

Beyond the Field:

Exploring athlete's career transitions and the phenomenon of transferrable skills and identity

Bachelor thesis, 2024

Sociology

The Faculty of Social Sciences

Department of Media and Social Sciences



Abstract

Studies on an athlete's career transitions, and the phenomenon of transferrable skills and identity are largely dominated by psychological fields. However, in recent years these topics have received attention within sociology. Unfortunately, the wealth of literature on this topic with a sociological background is low. Therefore, in this thesis I aim to contribute to the sociology of this subject by studying the professional footballer's experiences, perceptions and understanding of said phenomena. The sociological perspectives on career transitions in professional footballers is sparse, and I wanted to find out more. By examining theories on transition, transferrable skills, identity, and success, I found what key elements to look for here in Norway. I conducted a qualitative study consisting of semi-structured interviews with three Norwegian ex professional footballers. I wanted to see if their experiences of transition, and the phenomena it entailed, found similarities with the existing theory. These Ex professional footballers have gone through transition and experienced it first hand and could therefore provide me with their insights and perspectives, whilst finding relation and similarities with the over-arching theoretical framework. What I found in this study was that a theoretical sociological framework allowed for a unique understanding of the empirical answers received by the respondents. Key findings indicate that without the awareness of transferrable skills, a foreclosed athletic identity and no social support systems, transition would prove to be difficult. Conversely, athletes with a more diversified identity and understanding of their skillsets demonstrate better adaptability to transition, and ultimately experience a smoother and more successful transition.

The research in this thesis underscores the importance of fostering a balanced identity and enhancing the awareness of transferrable skills within athletes before they retire, providing them with more tools to compete with others in the employment phase. Lastly, the implications of this thesis can prove important for players, coaches, support systems and future employers as it emphasizes the need for comprehensive understanding of the phenomena to allow for the holistic development of elite athletes.

Contents

1. Introduction.....	4
2. Theory.....	5
2.1. Less Theory.....	5
2.2. Transition & Transition type.....	5
2.2.1. Culture shock in transition?	6
2.3. Challenges.....	6
2.4. Master Identity.....	6
2.4.1. Athletic identity vs Foreclosed identity.....	7
2.5. Transferrable skills.....	8
2.5.1. Transferrable skills vs Cultural Capital.....	8
2.5.2. Awareness.....	8
2.6 Successful transition?	9
2.6.1. My idea of success?	10
3. Method	10
3.1. Methodological choice?	11
3.2. Interviewee sampling.....	11
3.3. Anonymity.....	11
3.4. Who are the respondents?	11
3.4.1. Mike	11
3.4.2. Steve	12
3.4.3. Hugh	12
3.5. Interview guide and process	12
3.6. Method of analysis	13
4. Analysis & Discussion	14
4.1 Transition period	15
4.1.1 Experience	15
4.1.2 Predictability vs Unpredictability	16
4.2 Transferrable skills	17
4.2.1 Specific skills vs challenges	17
4.2.2 Cultural Capital	19
4.2.3 Awareness	20
4.3 Identity	20
4.3.1 Identity crisis	21
4.3.2 Adaptation	21
4.4 Success	22
4.4.1 Ideas of success	22
5. Conclusion	23
Sources	25
Appendix	28

1. Introduction

How do athletes perceive and navigate career transitions? What factors implicate such transitions? What is considered a successful transition? These are examples of questions raised when studying athletes embarking on career transitions. Although research is highly dominated by psychology disciplines, the interest area has developed and career transitions from sports have received not only attention from psychology disciplines, but also social sciences and sociology (Hickey & Roderick, 2023, p.1051). Therefore, in this thesis I aim to explore athletes' career transitions and see if I can contribute to the existing literature with the help of an overarching sociological standpoint.

Transition is defined by Schlossberg (1981) as *“an event or non-event results in a change in assumptions about oneself and the world, and thus requires a corresponding change in one's behaviour and relationships”*. (p.5)

In sociology, it is common to think of transitions as a larger life trajectory, or pathway like that of a career (Stauber et al., 2022, p.3). Stauber et al. (2022, p.3) goes on to say that these trajectories are those that chart the course of an individual's experience in life domains, and one's life course is composed of these multiple, interwoven trajectories. Trajectories are punctuated by life events and transitions during a life course, with both referring to changes in a person's state (Stauber et al., 2022, p.3). Events are usually relatively sudden and unexpected, whereas transitions are *“longer processes that may include discrete events, involve anticipatory and adaptive processes, and are often tied to the acquisition or relinquishment of social roles”* (Stauber et al., 2022, p.3). Transitions in sociology are understood as moments in people's life course that introduces social inequalities and the risk of social exclusion (Stauber et al., 2022, p.4) This thesis aims to use this guiding sociological principle, but ultimately narrow it down and look at one transition in an individual's life, the transition from a professional football career to a new occupational one.

