understanding. The processes underlying the transition prompt shifts in psychological functioning (e.g., identity formation and decision-making), transforming individual subjectivity and position in social relations/networks. A number of vocational career researchers suggested that life transitions "really happen" only when narrated and given meaning (e.g., Peavy, 1998; Savickas, 2001). In other words, it is not objective events but the perceptual dyad of emotional and cognitive processes involved in the individual's construction of experience that changes the self. In line with this theoretical position, we propose that cultural transitions intensify transformative processes of the (relational) self by

¹ Denmark, Finland, Sweden, Iceland and Norway constitute a group of countries known as the Nordic countries.

creating possibilities for clarifying the meaning of the past, negotiating and re-writing meaning for the present, and gaining “more freedom with regard to one's destiny because of the [cultural] decoding” (Bujold, 2004, p. 473) that the narrative and access to alternative discourses make possible.

Typologies of sport migrants

We also found the typology of sport migrants (Love & Kim, 2011; Magee & Sugden, 2002; Maguire, 1999) useful in our analysis of transnational DC pathways. Most of present knowledge about motives and typologies of sport migrants was developed by sociologists researching the phenomenon of sport labor migration. It is therefore based almost exclusively on the lived experiences of professional athletes. The typology by Maguire (1999), developed through interviews with male footballers, basketball players, cricketers and rugby players, provided the substance for gaining a more nuanced understanding of push and pull factors that influence some players' decision to migrate. The original categories of mercenaries, settlers, nomadic cosmopolitans, pioneers and returnees were checked in a study of Magee and Sugden (2002), which focused on experiential dimensions of sport labor migration in English league football. Three of the Maguire's six classifications, specifically mercenaries, settlers and nomadic cosmopolitans, were also usefully employed in explaining professional footballers' motives for selling labor abroad. In addition, Magee and Sugden (2002) extended the typology to include the categories of ambitious, exile and expelled. Reflecting on his colleagues' and his own work in this area, Maguire (2004) observed that the ambition to play at a higher level is a theme that cuts across several categories as it is often stated in athletes' explanations for migrating.

Magee and Sugden (2002) extended typology was utilized in a study by Love and Kim (2011), which explored the motivations of migrant student-athletes to participate in U.S. collegiate sport. Taking into consideration that the lived realities of collegiate athletes differ from the English Premier League football players in Magee and Sugden's study, new layers of meaning were added to the categories of sport migrants. For example, Love and Kim described the ambitionist as someone not only motivated by playing at a high level, but also having an ambition to receive a university degree. Similarly, the category of exile was modified to someone “exiled from home country by the inability to play a sport at a high level while attending university full-time” (p. 98). Two other types relevant to our study are those of mercenary and nomadic cosmopolitan, defined respectively as one who migrates for reasons of gaining financial rewards and limiting economic risks; and exploring the world, experiencing various cultures and seeking new opportunities.

Based on our dataset of transnational athletes, we agree with Maguire's (2004) assertion that ambitious is not a separate category but a theme overlapping several categories. We further agree that the presented typologies represent lived experiences of migrants in different combinations and should not be viewed as “either mutually exclusive or set in stone” (p. 480). Most importantly, we do not treat the typologies as personality types, but rather as discursive resources providing meaning for the athletes to organize a dominant storyline of the life narrative.

Method

The purpose of this study was to map out the types of pathways that the participants had taken as they began to organize their life choices within a broader transnational field. Gleaning insights into the complex relationship between migration and individual paths of development was particularly important because athletes'

motives for and experiences of migration inevitably impacted and transformed their career pathways.

Participants and life story interviews

Out of 15 transnational athletes participating in this research, six athletes attempted to arrange DC across international borders. Since our focus was on the Nordic region, the participants had at least one migration to or from Finland, Norway, or Denmark during the career duration. Athletes were either professional or semi-professional in various sports. Three were male and three were female, their age varied from 25 to 36 (median age was 26) and all of them experienced the transition from secondary to higher education in association with various transnational mobilities, primarily due to the pursuit of an athletic career. To protect athletes' identities, we use pseudonyms and refer to revealed events relevant only to this paper.

In this study, interviews were conducted from the life story perspective (Atkinson, 1998), generating on average five-interview hours with each participant. In a series of three interview sessions (except for one participant, who was unavailable for the third interview), the athletes were invited to reflect on and share their career stories in a way that was meaningful to them. Vocational career researchers have acknowledged the benefit of adopting a narrative approach for studying career development, decision-making, and transitions. It has been argued that narrative provides a means for articulating goals and aspiration, and can be analyzed for understanding life patterns and the different ways in which people bring meaning to life transitions, and make career decisions (Cochran, 1990; McAdams, Josselson, & Lieblich, 2001; Savickas, 2001). Narrative methodology has also enabled sport psychology researchers to garner additional understandings of psychological processes in the athletic career development and transitions in elite sport (Carless & Douglas, 2009; Douglas & Carless, 2009).

The interviews were conducted in English, which was neither the interviewees' nor interviewers' mother tongue. Whilst this process of translingual English practice (Pennycook, 2008a) may have hindered our expressive ability (which we acknowledge in the limitation section), the interview context constituted the lived reality of most transnational migrants, who create a shared language from the semiotic resources available to them and negotiate cultural meanings on a daily basis. Furthermore, for some participants, the translingual interview opens the possibility to discover the ‘voice’ by offering discursive means, not available in certain language systems, to link the cognitive with the social (Canagarajah, 2013; Pennycook, 2008b).

