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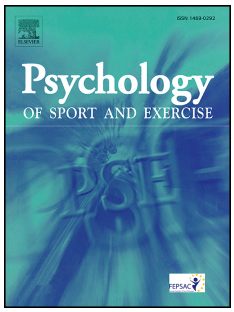
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"Sport has always been first for me" but "all my free time is spent doing homework": Dual career styles in late adolescence

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Abstract

Objectives: In adolescence, personally meaningful autobiographical memories begin to integrate into cultural narrative structures to form a life story. We examined how and to what extent adolescent Finnish athletes narrate and integrate significant life events in sport and education into their identities and future narratives in order to delineate the different styles of athletes' career construction.

Design: Longitudinal qualitative study.

Method: Ten female and eight male, elite junior athletes, aged 15-16 at baseline, participated in individual conversational interviews. The resulting interview data were analyzed using narrative analysis.

Results: Thirteen of 18 adolescent athletes drew primarily on the performance narrative plot to construct their life story and five of 18 athletes could not project into the future beyond their athletic selves. We identified three styles of athletes' career construction. Employing musical terminology as a metaphor, the contrapuntal style entwines sport and education as harmonically related life-themes; monophonic style draws on a prominent athletic life-theme; and dissonant style is underpinned by discord of sport and education. We did not detect direct associations between narrative types (performance, discovery and relational) and career construction styles. We show the dominant style development within an exemplary story.

Conclusion: Exploration of the future and possible selves are critical for developing meaningful (dis)continuity of a dual career pathway from adolescence to adulthood. We conclude that dual career discourse is gaining traction in directing young athletes' future thinking; however, a broader repertoire of exemplary success stories which allow athletes to imagine achieving excellence in diverse ways would enable them to channel action.

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"Sport has always been first for me" but "all my free time is spent doing homework": Dual career styles in late adolescence

One of the main challenges facing aspiring and elite athletes, aged 12-25, is to successfully combine education and high performance sport in a dual career pathway due to a significant overlap between normative developmental tasks, such as obtaining an education and secure a job, and athletic career development (see Figure 1). The structural support of athletes' dual careers in Finland is part of a European initiative to ensure that young people receive an education and/or vocational training alongside their sports training, thereby safeguarding their employability and adaptation to life after elite sport (EU Guidelines, 2012). Recent dual career literature, including the *Psychology of Sport and Exercise* special issue on athlete dual career development and transitions (Stambulova & Wylleman, eds., 2015), emphasizes the benefits of dual careers that may help athletes to better prepare for their retirement from sport (Aquilina, 2013; Torregrosa, Ramis, Pallarés, Azocar, & Selva, 2015), but also acknowledges the challenges and tensions that many athletes experience trying to excel in two anxiety laden and highly evaluated areas of life (see Christensen & Sørensen, 2009; Gustafsson, Hassmen, Kenttä, & Johansson, 2008; O'Neill, Allen, & Calder, 2013; Sorkkila, Aunola, & Ryba, 2017). Retrospective studies with mature and retired athletes in diverse sociocultural contexts revealed that the athletes on a dual career track reported more successful transition and adaptation to work life compared to those who focused exclusively on sport during their athletic careers (e.g., Aquilina, 2013; Torregrosa et al., 2015; Tsube & Feltz, 2015); thus, illustrating Stambulova and colleagues (2015, p. 5) assertion that "winning in the long run" "means to retire being prepared for it." Elaborating on the results of their two-wave longitudinal study of Swedish adolescent athletes' transition to elite sport schools, Stambulova et al. (2015) stated that in order to become winners in the long-run, student-athletes should first "win in the short-run"—that is, become well-adjusted

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in their present dual career programs to gain possible benefits in the future. Inability to adjust in a dual career program might lead to dropping out of sport or education. However, dual career theory and research are unclear about the processes that contribute to dual career construction in adolescence (short-run) that in turn may safeguard athletes' welfare in the future (long-run). Situating our study in the identified research problematic, we turn to developmental psychology for inspiration to formulate our research questions.

From the perspective of developmental theory, developing identity and future orientation are the main, intertwined tasks of adolescence (Erikson, 1968; Nurmi, 1991). It is also in late adolescence that young people begin to construe their lives in narrative terms as a means to connect remembered past, perceived present, and projected future in an internalized identity narrative that supports self-coherence and communal relatedness of a cultural member (McAdams, 1999). For narrative researchers, we are the stories we tell about ourselves and in the process of narrating our experiences, "we simultaneously create structure and meaning in our lives" (Fivush, 2010, p. 88). Recent cultural sport psychology research revealed how cultural narratives and discourse practices of elite sport shape psychological processes of athletic identity development by emphasizing and regulating the ways of being, feeling, and behaving as athletes (for a review, see Ronkainen, Kavoura, & Ryba, 2016). For example, Carless and Douglas (2013a, 2013b) employed narrative methodology to illuminate the embeddedness of young athletes in "familiar" stories that gave meaning to their sport experiences by validating certain interpretations of specific events. Drawing on their early work that delineated cultural narratives underlying identity stories of elite golfers (Douglas & Carless, 2006, 2009), the authors offered evidence of comparable processes among athletes in other sports and concluded that a performance narrative can still be considered the dominant narrative type while discovery and relational narratives are often trivialized and silenced within elite sport culture. Hence, individual differences in ways young athletes begin to story

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their lives may contribute to (dis)continuity of the dual career pathway as they transition from adolescence to young adulthood.