Unlike a corporate career, after an athlete hones one's skills and craft for years to achieve an elite level, retirement from elite competition and an athletic career, is inevitable (Zaichowsky, Kane, Blann, Hawkins, 1993, p.786) Nevertheless, as significant and full-bodied an athletic career and its achievements may be, the transition from athletic endeavours to common occupations pose a variety of challenges and many athletes experiencing a phase of existential questioning after retirement, with questions such as *“What's next?”* and *“How does one go on from here?”* (Kerr & Dacyshyn, 2000, p.116).

Considering existing theory on transition, transferrable skills, identity and challenges and success, I will attempt to research if athletes, specifically footballers can bring new light to the matter. I aim to find their own personal perspective on transition and their transferrable skills and identity; therefore, I have formulated this research question: *“How do athletes perceive transition and articulate their transferrable skills and identity acquired through sports when transitioning to a new career?”*.

However, I found it relevant to introduce an additional research question: “What is considered a successful transition? I believe it important to also shed light on what I believe is a successful transition, and what the athletes believe a successful transition to be, compared to the existing theory.

In the next chapter I will present the existing theory, definitions, terms, and perspectives I find relevant for my research questions. Moving on to chapter three, I will introduce my methodological approach and further explain my process of developing an interview guide, selecting respondents, preparing the interview process, and explaining the need for anonymity. Chapter four will consist of the empirical analysis and discuss findings from the interviews along with links to the over-arching theory. In the final chapter, chapter number five, I aim to conclude my argumentation and present the overall remarks of the research.

2. Theory

2.1 Less Theory?

Besbris and Khan (2017, p.147) state that sociologists often demand that papers that appear in leading sociological journals should advance a theory of the world, making sociology a more theory-driven than empirically driven discipline. This raises an interesting question of if we constantly feel the need for new theoretical advancement, what good is theory for understanding the actual world? (Besbris & Khan, 2017, p.147). Besbris and Khan (2017, p.147) argue that we must demand less theory in sociology so that the existing theories can ultimately do more. This guiding principle is what I aim to achieve in my thesis. I will present existing theory and literature, but instead of emptying theoretical concepts of their content to satisfy sociology’s demand of advancing theory (Besbris & Khan, 2017, p.147), I will aim to create more clarity through empirical description later in my thesis.

2.2 Transition & Transition Type

Studies on career development and transitions of athletes were introduced during the 1960’s and later increased substantially, both quantity and quality wise since the end of the 1980’s to present day (Stambulova et al., 2009, p.396). The understanding of the term “transition” as a phenomenon is one that has experienced a change overtime. (Stambulova et al., 2009, p.396). There lie two descriptive terms within career termination types, coined as “normative and non-normative” transitions (Stambulova et al., 2009, p.398). Retirement for an athlete is the clearest example of a normative transition, normative meaning that the predictability level of an event is high, with retirement in athletes being inevitable and highly predictable (Stambulova et al., 2009, p.398: Zaichowsky, Kane, Blann, Hawkins, 1993, p.786) Non-normative transitions are the direct opposite, these contain a high

level of unpredictability such as Injuries or other life circumstances resulting in career termination (Stambulova et al., 2009, p.398). Timing of transition is also a factor, with McKnight et al. (2009, p.64) concluding after research that transition from a long sporting career at an elite level after immediate career termination suggested to be traumatic, compared to retirement in high school or college where retirement was suggested as non-traumatic due to simultaneous interests and pursuits.

2.2.1 Culture shock in transition?

Award winning sociologist James A. Holstein's book on «life after football, surviving the NFL», provides a unique insight into the culture shock that an athlete experiences at the end of their playing career. American Football was the sport studied, and although a “culture shock” is generally short-lived, Holstein argues that NFL players adapt slower to transition than others (Holstein et al., 2015, p.217). The research showed that very few individuals exist in a “bubble” as captivating as a sporting career, and that these bubbles establish patterns of acting and social interaction that are deeply ingrained (Holstein et al., 2015, p.218). Holstein states that the bubble “*provides players with a cultural toolkit that they habitually use to craft the everyday features of their lives*” (Holstein et al., 2015, p.218). I will aim to study this in the analysis section of the thesis, as one can argue that this bubble is also present in football.