A semi-structured interview guide was developed to provide a framework for inquiring into athletes' experiences, but it was mainly used as a supportive tool and the participants were encouraged to follow their own preferred order in telling their stories. Initially, all participants focused on sporting narratives weaving other aspects of their lives into the fabric of their life histories. Because narrative approaches provide “a bridge between the stories told by specific persons, and the dominant discourses and narratives within which we all collectively live our life” (McLeod, 2006, p. 207), we encouraged the athletes to recall early childhood experiences, memories of family and school, development of their careers in sport, memorable achievements, challenges in reconciling athletic and academic pursuits, difficult transitions and negotiations of how their lives fit in a particular cultural setting.

In the second interview, the interviewer showed a chronological timeline that was drawn based on the first interview and invited the athlete to elaborate further on the major events and themes that emerged during the first interview. In the third interview, focusing on athletes' current life situations, the interviewer asked

the participant to reflect on important changes in the past, ponder on what they would have done differently given an opportunity, and share future plans and aspirations. In addition, the participants were asked to clarify some details, inconsistencies and/or contradictions of the charted account of their life narrative.

The life narrative approach utilized in this study aimed at attaining a deep understanding of how the participants made sense of their lives within the transformative processes of cultural transitions. The rich evocative career stories elicited during in-depth interviews facilitated our understanding of how transnational athletes' developmental trajectories were unfolding taking shape within the given social structures. Moreover, this approach allowed us to glean insights into shifting meanings of education and sport, which fueled the DC pathways in participants' lives and track the cultural metanarratives that athletes invoked to articulate their decision-making processes.

Analysis

Analysis of interviews was an ongoing process of immersion into participants' life-worlds. After each interview session, the interviewer listened to the voice file and made notes of the central themes in the participant's narrative. Probing questions for the next interview were prepared based on this initial analysis. The interviews were transcribed verbatim during and shortly after the data collection. In our analysis, we focused both on the content (i.e., what is said and what is left out) and the form of the story (i.e., how it is said, what are the common narrative forms and structural and linguistic conventions in use) (Spector-Mersel, 2010). The first stage of the analysis was a thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), which aimed at discerning main themes in each participant's narrative. The transcripts were read several times by the first author and initial comments, codes and memos were written to record her first impressions and ideas. These inductive initial notes were then developed more systematically into theme titles and small phrases, and discussed with the research team. At this stage, psychological terminology, sport migrant typology and more abstract concepts were introduced and overlapping theme titles were combined. As the analysis progressed, tentative connections were sought across themes and small narrative segments in order to form clusters and theme categories. The thematic analysis was finalized by a table of themes and a small case report for each participant's experiences. We then proceeded to the narrative analysis of form, which is fundamentally different from other forms of qualitative analysis in treating the participant's story as a whole unit rather than codes and fragments (Riessman, 2008). This part of the analysis focused on the organization of the narrative and the core plot in an attempt to tease out the underlying structures that held the story together (Smith & Sparkes, 2005). At this stage of the analysis, we were also interested in discerning the cultural narrative resources that were in use in the construction of each personal story. The narratives and narrative segments were then compared in order to identify patterns across cases. In line with common principles in narrative analysis, we interpreted participants' stories as the interpretation of the meaning of the past events in the time of telling (Spector-Mersel, 2010), which is evolving and takes place in dialog with the researcher and the narrative resources available to the narrator (Frank, 2012). Finally, the findings were compared with existing literature on DC and career transitions, transnationalism, and sport labor migration.

Results

In this group of transnational athletes, three patterns of DC pathways became evident based on the direction of geographic

mobility during the key transition, and the foremost motive for migrating. In our description of the paths, we chose to highlight ways in which the athletes ascribed (shifting) meanings to their decision to migrate and, consequently, to different ways to pursue the DC. Focusing on DC mobilization at a university level, which was pivotal in organizing the pathway, we nevertheless locate this transition within each participant's life story. This approach allows us to track a range of possibilities for arranging career projects, as well as to glean insights into the impact of a cultural transition on athlete development. While the athletes we spoke to interpreted the decision-making processes concerning their careers as an individual endeavor, a set of structural and discursive realities was certainly at play in their life choices. We will come back to this point in our discussion.

Within EU mobility: the sport exile DC pathway

Anu (orienteer) and Viktor (sport dancer) left Estonia and Slovakia respectively for sport-related reasons. Both of them made the decision to migrate because there were not many options, in their view, to further develop as athletes in their home countries.

Telling her career story, Anu described how she left Estonia for Denmark as soon as the opportunity arose. She was a first year student at an Estonian university when she participated in a Junior World Orienteering Championship. Although she didn't perform as well as expected, she received an invitation from a Danish club to train with them and to work as an au-pair in Denmark. Anu "didn't see any point to be longer in Estonia" and migrated to Denmark within a month.

Similar to Anu, Viktor's decision was driven by the fact that "in Slovakia, there are not that many coaches ... almost none, so the couples have to travel to their coaches." He and his partner met their Danish-based coaches at a training camp in Slovakia. The female coach was Slovak, which facilitated the athletes' cross-border mobility. Afterward Viktor made regular visits to Denmark for training purposes, but didn't perceive his border crossings as exceptional because "a lot of couples practice abroad." While in high school, the dancing couple decided to relocate to Denmark for one year. They "arranged a study exchange" so that they both would be studying in high school. Viktor was clear about their motives as he stated, "We didn't come with an intention to study. We came with the intention to dance."

Viktor returned to Slovakia for the final year in high school, graduated and entered a distance learning undergraduate program in social sciences in a Slovak university. For about six months he was without a partner, traveling to various international competitions for try-outs. Then he found a partner from Denmark, "which was perfect" because he had lived in Denmark before and both dancers "had the same coaches." Viktor moved to Denmark "exclusively because of [his] partner." During the 9-month stay in Denmark (his partner decided to retire from dancing afterward), Viktor "was studying in Slovakia and practicing in Denmark," and also occasionally worked part-time at the business of his partner's mother.