In his influential review of the development of future orientation, Nurmi (1991) emphasizes the importance of developmental environments in defining opportunities for developing persons to channel their future-oriented motivation, thinking, and behavior. Most of the developmental tasks of adolescence involve thinking about and planning for the future, especially with respect to education and work (Di Maggio, Ginevra, Nota, & Soresi, 2016; Nurmi, 1989; Nurmi, Seginer, & Poole, 1995). Developmental and vocational psychologists generally agree that imagining the future is vital for exploring career-related interests, making personal decisions, and committing to activities that will influence the course of adult life. Research with adolescents has shown that the timespan of their future thinking typically extends to their 20s and seldom beyond early 30s (Nurmi, 1991). However, studies with elite level student-athletes often report their difficulties to project into the future beyond the athletic selves raising concerns whether the narrative-discursive content of elite sport narrows down the field of possibilities in which athletes construct their life projects (e.g., Carless & Douglas, 2013a; Cosh & Tully, 2014; Lally & Kerr, 2005; Ronkainen & Ryba, 2017; Ryba, Ronkainen, & Selänne, 2015a). Alluding to a strong identification with the athlete role and subsequent difficulties to make vocational decisions and life choices, Navarro (2015) recently reported that while the majority of varsity athletes in her study considered obtaining an undergraduate degree to be important, their major choice did not align with their future career aspirations. While pressure to think about educational goals as a prerequisite of the more favorable vocational future begins at continuously earlier age in the Nordic countries (Christensen & Sørensen, 2009; Ryba, Aunola, Ronkainen, Selänne, & Kalaja, 2016), young people in most industrialized nations typically view secondary education as an inevitable part of youth rather than a critical context for exploring the way they are going to live their lives

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(Pekkarinen, 2012; Pless, 2014). It has been moreover argued that planning to attend a university after high school and constructing a career path are distinct aspects of career preparation (Xiao, Newman, & Chu, 2016). This seems to strike a chord with Navarro's (2015) and other research findings that although student-athletes embark on a dual career track, they tend to 'choose easy subjects' or university majors 'just to pass' and obtain a degree without meaningful engagement in the fields of their studies (see Cosh & Tully, 2014; Ryba, Stambulova, Ronkainen, Bundgaard, & Selänne, 2015b; Petitpas, Van Raalte, & Brewer, 2013). Indeed, vocational researchers have been increasingly advocating for early exposure to career exploration and life design counseling to enable students to construct meaning and make connections between subjects being taught in school and occupational opportunities available to them in the future (Di Maggio et al., 2016; Savickas et al., 2009).

In this paper, we assume that emergent competence to construct a life story in adolescence (Habermas & Bluck, 2000; McAdams, 1999) is closely linked to narrative construction of athletes' identities and future career paths. While recent narrative research into athletic identity elucidated the evolving connections between self and elite sport culture (see Carless & Douglas, 2009, 2013a; Ronkainen, Ryba, & Nesti, 2013), we know little about what youth athletes think about their future. To the best of our knowledge, there are only two prospective qualitative studies that explored how young talented athletes construct narratives of their imagined career paths. The interviewed Danish athletes, aged 15-19, were asked to tell tales from the future about their lives as elite athletes (Mortensen, Henriksen, & Stelter, 2013), and then themes derived from the aspiring athletes' imagined career stories were compared with the career accounts of elite level athletes (Henriksen & Mortensen, 2014). It was reported that talented young athletes envisioned their pathways in line with the normative script of athletic career development and underestimated relational contexts and interconnections between sport and other areas of life. Through a narrative approach to

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futuring (that is, imagining the future) these findings are insightful because they reveal the narrator's meaning making in the present (Sools, Tromp, & Mooren, 2015). With reference to Augustine, Crites (1971, p. 301) convincingly argues that in every moment of experience, "a present of things past" and "a present of things future" are inextricably joined in the "present of things present." In other words, while anticipatory stories are "very thin and vague" they are "not altogether formless" (Crites, 1971, p. 302), for future thinking also relies on "learning the culturally available temporal and evaluative frameworks for interpreting a life, including culturally canonical biographies, life scripts and master narratives" (Fivush, Habermas, Waters, & Zaman, 2011, p. 328).

Thinking of dual career construction as a temporal process, in which individual style is revealed through action (Crites, 1971), we suggest that adolescent athletes in this study, by virtue of their historical and sociocultural situatedness as upper secondary school students and elite junior athletes, develop inner story of experience that is already infused with cultural narrative structures and forms. Developmentally, however, they are at a critical time when they begin to integrate sequential autobiographical reasoning (such as starting school aged 6 and leaving home to attend elite sports school aged 15) into an interpretive framework of prevailing cultural storylines to develop an understanding of personal identity (Erikson, 1968; Fivush et al., 2011; Habermas & Bluck, 2000; McAdams, 1999). Given that athletes' dual career is a relatively recent academic and policy discourse in Europe, it is important to examine the relationship between cultural narratives of elite sport (performance, discovery, and relational narratives) and adolescent athletes' future orientation as a possible vantage point for understanding the developmental arc of dual career construction in the changing social world. In this research, we conceptualised dual career as a story that young people tell about their engagement at sport and school (see also Savickas, 2011) to examine three research questions: (a) How and to what extent do adolescent Finnish athletes narrate and

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integrate their autobiographical events in sport and education into identity narrative?, (b) How and to what extent are sport and education integrated in the adolescent athletes' projected future?, and (c) What does the relationship between one's narratives of the past and narratives of the future reveal about their dual career style?