2.3 Challenges

Danish et al., (1993) states the term contextual purity, which refers to the number of events that occur at once. One can argue that athletes embarking on career transitions can lead to a larger number of events occurring at once, such as decreased financial resources, extended free and family time, changes in activity levels, as well as self-esteem levels and the amount of social contact with others such as teammates and friends (McKnight et al., 2009, p.67; Danish et al., 1993.) In addition, an athlete experiences more disruption to their identity than others, spending their whole lives honing their craft whilst disregarding other occupations (McKnight et al., 2009, p.67; Danish et al., 1993).

2.4 Master Identity

The concept of a “master identity” is one which doesn't have a formal role within sociological theory, however it shares similarities and aligns with other known sociological perspectives, one being symbolic interactionism. The first person to bring forth the underlying principles of symbolic interactionism was George H Mead in his book “Mind, Self and Society” (1934). In his book, he discusses how we as individuals construct and develop our self-image, or as he calls it “the self”, through interaction with other individuals (Mead, 1934). Mead (1934) discusses that the self is a core

part of the personality of an individual, particularly involving self-image and self-awareness, that emerge from social experiences. This idea mirrors the idea of Cooley (1902), where he coined the term “looking-glass-self, to express the idea that a person’s self-image is mostly determined by others around them, other reactions to us as individuals act as the mirror, therefore we can base and judge ourselves by looking at said mirror (Cooley, 1902). However, how do these ideas align with an athlete’s identity? According to these perspectives, identities are not something that is fixed, rather a phenomenon that is continually shaped and negotiated through social interaction (Cooley, 1902; Mead, 1934). Therefore, one could argue that an athlete “master identity” can be understood as the central aspects of their personality, their “self”, that is reinforced through various social interactions, such as with their teammates, coaches, fans, and other surrounding staff. However, when an athlete enters the transitional period, and it is time for a change in occupancy, what happens to their identity, and will their “master identities” change through new social reinforcement in social interaction?

2.4.1 Athletic Identity vs Foreclosed Identity

Athletic identity is one that can be understood through Mead’s “self”. It is an occupational self-image and one which is created after athletes receive an elevated level social reinforcement for their talent and abilities (Beamon, 2012, p.196). This means that athletes conceptualize their identity and self-image based on performance in their respective sports, with their self-identity alone being an “athlete” and social identity composed by others who see them as athletes (Beamon, 2012, p. 196). Despite this, most individuals have a self and social identity that includes multiple social roles, such as a student or an employee (Beamon, 2012, p .196). When one of these roles changes or ceases to exist, an individual still beholds a self-concept due to their social roles, however when an individual commits solely to one identity it leads to something known as “identity foreclosure” (Beamon, 2012, p.196: Danish et al. 1993). Foreclosure of identity begins when an individual has not explored and engaged meaningfully in other options, and usually starts at a young age due to social reinforcement and encouragement from peers and family (Beamon, 2012, p.196). One can argue that individuals in sports experience a foreclosed identity due to disregarding other options, interests and hobbies because of their social identity being shaped by others, leading to a general occurrence where they choose the self-identity of an athlete (Beamon, 2012, p. 196).

2.5 Transferable skills

The term “transferable skills” is one which varies between generic skills, basic skills, key skills, employability skills, and although each term varies, they share a commonality in that all of them are

transferable between different situations (Nagele & Stalder, 2017). Transferable skills are used to act efficiently in different life situations, with an underlying assumption that these skills previously acquired in one domain, can be applied, and reused in a different one (Nagele & Stalder, 2017). So, what are transferable skills for an athlete? These are the skills an athlete has developed throughout their career that can be used in other occupational contexts, some examples of these are dedication, motivation, resilience, goal setting, teamwork, leadership, self-discipline and performing under pressure.