Viktor was strategic in carving out his career track, stating that he "intentionally chose such a school where it would be okay" not to attend lectures and to have a reasonable flexibility in arranging exam dates. Now and then he would travel to Slovakia to sit the exams. Having completed three years at the university, he interrupted his studies "because there has always been something coming in the way." He was straightforward in revealing that he "always prioritized dance over university." Pondering on the meaning of a university education, Viktor realized that "school didn't mean anything to [him]" and finishing "wouldn't have helped [him] in any way" because he didn't intend to do anything else than

dancing. At the time of the interview, Viktor was dancing competitively, participated in commercial dance shows as a choreographer and dancer, coached, commuted regularly between Slovakia and Denmark as well as other countries for shows, competitions and training camps, and enjoyed his transnational life-style. His career path rendered meaning in the world of sport dance as Viktor asserted, “even if I stopped competing, I would stay in dance one way or the other.”

While Anu has crafted a different storyline to make her life choices intelligible, she shares with Viktor the pattern of DC mobilization. Anu's life has been driven by orienteering as she confessed, “you just live for the sport.” After her one-year au-pair contract ended, she resumed her studies and training in Estonia. However Anu was not happy with her club as she felt like “nobody cared.” Training hard with the Danes, who “knew what they wanted ... and had goals” accentuated for Anu that she “didn't have [goals], was just talented to run ... and wasn't thinking of becoming a top athlete.” After studying for one year at her home university, she returned to Denmark as an Erasmus exchange student, training with her Danish club. Explaining her career decisions, Anu stated:

I liked training with them. They were very nice people and they offered me everything there. I was one of the best runners [in the club], so it was nice to train. That's why I went so many times back to Denmark.

Anu returned to Estonia for her final year at the university to work on the Bachelor's project, graduating the following year. During that time period, Anu also trained every summer in Finland as a pro athlete. It was an “opportunity to train well in a difficult terrain to become better in orienteering technique.” Anu admitted that the Finnish coaches were experienced and knowledgeable, that she could concentrate solely on orienteering, and that moving to Finland was a turning point in her athletic career because “then [she] was doing it seriously.” Yet she found the sporting environment very stressful. In Anu's words:

The Finns, they take orienteering so seriously. That's the different thing from Denmark. In Denmark, it's fun, but it's also high level ... nobody is expecting you to win competitions all the time. But in Finland, it was like that—you should win.

Anu didn't like the pressure and high expectations associated with professional orienteering in Finland, and her performance suffered. She asserted that she was “actually quite happy when they kicked [her] out after three years.”

Anu had many fights with her family “because they didn't like [her] doing orienteering.” Their vision of her life was that she “graduate from university, go to work, get a family, kids, blah blah,” but Anu “still kept running.” At the time of the interview, Anu held two Bachelor degrees, migrated to a third country as a part-time au-pair accompanying the same Danish family she had worked for in Denmark and also held a part-time clerical position in the Estonian consulate. She trained on her own with a professional attitude and competed in major international competitions preparing for the Olympic Games. It was distressing for Anu to think about retiring from sport to a “normal” life in Estonian society; yet, she was convinced she had an array of possibilities from which to assemble her life.

Snapshot: the main organizing principle in these athletes' DC pathways appears to be pursuit of the athletic career through migration while arranging basic studies in and through the country of origin.

Mobility to the U.S.A

Evan (French Canadian), Stojan (Bulgarian), Daina and Heidi (both Finnish) moved to the U.S.A. with an ambition to participate in collegiate sports. A possibility to combine sport and education by receiving an athletic scholarship was stated as the main motivation for migrating. Nevertheless, there were differences in meanings linked to the athletes' experiences, which illuminated the underlying discursive structures that supported and held together the career storyline of each participant. Based on the narrated meanings, we identified two pathways in the transnational DC taxonomy: the sport mercenary and the nomadic cosmopolitan.

The sport mercenary DC pathway

Evan and Daina spoke about playing ice hockey and basketball, respectively, as the means to receive a free university education in the U.S. The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division I (D-I) universities were implicitly constructed as a springboard to professional sport.

Evan remembered how his parents “always pushed education ... even as I was growing up and they could see I had a good talent for hockey ... their goal was for me to be able to do both.” The importance of education was also highlighted in choosing university hockey in the U.S. over junior hockey in Canada, “which is a place you go to make it to the pros easier.” Evan's father emphasized “this incredible opportunity in the U.S. with scholarships,” where “you get to go to great schools for free and play hockey.” So from young age, Evan continued, “he pushed that on me ... to keep school and grades good.”

Similarly, Daina's recollection was of her parents stressing “free” education in the U.S. In Finland, Daina would have had a possibility of receiving higher education at no cost, but she “wanted to play college basketball ... and to know for [herself] whether [she] could play at that level.” There were many contradictions in Daina's story, which appeared to be reflective of different emphases in the messages she received from her parents regarding functions of sport and education in life.

Evan and Daina moved away from home at 16 to attend high school, in Ontario and California respectively, in order to be spotted by university scouts. “I went to English school for the first time,” Evan acknowledged, “and it was an adaptation, kind of like a preparation for university.” He played very well and received many offers from American universities. After visiting a couple of universities, he chose one not far from home. Evan felt like he had “to grow up,” living on his own, “plus going to school and hockey.” Yet, as he confessed, “those were four of the best years of my life, my young adult life.” Evan did not complete all the requirements for a degree in physical education, being “only six credits shy of [his] diploma as a teacher.” At the time of the interview, Evan was a successful professional athlete with transnational experiences of playing in the National Hockey League (NHL), Kontinental Hockey League (KHL) and several top hockey clubs in Europe. It was still his goal to finish the university.