Methodology and Methods

This article is based on two waves of interview data gathered for the ongoing Finnish Longitudinal Dual Career Study (Authors, 2016). The qualitative study was designed to follow a life course of aspiring athletes participating in the national talent development program, particularly examining subjective meanings of career turning points and life transitions in their developmental trajectories. To answer the stated research questions, we situate our research within the interpretive paradigm and draw on narrative inquiry to explore processes of dual career construction through stories of concrete events and happenings (Carless & Douglas, 2013; Smith & Sparkes, 2009) that have occurred and are also projected to occur in young peoples' lives. While narrative researchers tend to analyze personal stories as a way of retrospective meaning making (e.g., Busanich, McGannon, & Schinke, 2014), the role of narrative in creating and realizing meaning for the future has also been acknowledged (e.g., Bujold, 2004; Crites, 1971; Sools et al., 2015). For McAdams and McLean (2013, p. 233), "Through narrative identity, people convey to themselves and to others who they are now, how they came to be, and where they think their lives may be going in the future." As Crites (1971, p. 303) eloquently argues, memory is "the depth of its [embodied present] experience" while anticipation is "the trajectory of its [embodied present] action;" and when "the past remembered and the future anticipated but still undetermined" meet, the whole story "vibrates with the musicality of personal style." Through narrative methodology we hope to glean insights into how elite youth athletes develop a certain career construction style.

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The Finnish context

We culturally adapted a holistic athletic career model of Wylleman and colleagues (2013) to incorporate the specificities of Finnish society (see Figure 1). This model describes five layers of athletes' development – athletic, psychological, social, academic/vocational and financial – and predicts athletes' major normative transitions within the Finnish sporting, educational, and broader sociocultural contexts. In the Finnish educational system, after completing 9 years of compulsory education, students need to make a decision on whether to take another 3 years to complete their secondary education at upper secondary level (considered to be an academic track that prepares students to sit for the university entrance exam) or vocational high school (professional preparation), or enter the labor market. Participants for the present study pursued secondary education within the national talent development program that structurally enables the construction of a dual career pathway. Upper secondary sport schools (urheilulukiot in Finnish) collaborate with athletic clubs and sport federations to arrange morning practices for athletes, offer the possibility to extend a 3-year academic curriculum to 3.5 or 4 years, give some study credits for sport, and assist with dual career planning. Nevertheless, pursuing an academic track in Finland has been shown to be more challenging and stressful for adolescents than the comprehensive school or vocational track (Salmela-Aro, Kiuru, & Nurmi, 2008). This is possibly because the medium-skill well-paid jobs are rapidly disappearing (Pekkarinen, 2012) and Finnish youth is expected to earn a university degree.

Participants and procedures

The study participants were 18 (10 female) elite junior athletes, aged 15-16 at baseline, who were identified through Finnish Sport Academies under the auspices of National Olympic Committee. Ethical approval was obtained from the first author's university ethics committee before participant recruitment. All participants agreed to participate in a four-year

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project and gave written informed consent prior to the first interview conducted at the beginning of their freshman year in upper secondary school. The insights the longitudinal qualitative study has been providing into the lives of these young people serve as the backdrop for the study we present here (see also Carless & Douglass, 2013a).

The aim of the first interview was to get to know young people and to understand their experiences as student-athletes through their individual history of becoming athletes who had achieved international success at junior level. We used a conversational approach in the interview which began with a question, "Can you tell me your story of becoming an athlete?" The follow-up questions were based on the interviewee's responses. We also aimed at learning about their relational life-context, such as family, friends, and personal interests, as well as career aspirations and future plans (e.g., Let's take an overall glimpse of your future. What are biggest dreams and hopes?). The conversational approach was decisively used to supplement the 'big' story perspective with small stories-in-interaction to gain an analytic insight into processes of adolescent situated construction of who they are (Bamberg, 2006). The second interview was conducted six months later to follow up on their daily lives and also probe more into their futuring. To facilitate the exploration of the future during the interview, we asked the participants to create a visual representation of their dream day sometime in the future, which was subsequently used to elicit more nuanced descriptions of the dream day and also probe into the areas of life that were not included in their creative representations. In this study we do not analyze visual data, which are submitted elsewhere.

Due to a limited journal space and our intent to illustrate processes of career construction through stories of "the past remembered and the future anticipated but still undetermined" (Crites, 1971), we chose to explore the dominant dual career style within the story of Unelma (pseudonym), a 16-year-old track athlete, based on her two one-hour individual interviews. Unelma was interviewed by third author with whom she established a

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quick rapport, felt confident to engage in small-talk on everyday matters and to co-explore thoughts about her future. Unelma demonstrated a high level of engagement in meaning making within conversational interview contexts confessing that some past traumatic experiences made her "grow up faster as a human being." It has been observed by developmental researchers that depth of meaning-making is linked to greater exploration of identity (Fivush, 2010; McLean & Pratt, 2006) and attentive listening helps adolescents to 'figure out' who they are (McAdams & McLean, 2013). Consequently, in all the interviews, a low structured, conversational approach was used to gain a rich and holistic understanding of each athlete's experiences in specific biographical, historical, and cultural contexts (Atkinson, 1998).