2.5.1 Transferable skills vs Cultural Capital

How do these transferable skills find similarities to Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital? The theory of cultural capital has become a flaming wheel that has spiralled out of control, with numerous definitions that make the concept available to use in different ways, as it hasn't an agreed upon meaning (Besbris & Khan, 2017, p.147). Nevertheless, in this thesis I have decided to use the idea that the consensus of cultural capital is that it is like money in one's wallet, except the currency is culture not cash (Besbris & Khan, 2017, p.150). One can argue that transferable skills acquired during a sporting career can be seen as a form of cultural capital, but on a larger scale. Consider skills in sports as a practice, looking through Bourdieu's lens of cultural capital, the valuation of skills can only be identified in relationship to other skills that are more, or less valued in that sporting context (Besbris & Khan, 2017, p.151). However, one can argue that skills acquired in sports are not just valued in one specific context like cultural capital, but instead valued across different contexts and occupations. Similarly, to cultural capital, transferable skills can be used to enhance one's social position or opportunities, allowing for a smoother navigation through career transition. Besbris & Khan (2017, p.151) outline that cultural capital can be leveraged to gain status, whilst not losing any of one's cultural capital when using it to obtain a more advantageous position. A question one can ask would be: how can an individual leverage a more advantageous experience and opportunities with cultural capital and transferable skills when athletes have similar skillsets? One can argue that the short answer to this is "awareness".

2.5.2 Awareness

Danish et al. (1993) outlines that the awareness of one's transferable skills could prove to be a barrier in transition, as some athletes are in fact not aware of them (McKnight et al., 2009, p.68). Mayocchi & Hanrahan (1997) build upon Danish's ideas and explain that increasing one's awareness of these skills may produce positive effects towards career transitions, as individuals would pose a better chance of explaining to employers of their skillset, and how these can prove useful in a new

occupational career (McKnight et al. 2009, p.68). Similarly, to cultural capital, transferable skills can be used to enhance one's social position or opportunities, allowing for a smoother navigation through career transition, but can only be done so through an athlete's awareness of their own transferable skills. Research shows that athletes who are concerned about their transferable skills during a transitional period, should show an interest in learning how to transfer and leverage these skills into another career (McKnight et al., 2009, p.68). This interest can lead to the awareness of an athlete's skills that can prove effective in other occupations, with research arguing that athletes respond positively during transition when being made aware of how their specific sporting skills can be transferred into non-sporting areas of their lives (McKnight et al., 2009, p.71: Danish et al., 1993).

2.6 Successful Transition?

So, what constitutes a successful transition from an athletic career to an occupational career? Crook and Robertson believed there were five factors that affected the success level of a transition: Anticipatory socialization, Identity and self-esteem, personal management skills, social support systems and voluntary versus involuntary retirement (McKnight et al., 2009, p.65).

Anticipatory socialization refers to the proactive response of preparing for career termination and retirement before it happens (McKnight K et al., 2009, p.65: Crook & Robertson, 1991). In simpler terms, preparing for a life after sports can prove advantageous towards an athlete's transition, and not doing so could be spark a negative transition (McKnight et al., 2009, p.66: Blinde & Greendorfer, 1985: Crook & Robertson, 1991).

Identity and self-esteem are often catalysts in negative transitions, with many athletes' whose identities and self-esteem are tied to their respective sports feeling a confusion and loss of identity after career termination (McKnight et al., 2009, p.66: Crook & Robertson, 1991).

McKnight K et al., (2009, p.66) argues for Crook and Robertson's idea that having good personal management skills is paramount to achieve a successful career transition. They go on to state that athletes may not be ready for transition as they are dependent on exterior factors such as coaches and teammates. This builds on ideas from Mayocchi & Hanrahan, (1997) that stated that athletes who exhibit a high self-efficacy constitutes for a more likely successful transition (McKnight et al., 2009, p.66)

Furthermore, the social support systems such as family and friends according to Werthner & Orlick (1986) can ease the level of disruption in the transition process out of sport, whilst athletes who experience a negative transition often cite the loss of a support system after their career termination as teammates and friends actively continue with the sport (McKnight et al., 2009, p.67).

Lastly, voluntary versus involuntary retirement. The literature suggest that negative transitions occur when it is involuntary and athletes who experience involuntary retirement often are less prepared than those who retire voluntarily (McKnight et al., 2009, p.67) However, McKnight et al. (2009, p.67) states that retirement is instead only voluntary when an athlete has another choice of action.

2.6.1 My idea of success?

Although I agree that these dispositions mentioned above can facilitate a smoother transition, my personal belief of what a successful transition is, is one that strays from these five ideas. My idea of success is one that agrees with Stambulova's idea that success is achieved when an individual can fully leverage the transferrable skills learnt through their career (Stambulova et al., 2009). However, I also recognize the paradox of leveraging these skills only being possible through an individual's awareness of them.