Daina had dual citizenship and migrated to the U.S. to attend the last year of high school, staying with her extended family. “When basketball season started and they found out I could actually play,” Daina shared, “another player's mom brought up that some paperwork was missing ... so I couldn't play for half of the season.” Daina narrated a poignant story of transitioning to her new life in the U.S., which was compounded by her inability to play basketball after high school because she had not registered with NCAA eligibility center. So she played for two years at a junior college before transferring to a D-I university on the athletic scholarship. She had several offers and visited various teams, choosing the university located farthest from her relatives' residence.

Daina repeated few times during the interview, “I’ve always known that I can’t play forever. So then, basketball was never that serious to me.” However, during her university years, she didn’t know what she wanted to study either. She was taking “random classes ... from interior design to math to chemistry.” “That’s why,” Daina continued, “I graduated with general studies because I didn’t know what I wanted to do.” Moreover, she felt that her coach was more interested in winning than improving his players, and that he didn’t teach Daina anything new. She became more interested in “other things, like everything outside of classroom and basketball.” Her grades suffered and she had to sit out one year before she could play again. Daina credited the NCAA policies for student-athletes, which facilitated her motivation to graduate: “I think the actual good thing about the university system in the States is that you have to have a certain GPA to be eligible to play.”

Although Daina’s key motive for transnational migration appeared to be her aspiration to play college basketball, when she was in the U.S.A. “it [basketball] wasn’t fun anymore.” Her mantra became “play well, get a scholarship, get a free education.” She settled for “the bare minimum” as she asserted, “it really didn’t matter what degree I got when I graduated.” At the time of the interview, Daina was combining graduate studies and basketball in Finland. She was considering turning professional and playing for a European club after obtaining her Master’s degree.

Snapshot: the American sport system, which provides an opportunity to receive education while participating in sport at a high level, serves as the main organizing principle in these athletes’ DC pathways. In addition, financial benefits associated with NCAA D-I universities and implicit opportunities for the consequent professional athletic career were important incentives for Evan and Daina’s migration.

The nomadic cosmopolitan DC pathway

Growing up, Heidi (soccer player) and Stojan (basketball player) prioritized the development of their athletic careers over education. Yet they also recounted being good at sports and having fun, being open to new experiences, and utilizing sporting networks to excel in life. Both participants spoke about making important life choices independently from their parents, but with their implicit trust and support.

Heidi made a decision to apply for a sport high school when she was in seventh grade. To get into a sport high school in Finland, Heidi explained, “you need to be at the top level of the age group ... and then, you need to have a decent GPA.” Most high school student-athletes receive a letter from a company “saying that it gets athletes to the U.S.” So Heidi was thinking about playing college soccer in the U.S. already in high school, but didn’t know much about the system there except that “it’s very expensive to study in the U.S.”

In high school, Heidi “didn’t study much because it was very easy to pass the classes without studying.” “I was good at everything,” Heidi remembered, “but I really didn’t find anything that interesting.” Because Heidi didn’t know what occupation she wanted to pursue, she didn’t apply to any universities in Finland² after graduation. Instead she went to work for two years. Then one day another letter arrived from an intermediary recruiting company with an offer to send her to the U.S. for a small fee. Heidi confessed that for her, “it was very convenient ... to have some time to just take classes and decide what [she] wanted to study ... and at the same time, play soccer.”

Heidi was playing club soccer at the highest level in Finland since she was 15 and wanted to “develop as a player and just in general.” She was also coaching and “was curious to see something different ... really hoping for some good coaches.” Stating that playing soccer in the U.S. was her “biggest reason to go there,” Heidi also stressed being open-minded and wanting to get out of Finland and to try something new. Heidi recalled being very excited to go as she asserted, “It was what I wanted ... and I loved it from the moment I arrived—I loved the place, and the people, and everything.” She enjoyed both studies and soccer: in the second year, Heidi decided on her major and was content with her decision, and she also felt receiving appreciation as a player “hundred times more” than in Finland. Reflecting on the meaning of soccer for her, Heidi revealed:

There’s so much in soccer I enjoy ... I was just never about the success and you know, playing for the country ... it was just playing because it’s fun, and then when it’s not fun anymore, ... that’s it.

At the time of the interview, Heidi was finishing her Master’s degree in a Finnish university and coaching a youth soccer team.

Stojan’s DC development was unfolding through the (sporting) transnational networks in Bulgaria, Denmark, Norway and the U.S.A. Basketball “took [him] to so many places,” transforming his lifestyle as Stojan began to enjoy “exploring the world.” At age 14 he was invited to join the Bulgarian national team, for which Stojan had played three years before he was seriously injured. “So three months I was in a plastic cast,” Stojan shared, “and was like—what should I do now?”

At age 17, he “had the opportunity to come to Denmark as an exchange student and also play.” Because of the language barrier, Stojan “couldn’t take all the classes” and therefore “continued being a private student in Bulgaria.” At that time, he didn’t really speak English either, which made his relocation “boring and frustrating.” Stojan admitted that “if it wasn’t for basketball, [he] wouldn’t have been able to stay.” Stojan wanted to go to college in the U.S.A., but that didn’t work out the year he had graduated from high school and he migrated to Norway to play basketball. His new coach had contacts in the U.S. and helped him to get recruited by an American university. Although Stojan had played for the Bulgarian national team since he was 14, that summer he “chose to go to Denmark and work rather than stay with the national team during the summer [after Norway] so [he] could afford to go to college in the U.S.” When asked to elaborate on his decision, Stojan stated:

I think it was more of a challenge for me. It was more interesting. I knew it was something I really wanted to do ... to have a Bachelor’s degree from the States, so I wanted to invest my time in that rather than playing with the national team. It was a choice ... my ticket was 2000 USD, and that was a lot of money just for a plane ticket. So I wanted to work and make this money.