Data analysis and interpretation

The interviews were recorded and transcribed for analysis. As a first step, the youth athletes' stories were read and re-read to become familiar with their content and to get an overall sense of how they are put together in a particular historical and sociocultural context. Guided by our first research question—that is, how and to what extent adolescent Finnish athletes narrate and integrate autobiographical events in sport and education into their identity narrative—the first author conducted a narrative analysis of structure to examine the types of cultural narrative the athletes drew on to organize their personal stories (Riessman, 2008; Smith & Sparkes, 2009). This allowed us to understand what type of story was guiding individual actions, feelings and behaviors, and the ways identities constructed within particular narratives may impact the athletes' possibilities of development in their current life situation. With respect to second research question—that is, how and to what extent sport and education are integrated in the adolescent athletes' projected future—a within-case thematic narrative analysis was conducted (Riessman, 2008; Smith & Sparkes, 2012) to identify themes of adolescents' future orientation (see Table 1 for participants' dominant narrative

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type and future orientation). Here, the story analyst focused on understanding the internal connections that provided meaning to personal experiences in the future by making links within the individual's broader story. This also allowed us to infer into personal style that adolescent athletes used to construct their dual career pathways. Additionally, in response to our third research question—that is, what the relationship between narratives of the past and narratives of the future reveals about adolescent athletes' dual career construction—a cross-case thematic analysis was conducted (Riessman, 2008). By comparing and contrasting the athletes' dual career accounts and their thoughts, hopes, and actions with respect to the future, we were able to delineate three career construction styles within this sample of elite junior athletes (see Table 2 for career construction styles' definitions and example quotes).

Given the space constraints of a journal article and responding to Carless and Douglass's (2013a) call to show psychological processes unfolding in elite sport culture rather than reporting static phenomena, we briefly overview our overall findings and focus on presenting and discussing the processes of dual career construction within the case of Unelma. Unelma's story could be regarded as the exemplar because albeit being unique in autobiographical details, it is not simply her personal production but derived from the fabric of society and culture (Smith & Sparkes, 2009). Unelma's personal narrative structure has been developing within the dominant performance narrative plot, but also elucidates how the younger generation of athletes in the Nordic countries tap into a dual career discourse to make meaning about themselves and their lives in the shifting socio-historical context.

Results and Discussion

Overview of the findings

We found that the vast majority (n = 13, 72%) of the participants' lives were passionately storied and experienced in ways that conform to what Douglas and Carless (2006) described as the performance narrative. Constructing their identities using the

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narrative resources of the performance plot, young athletes' stories revolved around winning or being the best, training hard, competing and achieving in the senior ranks. Five of 18 adolescent athletes drew primarily on the relational narrative when recounting and making sense of their experiences. According to Carless and Douglass (2013a), this narrative type is characterized by making life events meaningful through relationships (e.g., comradery with teammates, participating in sport with family members) rather than performance outcomes.

[Please insert Table 1 around here]

While at the time of this research, all 18 participants were integrating sport and education in their daily living, most of the adolescents considered school activities to be the inevitable part of youth, which consumed all their "free" time after sport, and five of them had difficulties to imagine themselves to be anything but professional athletes in the future. For Crites (1971, p. 291), "the formal quality of experience through time is inherently narrative" and "the style of action through time is inherently musical." Adopting these metaphors, we identified three composition styles that adolescent Finnish athletes in this sample used to construct their dual careers (see Table 2 for definitions and examples of career construction styles).

[Please insert Table 2 around here]

To avoid a conceptual confusion with established narrative terminology (e.g., monologue and dialogue), we chose to draw on musical terminology to term the career construction styles. Any usage of established terms may result in projecting theoretical underpinnings of those concepts onto career composition styles. For example, Carless and Douglas (2013a) present the performance narrative as monological. Terming a monophonic career construction style "monological" could have led to "fixing" this career style into a certain identity typology. However, we did not detect a direct correspondence between the types of narrative athletes drew on from elite sport culture (performance, discovery, and

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relational; Douglas & Carless, 2009) and their career construction style. As presented in Table 1, there are both male and female athletes whose "classic" performance story, at the time of interviews, vibrated with two interdependent storylines of sport and education as they were projecting their selves into the future. There were also athletes whose personal stories drew mainly on the relational narrative plot in which professional sport was a single-line melody of their future. It would be important for future work to examine the dynamic co-development of narrative meaning-making in relation to identity and career construction style and to better understand associations between them.

Unelma's story

Developing an identity storyline: "I have chosen sports and that is what I want to do"

In this section, we focus on showing key elements of Unelma's evolving story of the self in response to our first research question how and to what extent young athletes integrate autobiographical events in sport and education into their identity narrative. Our presentation of Unelma's storied experiences is interwoven with analysis and interpretation of her account in relation to the narrative typology of elite sport and developmental literature.

Telling her story of becoming an athlete, Unelma invoked competition and being athletic from the early age:

> Well, I had always been going to all competitions like these Hippo-competitions for kids, but it really started from when I was participating in ballet and there they told me that I am too muscular to be a dancer and that my muscles would fit better with athletics. I was maybe six then, and then I went to track and field school. Ummm, then, basically I just tried and exercised at the track and field school, and then, it was maybe at age 9 when different competitive age groups start, then there are competitions, so then it became more established. I have not ever had any other hobbies…I just liked the sport and I was good at it, and then there was also that my family…umm, my siblings skied, but I did not want to

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ski because of the cold…I liked track and field and I was good at it. And I have always been training really well and diligently, but when I really started being focused on it [was when] I switched from team A to team B two years ago, and then I had like real success for the first time, and I succeeded also in the adults, so then I really started to think about other things than just training, such as how you eat and what you do during your free time, and how it all impacts on athletics.