Stojan was astutely aware of elite sports’ harsh realities, such as career ending injuries, false hopes and power games. He was one of the first athletes “in [his] circles” who went playing abroad and had to rely on himself to manage his career and life. After college, Stojan returned through his basketball networks to play in Denmark. He also applied to a graduate business school and took his studies very seriously. He was firmly convinced that athletes need “to develop in different areas, in different ways” and to have balance in life. Admitting that he is ambitious and goal-oriented, he also asserted that he “like[s] to have fun achieving what [he] is achieving ... and to enjoy life.” Stojan’s motto was “take a chance and seize the opportunity,” and he was living it whole-heartedly. At the time of the interview, he was completing his Master’s degree and was looking

² In Finland, high school graduates have to decide on a specialization track before applying to a university, because entrance exams are contingent on the chosen specialization.

forward to the end of his basketball season in order “to get out of Denmark and travel a little ... just to see what’s around and be a little bit more aware of the world.”

Snapshot: like Evan and Daina, Heidi and Stojan wanted to combine university studies with elite sport in the U.S.A., yet these athletes’ career narratives were constructed around “new experiences” and “life opportunities” rather than “free education.” Heidi and Stojan emphasized a zest for exploring the world, expanding their life choices beyond national borders, and having fun in and outside their sport.

Discussion

This study stemmed from numerous research accounts about the challenges that athletes experience in athletic and non-athletic transitions, including educational and cultural transitions (e.g., [Alfermann, Stambulova, & Zemaityte, 2004](#); [Cecić Erpić, Wylleman, & Zupančič, 2004](#); [Pummell, Harwood, & Lavalley, 2008](#); [Ronkainen et al., 2014](#); [Ryba et al., 2012](#); [Stambulova, Franck, & Weibull, 2012](#)). Our main focus was on idiosyncratic dual career pathways in the group of transnational athletes—a previously unexamined population in DC research. To track how the interviewed athletes initiated and managed simultaneous and interactive cultural, sporting and educational transitions, we applied several principles of the cultural praxis of athletes’ careers ([Stambulova & Ryba, 2013b](#)). We approached athletes’ life stories from the holistic life span perspective addressing various aspects of their athletic, psychological, psychosocial and academic-vocational development ([Wylleman & Lavalley, 2004](#)), as well as the interconnections between these developmental layers. Athletes’ narratives also revealed the dynamic and constitutive nature of sociocultural and psychological processes in the course of their development, and how cultural transitions were implicated in shaping the DC paths. Therefore, in our analysis we embraced micro-social contexts (i.e., family and personal networks), but also considered macro-level organizations and relevant cultures in molding the transnational DC pathways. All stories were rich and different; yet there were also some shared features that allowed us to categorize the transnational athletes’ DC paths based on the direction of geographic mobility and the way meanings of migration were constructed in athletes’ narratives.

Linking our research findings to the sport labor migration literature offered some analytical insights into the patterns of transnational mobility of athletes in relation to life choices they have made, or felt they have been forced to make, to arrange their DC projects. In the results, we highlighted individual agency in the career decision-making. Nevertheless we consider DC paths as historically contingent *possibilities* of individual development shaped by matrices of social structures in a given cultural location. Within this dataset, structural conditions associated with transnational DC paths were in the domains of national sport organizations and support resources for athlete development; feasibility of a professional athletic career; national educational systems and DC support; availability of athletic scholarships; language prerequisite in various settings; bi-lateral or EU student exchange agreements; distance learning or flexibility in a course; and transnational networks. The athletes’ reasons for pursuing a certain DC path were underpinned by the aforementioned structural realities invoked in various combinations.

Confirming [Maguire’s \(2004\)](#) assertion that the ambition to play at a higher level is a recurrent reason for athletic migration, our participants also revealed the aspiration to participate in sport at a higher level—a condition that, except for Evan, was not readily available to them in their countries of origin. Heidi, for example, felt that she had reached the highest level in Finnish soccer at age 15.

She was not satisfied with coaching expertise in Finland and was eager to explore new avenues in the U.S.A. Anu believed that orienteering was not taken seriously in Estonia, and her training experiences in Denmark and Finland reinforced that belief. In a similar vein, Viktor stated that there were no coaches for international level dancers in Slovakia; therefore, he had to arrange his training in Denmark. It was also Daina and Stojan’s dream to experience high-performance basketball culture in the U.S. In line with [Love and Kim’s \(2011\)](#) findings, integration of sport and education supported by American system of collegiate sport was an additional incentive for Heidi, Daina, Stojan and Evan. Evan’s career narrative accentuated the latter point as although he could have had an early opportunity to turn professional in Canada, he chose to combine university education with elite sport participation in the U.S.A.

There appears to be a clear distinction in the DC paths based on sports for which athletic scholarships are available. While basketball, soccer and ice hockey are popular college sports in the U.S.A., sport dance and orienteering have stronger European roots with less or no possibilities for obtaining an athletic scholarship to integrate DC pursuits. Hence, Anu and Viktor mobilized their DC career projects through transnational networks and various student exchange programs within the EU. Anu was spotted by a Danish coach at the international competition and subsequently joined the leading orienteering club in Denmark. She could maintain her university studies through the Erasmus exchange program while training in Denmark. Viktor’s Danish coach was of Slovak origin and was invaluable in providing him with social support in a new cultural environment in addition to advancing his dancing skills. Stojan shares similar experiences as his transnational DC pathway began to unfold through a student exchange program, which allowed him to migrate from Bulgaria to Denmark in order to play basketball. The EU citizenship facilitated these athletes’ mobility and also gave them eligibility and access to funding to participate in educational programs at the EU level. Stojan was especially candid about utilizing transnational sporting networks for the advancement of his athletic and non-athletic careers.