Can you give us an example?

Well, for example, like how you spend your evenings when you come home after practices…like how you spend those few hours. For example, you can spend a lot of time with your phone, which takes time away from like doing your homework or stretching and then you have to think about in what order you do things…like I make my own food so when do you do that so that you don't spend time on something else like your phone.

Do you have enough time for school and other things?

Well, track takes a lot of time…so then I really put all my time for school and doing homework, and there is no time to do other things that I would like to do, like be with friends and such. For that I have very little time, but on the other hand I have chosen sports and that is what I want to do, and I have gotten friends from there.

The story shared by Unelma illustrates the process of identity construction with narrative resources of the performance plot, defined by Douglas and Carless (2009) as a "story of single-minded dedication to sport performance to the exclusion of other areas of life and self" (p. 215). In the presented excerpt, by making intermittent references to social relations and school while centralizing athletics, Unelma demonstrates how she has organized her storyline around the performance script and committed to commonly held views of elite athletes' functional lives. Although she estimated spending about 25 hours a week on her

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sport, she dreams "to live an athlete's life" as she attests, "right now I have so much school and such... I have so much school that I cannot focus fully on athletics."

Unelma continues to draw on the performance narrative as she recounts her athletic experiences; however her story is not yet finalized as she emphasizes "personal development, learning, and mastery of skills (rather than solely the outcome), something which is not present in the current [performance] typology" (Ronkainen et al., 2016, p. 133). For example, Unelma likens her motivation for sport to "inner desire" and describes her zeal of learning her own capabilities:

> I don't do sports so that I could be on the news or something. I don't even really like that. But often…it's kind of like this inner desire to do it. Something like success –well, of course, you do not care to do it if you don't succeed and you're last all the time—but …they are like things that will get you to a certain point, but then you have to have something else in addition to the will to win prizes and get publicity…well in competitions you get it from…well sometimes you don't even know what you're capable of…like sometimes you are able to do things so well that you didn't even yourself have the knowledge of that. I think that gives me the most…that's like the most wonderful thing.

In line with McAdams and McLean (2013), Unelma's narration illustrates a high level of exploratory narrative processing to achieve self-understanding as she draws on different storylines to weave her athlete self. Although she utilizes predominantly the performance plot to make sense of her experiences in sport, there are traces of an embodied discovery narrative in the aforementioned extract too.

Developmental research has indicated that meaning making, particularly at adolescence, can be a hard work (McLean, 2005). By sequencing and describing details of her autobiographical events in certain ways, Unelma attempts to convey her values, beliefs, and what she thinks is important about her life. While she does not narrate rich details of her

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activities in school, educational values are signaled by taking her studies seriously (e.g., "I have to study a lot"), having fun learning at school (e.g., "I like physics, chemistry, and also history, geography, social studies…those are the most fun), as well as reflecting on other athletes' decision-making:

> Even though I take my sport too seriously sometimes, but if you think about it, then school is your future and sport is really uncertain, you never know what happens. I have always wondered about it when hockey players, and even soccer players, often quit studying, so what then if you get injured and such?

We suggest that although Unelma's account of her involvement in athletics discloses how the performance narrative's seeds have already been planted to instigate her identity narrative "from the singular self-position of 'athlete'" (Carless & Douglas, 2013a, p. 31), at the time of her first interview, Unelma was actively exploring what being an elite athlete would mean for her future.

Exploring the future: "That's not my goal to be best in everything"

Our second research question concerned how and to what extent sport and education are integrated in the adolescent athletes' projected future. Confirming previous conceptual and empirical findings that young people's future narratives are thin and vague, but nonetheless revealing with respect to meaning making processes (Crites, 1971; Habermas & Bluck, 2000), Unelma's account illustrates how the master narrative of elite sport has been tightening its grip on structuring her story. Her "dream day" was constructed as a peak performance story of winning at the Olympic Games, which adhered closely to a well-rehearsed pre-competition routine that led to victory in her main event, followed by celebrations with teammates. As attested by Unelma, it was easier for her to project into the athletic future than other areas of life because her futuring was facilitated by formal as well

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as tacit knowledge of the elite sport (e.g., most celebrated sporting achievement, optimal maturation age in her sport, competition script):

> So this is like it's related to sport, but you know I was just thinking about it yesterday that like you have dreams related to many different things, so not only in sport, but on the other hand sport is like the closest thing to me at this moment. So if you think that one dream could be like your own house or something, well that feels pretty far like that's further than those related to sports. So I thought that my dream day would take place at the Olympics. And I envisioned that this would happen in the 2024 Olympics, and I would be like turning 25 years then, so that would be like an optimal time point for me.

Unelma emphasized, "this is just a dream because it's still so far away," and reflected on how with time her childhood dreams, such as "to run on the Olympic stadium at the Finnish-Swedish games," "somehow became smaller and turned into goals." In these simple words, she shows processes of futuring, in which the cultural repertoire available to her to construct her story has been guiding her hopes, thoughts, emotions, and actions. Unelma's search for meaning and validation of her life have been narrowing to a performance or achievement story which, in research with late adolescents and emergent adults, has been shown to contain a low meaning-making content (in contrast to stories about relationships, at a crossroads or mortality events) and to relate positively to diffused (no commitment, no exploration) or foreclosed (commitment, no exploration) identity statuses (McLean & Pratt, 2006).