Previous career research revealed that few elite athletes could rely on a system in place in their own country to allow them to be financially independent from their families as young adults ([Aquilina, 2013](#)). Our participants shared similar concerns as very few of them could make a living out of their sport or have sponsors to commit themselves to a DC path. Most athletes in our study had to negotiate both the opportunities and constraints within the transnational field and to balance sport, education and (part-time) work at different locale across borders.

Participants’ reflections about the use of the English and local languages in educational, sporting and everyday contexts gleaned additional insights into the ways transnational DC were taking shape. Since undergraduate studies are typically offered in a state language within the EU, Anu and Viktor based their university studies in the countries of origin. The athletes who migrated to the U.S.A., needed to have sufficient English language skills to be accepted by a university. In fact, all transnational athletes were motivated to learn English because of its widespread use in intercultural sporting environments. Moreover, courses for Erasmus exchange students and many graduate courses are taught in English in many European universities, and this positions the English language as the means of advancing professional development and social mobility. Stojan and Viktor, for example, stated that although Denmark could be considered their second home, they were more concerned with upholding their transnational belonging than learning Danish towards assimilation.

The process of choosing and developing a career reflects not only individual interests and abilities, but also is intertwined with

existential meanings, social expectations and cultural demands (Lips-Wiersma, 2002; Richardson, 2012). The way male and female athletes talked about athletic careers indicated, for example, the extent that gendered narratives and beliefs had deeply permeated and affected their experiences and life choices. Female athletes felt pressured to adhere to the cultural script of a “normal life,” in which female athlete is a nuisance (Anu) and could not even envision having a professional athletic career due to a low status of sport and a lack of female role models (Heidi). Similarly, Daina's concerns were whether she would have a male partner supportive of her professional basketball career and her own desire to start a family, which was perceived as the end of her athletic career.

Our narrative analysis further revealed how family discourse practices around sport and education were implicated in career behaviors of the interviewed athletes. Most families attempted to instill educational values in their children, which was expressed through praising their school achievements, expecting good grades, at times questioning their sport commitments and paying for academic tutors. In line with previous research (e.g., Christensen & Sørensen, 2009; Douglas & Carless, 2009; Wylleman, De Knop, Verdet, & CeciĆ Erpić, 2006), our research findings consolidate the observations about the importance of family members, as early socializing agents, in supporting successful integration of both athletic and academic careers. As Stojan attested, when he had migrated to Denmark as a high-school student to play basketball, he was well aware that he could not succeed academically there because of his poor English and no Danish language skills at that time. Hence, he had Bulgarian tutors to help him cover a high school curriculum independently and prepare for graduation exams in Bulgaria. The account of Stojan and other athletes participating in this study suggest that although sport is often the prioritized aspect of athletes' lives, many athletes agree that they need to have both careers to succeed in sport and life.

The interviewees articulated that while they dedicated a significant amount of time to sports, other aspects of their lives were equally important. Daina became tearful when she spoke about missing seeing her siblings growing up when she was in the U.S.A. Evan emphasized the importance of quality family time in his life as it helped him to maintain a perspective and be a better hockey player. Stojan also actively resisted the dominant narrative that elite athletes have to dedicate all of their time exclusively to sport in order to be successful as he sought opportunities to advance his education and develop a business career.

All of the athletes voiced a belief that their transnational belonging gained them access to alternative meanings that had implications for how they planned and managed their DC and post-athletic career. For example, Heidi whose body type was not of a typical soccer player appreciated in Finland, but who excelled in technical and tactical skills, was rewarded with gratifying experiences playing for a Brazilian coach in the U.S.A. Upon return to Finland, she was committed to coaching youth players in order to raise the level of female soccer in the country. Viktor also realized after having a chance to dance in an Australian TV show and tour commercially in China, that he is more interested in devoting himself to competitive dancing. Consequently he began to view his competitive experiences as the ‘university’ years in dancing preparing him for a coaching and judging career in sport dance.

To briefly summarize, by means of narrative inquiry, we explicated the ways agentic individuals navigated social structures and cultural expectations in bringing authenticity and meaning to their life through the DC pursuit. This study offers a number of analytical perspectives that can provide bases for future DC research with transnational athletes.

Limitations and future perspectives

The proposed taxonomy is based on six life stories and is by no means exhaustive. Further research with a larger and more diverse set of transnational athletes is needed to test and expand the conceptualized taxonomy. The use of the English language as the main means of data collection might also have had implications for how meanings were communicated and interpreted. The issue of language in transnational research is complex and needs to be carefully thought through in future work. Both quantitative and qualitative approaches are encouraged to verify the identified pathways as well as to add a rich contextual depth to the investigated phenomenon. Future studies should also examine the ways in which gendered and sport specific meanings shape transnational DC pathways.

Practical implications

The findings of this research demonstrate a lack of professional DC and cultural adaptation support available for student-athletes transitioning abroad. Our cross-paths analysis of the identified DC taxonomies gathered three insights, which have practical implications for DC support. The first one deals with an organizing principle of transnational DC, i.e., whether a pathway unfolded within an established structure or was self-organized. Athletes, who migrated to the U.S.A., entered the organized DC programs conducive to integration of sport and studies. Athletes, who migrated within the EU, had to arrange their DC projects themselves, which required seeking various solutions in the countries of origin and settlement in order to sustain both pursuits. The second insight contrasts structural incentives and demands to find an optimal balance between sport and studies (e.g., in American collegiate sport system) and a lack of organizational incentives in self-organized DC. The third brings attention to whether or not career support services to manage transnational DC are available for student-athletes. While American universities usually have career consultants for student-athletes, student-athletes' mobility in Europe has not been yet structurally supported until recently.³

Therefore, results of this study strongly support the EU Commission's advocacy, expressed in the [EU guidelines on dual careers of athletes \(2012\)](#), to develop the so-called European dimension of DC, including “dual career policies,” “dual career mobility networks,” “shared curricula and educational programs for elite sportspersons,” and “a European quality framework for dual career services” (p. 36). Importance of these measures is visible through the narratives of Anu and Viktor, whose DC within the EU were self-arranged.

As articulated in a cultural praxis of athletes' careers framework, participatory action research is beneficial for integrating theory, research, and career assistance programs. Hence, career research with transnational athletes should be supplemented by transnational networks of culturally competent consultants to help athletes with choices around DC paths, different types of mobility, support structures, as well as to assist with issues of adaptation, and to make timely interventions, if necessary. Intervention case studies aimed at developing content and organizational frameworks for transnational DC support services would be an excellent beginning in furthering praxis.

³ Erasmus+ is a new EU program for education, training, youth and sport, which started in 2014 and includes sport for the first time. It is not yet comparable to the one in the U.S.A.

Conclusions

Acknowledging the growing numbers of student-athletes “on the move,” this research adds a timely contribution to informing DC research and assistance. While the literature on challenges and experiences of athletes in combining an athletic and academic career has been developing, there is a relative research lacuna with regard to athletes’ DC mobilization across international borders. By taking an interdisciplinary approach, we shared the patterns of transnational mobility of athletes as related to the motives that drove and sustained their DC paths. Our findings provide distinctive insights into transnational DC development. First, we emphasized the personal existential meanings that athletes assign to their life projects; and how these meanings seep in their motives for migration to produce different types of DC pathways. Second, our narrative analysis shed some light on how structural and discursive conditions in specific locations impacted and mediated athletes’ decisions and career behaviors. Third, athletes’ transformative experiences attributed to living in new cultures and learning about different world-views, highlighted the importance of cultural practices in molding young people’s development. This study illuminates the necessity for career researchers and consultants to be attentive to the ways that multiple and interconnected transitions, described in Wylleman and Lavalley’s (2004) lifespan model, are taking place in specific contexts. Finally, certain career transitions of transnational student-athletes (e.g., in sporting or educational domains) occur alongside a cultural transition. Therefore, career professionals should consider cultural transition as the basis for formulating a better understanding of athletes’ experiences in a transnational context.

Acknowledgments

This research was funded by the Danish Ministry of Culture (TKIF2011-021).