Interpretive studies with athletes revealed how powerful exemplary narratives and normalizing discourse practices are in foreclosing athletes' sense of self and their career trajectories; and because the performance narrative is omnipresent in the cultural sphere of elite sport, its script is often accepted as the only way to success. It has been shown, for example, that the performance narrative undergirds athletes' extreme disciplinary practices of daily living with respect to diet and exercise (Busanich et al., 2014; Papathomas & Lavallee,

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2014), and may disrupt their life narratives leading to distress and mental health difficulties during periods of poor form, injury, and acquired disability (Ronkainen & Ryba, 2017; Sparkes & Smith, 2002), ageing (Ronkainen et al., 2013), and following career termination (Carless & Douglas, 2009).

There is, therefore, a warning sign in Unelma's linear athletic future orientation that stretched to her mid 20s whereas her future thoughts about education were dim revolving mostly around managing her school courses and day-to-day studies. Despite these narrative signs of foreclosing her identity development, Unelma eagerly exchanged "small stories" with the researcher at the interview that were high in self-exploration content and can be thought of as reflective practice to forming a life story (Bamberg, 2006; McAdams & McLean, 2013). For example, as Unelma talks about her strengths:

> Well, let's say…in sport I am rather…I'm not sure whether this is a strength or weakness, but I'm rather critical and I like to improve everything…and that is also in school and life. But I think it can be a weakness if you take it to the extreme. But then I am very persistent and…what else? I am persistent and diligent, so if I have a task, I will do it even though it's not so much fun. And then I am tenacious, which is a good trait to have, for example, in the last stretch of a race. But then…did you say in school as well? Well, actually those three [critical, diligent and tenacious] fit them all.

In this narration, Unelma starts reflecting on her strengths as an athlete and then shifts between different life-contexts extending her gained knowledge to other parts of the self. Discussing her future possibilities in the field of healthcare, Unelma has made connections with her strengths suggesting that although she does "not have a particular profession in mind," she "knows the direction [she] wants to go." Past research with adolescents has shown that career exploration typically occurs in conversations with parents, mentors, and friends (Nurmi, 1989; Xiao et al., 2016) and is particularly important with respect to facilitating

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narrative meaning processing even though "the events upon which one is reflecting are not eventually integrated into that life story" (McLean & Mansfield, 2011).

Unelma's story provides a convincing illustration of how her futuring processes are channeled along the established contours of the performance narrative plot. As part of the new generation of dual career athletes, she acknowledges that education is important and increases chances of getting a good job, but was seemingly vague when asked to describe her vocational future. Against the developmental psychology backdrop, the study participants are entering the stage of career exploration and identity 'coming-into-being' and, therefore, Unelma's values for education are rather expressed through actions (e.g., doing homework, not cutting classes) and small stories of dual career achievements as illustrated in the following interaction:

> How has your school year been so far?
>
> It's been okay like I thought it would be even more work. You know, the most important thing is that I've been able to combine sport and school like even though sport has not gotten down like I've actually become better you know and still I've also been able to do schoolwork. So it has been going really well.
>
> Yeah.
>
> But like I somewhere said, I invest in sport like my energy at this moment. And that's not like…well in school I don't want to give myself some goals for my grades because that will add stress. So like, well sometimes you perceive things so that you should be good in everything, but well I would like to highlight that that's not my goal to be best in everything, because that's not even possible.

Similar to the views of adolescent Swedish athletes (Stambulova et al., 2015), Unelma asserts that it is not possible to invest fully to all areas of life quite simultaneously and learns how to find her own optimal rhythm in the temporal process of career construction, previously

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shown to be a resilient way of coping with dual career challenges. While she draws mostly on the performance narrative to make sense of her experiences and to project into the future, the polyphonic texture of her experience in which sport and education are valuable but independent in rhythm (i.e., sport and school in counterpoint) and contour (i.e., more defined athletic future), suggests a contrapuntal style of career construction. By deliberately choosing to focus more on her sport within the prime period of her athletic development, Unelma eschews neither schoolwork nor decision-making about academic subjects necessary for her professional education in the future, nor learning in various informal contexts. With respect to the latter, without prompting Unelma talked about life learning in the sporting context: "I've really studied a lot about food stuff and also been to a nutritionist. Yeah I just want to learn things."

Like many young athletes in this sample, Unelma narrated conflicting events in her life and tensions about making the right choice about her future, also resisting to becoming a subject of the dual career discourse of how society expects her to be: *"I would like to highlight that that's not my goal to be best in everything."* As Unelma develops her personal ideology through narrative meaning-making processes directed at understandings of self, other, and the world (McLean, 2005), it is particularly significant that she can have access to a broader repertoire of narratives to draw on to frame her experiences of the possible future. Considering the developmental stage of her life cycle, we resist finalizing Unelma's story as linear and monological and agree entirely with Frank (2005, p. 968) not to "fix participants in identities that fit typologies." Rather we emphasize Unelma's "own struggles of becoming" an Olympian, an educated professional, and a grown woman, and the need for significant adults in her life to expand narrative opportunities for her life design in the continuing dialogue.

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Concluding Thoughts

The driving force of this research was to understand the developmental processes and consequences of dual career construction in adolescence. We drew on narrative theory to demonstrate the narrative construction of experience through time and the ways in which processes of identity development and future orientation interpenetrate. In the past, athlete career research has only shown a "big story" of identity development through the retrospective representations of the teller. Though diverse narrative threads have been considered (e.g., Carless & Douglass, 2013a, 2013b), we advocate for more sensitivity to the narrative-discursive content within the established typology by "shifting focus from overall storylines" to "small stories" (Ronkainen et al., 2016, p. 133) in the conversational context of interviews. By supplementing the life story approach with the athletes' use of small stories in particular interaction, we have shown how it is possible to tell an athletic performance story without neglecting other areas of life or self. Yet, the athletes' narratives of their projected futures were indeed thin with respect to creating situated accounts of their non-athletic selves. Therefore, there is a need for future research to 'gather' the textual features of small stories as constructive means of contextualized identities to add layers to our understandings of athletes' lived lives and to inform narrative-discursive interventions with an aim to foster meaningful (dis)continuities in the process of dual career construction. This is particularly important in research and applied work with adolescents to encourage them to 'figure out' who they are (McAdams & McLean, 2013) and to provide them with conversational contexts that can instigate their meaning-making processes. Based on our findings we suggest that exploration of the future and possible selves are critical for a high level of narrative processing to achieve self-understanding and design a dual career pathway from adolescence to adulthood. Our study confirms previous research results that many young athletes are motivated to excel in both sport and education (e.g., Lupo et al., 2015; Stambulova et al.,

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2015), but often experience inner conflict, tensions, and personal doubts whether achieving success at elite level is possible without rigid adhering to the performance script (see also Carless & Douglas, 2013a; Gustafsson et al., 2008; Ryba et al., 2015a). While we found evidence that dual career discourse has made inroads into young athletes' thinking about their future—that is, all participants were engaged in dual career practices and 66% displayed a contrapuntal style—it would also appear that societal expectations for young athletes to succeed in dual career pursuits heighten their anxiety about making "the right choice" in the bigger frame of their life course. As shown by past research, formation of identity and style of action are inseparable from developmental environments and seldom are conscious events. Therefore, coaches, teachers, school counselors, and sport psychology service providers are encouraged to take seriously small-talks and chit-chats in their everyday encounters with young athletes as a means for prompting meaning-making and probing the boundaries of their imagined futures.

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Table 1 *Participants' age, sport, narrative type, and future orientation*

Pseudonym	Age	Sport	Dominant narrative type	Future orientation
Unelma	16	Athletics	Performance	Olympic Games, healthcare professional
Fem 2	16	Cross-country skiing	Performance	Olympic Games, professional athlete, coaching
Fem 3	16	Alpine skiing	Performance	World Cup, university, judge/lawyer
Fem 4	16	Aesthetic group gymnastics	Relational	Olympic Games, university, exercise science
Fem 5	15	Basketball	Performance	Universiade, college basketball (USA), journalist
Fem 6	16	Soccer	Performance	College soccer (USA), professional athlete
Fem 7	16	Swimming	Performance	Olympic Games, college swimming (USA), lawyer
Fem 8	16	Judo	Performance	World Championship, doctor or physical therapist
Fem 9	16	Judo	Performance	World Championship, medical school
Fem 10	16	Judo	Relational	European Championship, university, exercise science
M 1	16	Orienteering on skis	Relational	World Championship, university, school teacher
M 2	16	Artistic gymnastics	Performance	Olympic Games, university, professional athlete or doctor
M 3	15	Artistic gymnastics	Performance	Olympic Games, entrepreneur
M 4	15	Tennis	Performance	APT tour, university, professional athlete and/or dentist
M 5	16	Ice hockey	Performance	NHL, professional athlete, entrepreneur
M 6	16	Ice hockey	Relational	NHL, professional athlete
M 7	16	Soccer	Relational	Premier League, professional athlete
M 8	16	Judo	Performance	Olympic Games, university, healthcare professional