References

- Alfermann, D., Stambulova, N., & Zemaityte, A. (2004). Reactions to sports career termination: a cross-national comparison of German, Lithuanian, and Russian athletes. *Psychology of Sport & Exercise*, 5(1), 61–75.
- Aquilina, D. (2013). A study of the relationship between elite athletes’ educational development and sporting performance. *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 30(4), 374–392.
- Atkinson, R. (1998). *The life story interview*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Bale, J. (1991). *The brawn drain: Foreign student-athletes in American universities*. Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press.
- Brandão, M. R. F., & Vieira, L. F. (2013). Athletes’ careers in Brazil: Research and application in the land of *ginga*. In N. Stambulova, & T. V. Ryba (Eds.), *Athletes’ careers across cultures* (pp. 43–52). London: Routledge.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101.
- Bruner, J. S. (1990). *Acts of meaning*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Bruner, J. S. (1994). The “remembered” self. In U. Neisser, & R. Fivush (Eds.), *The remembering self: Construction and accuracy in the self-narrative* (pp. 41–54). New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Bujold, C. (2004). Constructing career through narrative. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 64, 470–484.
- Canagarajah, S. (2013). *Translingual practice: Global Englishes and cosmopolitan relations*. Routledge.
- Carless, D., & Douglas, K. (2009). ‘We Haven’t got a seat on the bus for you’ or ‘all the seats are mine’: narratives and career transition in professional golf. *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health*, 1(1), 51–66.
- Cecić Erpić, S., Wylleman, P., & Zupancić, M. (2004). The effect of athletic and non-athletic factors on the sports career termination process. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, 5, 45–59.
- Chepyator-Thomson, J. R. (2003). Kenyan scholar-runners in the United States: their thirst for education and intercollegiate experiences. *Avante*, 9, 31–39.
- Christensen, M. K., & Sørensen, J. K. (2009). Sport or school? Dreams and dilemmas for talented young Danish football players. *European Physical Education Review*, 15, 115–133.
- Cochran, L. (1990). Narrative as a paradigm for career research. In R. A. Young, & W. A. Borgen (Eds.), *Methodological approaches to the study of career* (pp. 71–86). New York: Praeger.
- Cosh, S., & Tully, P. J. (2014). “All I have to do is pass”: a discursive analysis of student athletes’ talk about prioritising sport to the detriment of education to overcome stressors encountered in combining elite sport and tertiary education. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, 15, 180–189.
- Douglas, K., & Carless, D. (2009). Abandoning the performance narrative: two women’s stories of transition from professional sport. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology*, 21(2), 213–230.
- EU guidelines on dual careers of athletes: Recommended policy actions in support of dual careers in high-performance sport. (2012). Retrieved 2014-02-15 from http://ec.europa.eu/sport/news/20130123-eu-guidelines-dualcareers_en.htm.
- Frank, A. W. (2012). Practicing dialogical narrative analysis. In J. A. Holstein, & J. F. Gubrium (Eds.), *Varieties of narrative analysis* (pp. 33–52). Los Angeles: Sage.
- Glick Schiller, N., Basch, L., & Szanton Blanc, C. (Eds.). (1992). *Toward a transnational perspective on migration*. New York: New York Academy of Sciences.
- Glick Schiller, N., & Fouron, G. E. (1999). Terrains of blood and nation: Haitian transnational social fields. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 22(2), 340–366.
- Lally, P. S., & Kerr, G. A. (2005). The career planning, athletic identity, and student role identity of intercollegiate student athletes. *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport*, 76(3), 275–285.
- Lips-Wiersma, M. (2002). The influence of spiritual meaning-making on career behavior. *Journal of Management Development*, 21(7), 497–520.
- Love, A., & Kim, S. (2011). Sport labor migration and collegiate sport in the United States: a typology of migrant athletes. *Journal of Issues in Intercollegiate Athletics*, 4, 90–104.
- Magee, J., & Sugden, J. (2002). “The world at their feet”: professional football and international labor migration. *Journal of Sport & Social Issues*, 26(4), 421–437.
- Maguire, J. (1999). *Global sport: Identities. Societies. Civilizations*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.
- Maguire, J. (2004). Sport labor migrations research revisited. *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*, 28, 477–482.
- Maguire, J., & Faloutsos, M. (Eds.). (2011). *Sport and migration: Borders, boundaries and crossings*. London and New York: Routledge.
- McAdams, D. P., Josselson, R., & Lieblich, A. (2001). Turns in the road: introduction to the volume. In D. P. McAdams, R. Josselson, & A. Lieblich (Eds.), *Turns in the road: Narrative studies of lives in transition* (pp. xv–xxi). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- McLeod, J. (2006). Narrative thinking and the emergence of postpsychological therapies. *Narrative Inquiry*, 16(1), 201–210.
- Peavy, R. V. (1998). *SocioDynamic counselling: A constructivist perspective*. Victoria, BC: Trafford.
- Pennycook, A. (2008a). Translingual English. *Australian Review of Applied Linguistics*, 31(3), 301–309.
- Pennycook, A. (2008b). English as a language always in translation. *European Journal of English Studies*, 12(1), 33–47.
- Petitpas, A. J., Van Raalte, J. L., & Brewer, B. W. (2013). Athletes’ careers in the United States: developmental programming for athletes in transition. In N. B. Stambulova, & T. V. Ryba (Eds.), *Athletes’ careers across cultures* (pp. 222–234). London: Routledge.
- Pummell, B., Harwood, C., & Lavalley, D. (2008). Jumping to the next level: a qualitative examination of within-career transition in adolescent event riders. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, 9, 427–447.
- Richardson, M. S. (2012). Critique of career discourse practices. In P. McIlveen, & D. E. Schultheiss (Eds.), *Social constructionism in vocational psychology and career development* (pp. 87–104). Papendrecht: Sense Publishers.
- Riessman, C. K. (2008). *Narrative methods for the human sciences*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Ronkainen, N. J., Harrison, M., & Ryba, T. V. (2014). Running, being and Beijing – an existential analysis. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 11(2), 189–210.
- Ryan, C., & Thorpe, H. (2013). Athletes’ careers in New Zealand (Aotearoa): the impact of the Graham Report and the carding system. In N. B. Stambulova, & T. V. Ryba (Eds.), *Athletes’ careers across cultures* (pp. 148–159). London: Routledge.
- Ryba, T. V. (2013). Understanding a cultural transition in athletes’ transnational careers. In *Proceedings of the 28th Annual Conference of the Association for Applied Sport Psychology*, New Orleans, LA. p. 117.
- Ryba, T. V., Haapanen, S., Mosek, S., & Ng, K. (2012). Towards a conceptual understanding of acute cultural adaptation: a preliminary examination of ACA in female swimming. *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health*, 4(1), 80–97.
- Ryba, T. V., & Stambulova, N. (2013). Turn to a culturally informed career research and assistance in sport psychology. In N. Stambulova, & T. V. Ryba (Eds.), *Athletes’ careers across cultures* (pp. 1–16). London: Routledge.
- Savickas, M. L. (2001). Toward a comprehensive theory of career development: dispositions, concerns, and narratives. In F. T. L. Leong, & A. Barak (Eds.), *Contemporary models in vocational psychology: A volume in honor of Samuel H. Osipow* (pp. 295–320). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Schlossberg, N. K. (1981). A model for analyzing human adaptation to transition. *The Counseling Psychologist*, 9(2), 2–18.
- Smith, B., & Sparkes, A. C. (2005). Men, sport, spinal cord injury, and narratives of hope. *Social Science & Medicine*, 61(5), 1095–1105.
- Spector-Mersel, G. (2010). Mechanisms of selection in claiming narrative identities: a model for interpreting narratives. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 17(2), 172–185.
- Stambulova, N., Franck, A., & Weibull, F. (2012). Assessment of the transition from junior to senior sports in Swedish athletes. *International Journal of Sport & Exercise Psychology*, 10(2), 1–17.

- Stambulova, N., & Ryba, T. V. (Eds.). (2013a). *Athletes' careers across cultures*. London: Routledge.
- Stambulova, N. B., & Ryba, T. V. (2013b). Setting the bar: towards cultural praxis of athletes' careers. In N. Stambulova, & T. V. Ryba (Eds.), *Athletes' careers across cultures* (pp. 235–254). London: Routledge.
- Vertovec, S. (2001). Transnationalism and identity. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 27(4), 573–582.
- Vuolle, P. (1978). Sport as life content of successful Finnish amateur athletes. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 13, 5–29.
- Wylleman, P., & Lavalée, D. (2004). A developmental perspective on transitions faced by athletes. In M. Weiss (Ed.), *Developmental sport and exercise psychology: A lifespan perspective* (pp. 507–527). Morgantown, WV: Fitness Information Technology.
- Wylleman, P., & Reints, A. (2010). A lifespan perspective on the career of talented and elite athletes: perspectives on high-intensity sports. *Scandinavian Journal of Medicine & Science in Sport*, 20(Suppl. 2), 88–94.
- Wylleman, P., De Knop, P., Verdet, M.-C., & Cecic-Erpic, S. (2006). Parenting and career transitions of elite athletes. In S. Jowett, & D. Lavalée (Eds.), *Social psychology of sport* (pp. 233–247). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.