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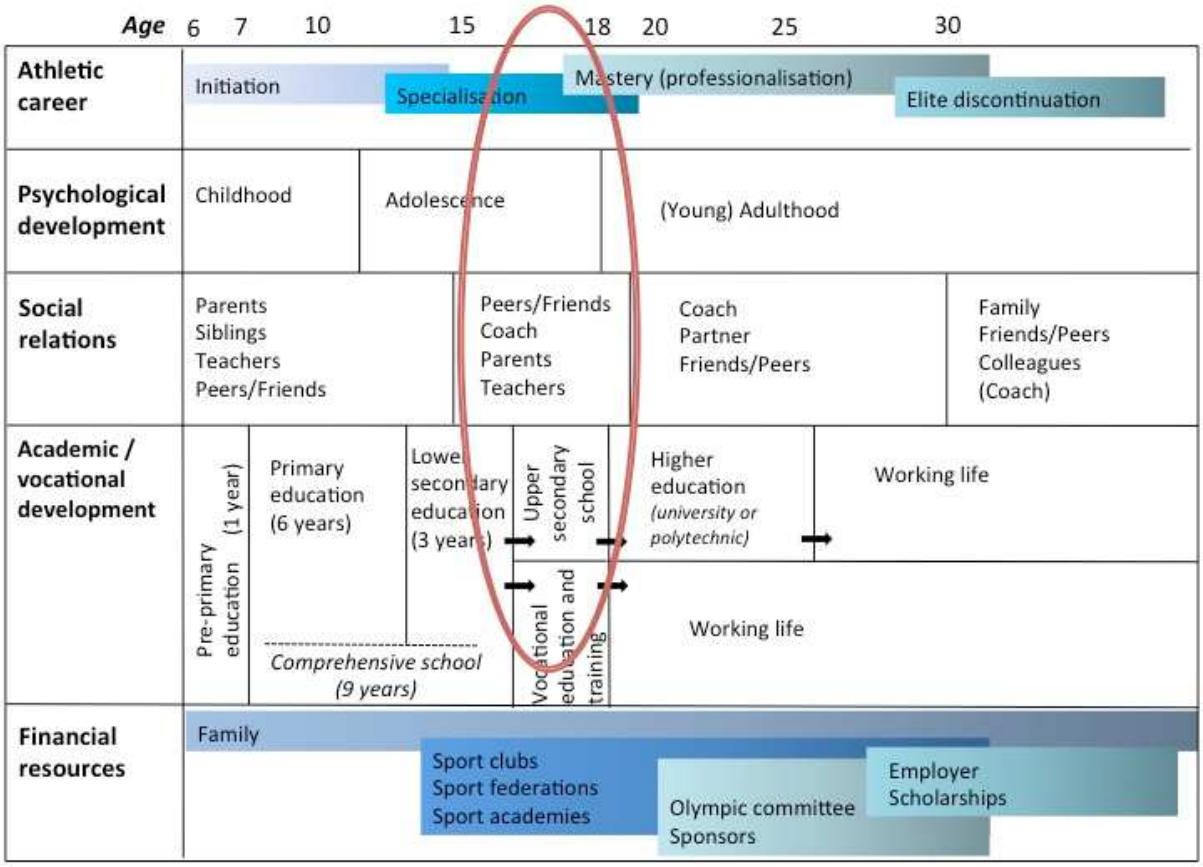
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Table 2 *Definitions and examples of career construction styles*

Career construction style	Definition	Example quotes
Contrapuntal (n = 12)	An athlete style of career construction characterized by sport and education forming an interdependent relationship. Both themes are congruent with a personal identity and are independent in the ways they progress with respect to each other.	"If I will not be an ice hockey player, I would like to have a good profession. That's why I am here in upper secondary school. I try to do well, so it will help me in the future. My family encourages me to do school too at the same time [with hockey]." (M 5) "My dream has always been to become a professional athlete and go to the Olympics, but those are dreams and not very many people achieve that. I am thinking of something to do with sport…maybe a PE teacher, personal trainer, nutritionist. I have always liked to study about health and people's wellbeing." (M 8) "We do not have a contract to keep a certain GPA, but we always try our best and if grades start going down, then we need to reconsider how much we train…and maybe get some extra teaching sessions or something. […] I have to see how my judo career will progress. And if it goes well after high school, then I will take a year off and focus on judo; and if I have no energy to do judo, then I go straight to the medical school." (Fem 9) "I would like to do gymnastics as long as I can, usually people do it until they are 20 or so and if you are older, you start getting injuries. Our main goal is 2020, so till then. I don't know about a dream, we did win the World Championship in ****, so maybe do that again. I do not have anything exact about my future job, but something related to sport and exercise would be nice. So if I would graduate from school and then I would quit gymnastics and replace it with some other sport…well, I like to run and I like to run long distances, so I think I will follow my dad's lead and start running marathons." (Fem 4)

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Monophonic (n = 5)	An athlete style of career construction characterized by one overarching theme, typically expressed in terms of a subjective professional athletic career. Monophonic style is often associated with the difficulty to imagine other possible selves.	"I would like to ski in the World Cup and represent or be a part of the national team […] I can't even imagine that I would participate in any other sport…and at some point I will find a profession within sport, if I won't be an athlete, I will coach or something like that." (Fem 2) "I have a plan for the next few years…like with my agents we have discussed like what makes sense for a Finnish player in soccer. Like next year and this season—just being able to play with a men's team as much as possible. Like forget the junior soccer and tap into the men's game…And like the very first thing that I want is to stay healthy, like I've had a lot of injuries, so it's really important to stay healthy because then you are able to train and play well. If I'm able to play well this season, there will be options where to go. Like in Finland, during next season I could take a bigger role and then maybe after that go abroad. So like when I'm about 20, then it would make sense to move forward." (M 7)
Dissonant (n = 1)	An athlete style of career construction characterized by sport and education forming a discordant relationship that is seemingly impossible to integrate into a personal meaning structure.	"If school doesn't go well, I won't be doing sports. That is the contract between me and my dad." (Fem 3) "…it just feels like I don't have energy for school anymore and like who cares if I get grade six…and I cry almost at every practice cause I can't get through the slope." (Fem 3)



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"Sport has always been first for me" but "all my free time is spent doing homework": Dual career styles in late adolescence

Highlights

- Through narrative methodology we delineated three styles of athletes' dual career construction.
- Contrapuntal style entwines sport and education as harmonically related life-themes
- Monophonic style draws on a prominent athletic life-theme
- Dissonant style is underpinned by discord of sport and education
- There is no direct correspondence between narrative types (performance, discovery and relational narratives) and career construction styles

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