3. Method

3.1 Methodological Choice

Methodological choice for this thesis is based on my research about an individual's experience during transition, how they use transferable skills, their identity and what extent their transition is believed to be a success. This meant I would need personal and comprehensive data, requiring a qualitative approach. Aspers & Corte (2019) outline that using a qualitative approach as method allows one to become closer to both participants and data, allowing the opportunity to understand and resonate with the data being researched. Therefore, my method of qualitative approach is to conduct interviews. This choice is guided by my desire to explore the nuances, subjective experiences, and underlying factors of the transition phenomenon. Jacobsen (2018, pp. 146-147) states that when we want to understand an individual's subjective interpretation and experience of a particular phenomenon, conducting interviews with few research units is the best method of use. Being an ex-professional athlete allowed me to leverage my social network and find interviewees in whom to interview. During the interviews, I aim to explore an area of in-depth and intense conversation, allowing the interviewees to share their thoughts and their own experience of the phenomenon tied to my research question (Halvorsen, 2018, p.138). To achieve this, I have decided to conduct semi-structured interviews, something that allows me to follow a set of themes and open-ended questions, but also provide the chance to ask questions that are otherwise not on the interview guide (Jacobsen, 2018, pp.149-150).

3.2 Interviewee sampling

To sample participants, one must cover criteria to allow for research; ensuring that the information is relevant to the study and comprehensively adept to cover several aspects (Halvorsen, 2018, p.164).

The criteria I had chosen to fulfil was that the participants must have had to be professional athletes at an elite level for over five years, who have since terminated their careers. Participants must have gone through the transition and been in their new occupational career for over two years, to allow time for adjustment. I have also chosen to specifically interview male subjects due to the prominence of male sport culture, my own social network, and the availability of participants available to me. Bergsland & Jæger (2014) state that the most important factor of sampling is that the informants can explain and describe the phenomenon being studied in a good way, and I believe that the criteria set has allowed for this to come to fruition.

3.3 Anonymity

Due to a vast number of professional footballers in Norway, anonymity is something I was able to grant for the respondents. I stated specifically in my information letter that all interviews will be completely anonymous, with no questioning or data that can be linked back to them. The letter of information contained a consent form which they signed digitally using “PDF Reader” and were later stored on an encrypted file. No personal information will be disclosed as I feel there is no need to do so to be able to fully answer my research question.

3.4 Who are the respondents?

I deem it relevant and just to describe who the respondents are and why they were chosen, whilst providing them with fake names to uphold anonymity. Doing this allows the responses they provide in the analysis section to be more easily understood for the reader. The respondents are all Norwegian and I have chosen to disregard the cultural differences within athletes from different countries and focus solely on the micro-sociology of the individual and their experiences-

3.4.1 Mike

Mike is an ex professional footballer who is now a team leader for a marketing company. He played professionally for over ten years in Norway and started studying immediately after retirement, as he only had a secondary school education. He now has a bachelor’s degree and has been in his current occupation for the last four years.

3.4.2 Steve

Steve was also a professional footballer in Norway, but only for eight years. Steve studied during his footballing career and holds a bachelor's degree. He has worked in finance the last seven years and is now a project manager in his company.

3.4.3 Hugh

Hugh played professional football for only seven years, before retiring to pursue a career in finance. Like Steve, Hugh managed to achieve a bachelor's degree during his football career and has now worked in finance for the last two years.

3.5 Interview guide and process.

My choice of semi-structured interviews meant that I would have to produce an interview guide to have a chance of receiving the information I was after. Jacobsen (2018, p.150) states that semi-structured interviews inhabit a less structured interview guide of open questions with specific themes, but no set answers. This allows me to keep questions open to interpretation, allowing the respondents to decide where to take the conversation, whilst still following a set range of themes. The themes I have chosen to follow in my interview guide are those I feel best represent a chance of answering my research question. These themes are Retirement, Transition, Transferable skills, Identity, Challenges and Success. Introducing themes allows the interview guide to act as a boarder and catalyst for conversation whilst keeping the door open for spontaneous follow-up questions (Løkken & Søbstad, 2017).

My goal was to interview five people, however after considerate attempts to establish contact with respondents, I managed to only interview three people. One can argue this will not influence the project and may even allow for more specific results. Each of the interviews lasted between thirty minutes to one hour, and every respondent received an email from my university mail, containing an in-depth form describing the project, whilst also asking for their signature to provide consent to participate in the interviews. I conducted all the interviews via the University of Stavanger's portal to the digital platform "Zoom", without video and only the microphone from the computer on. The reason behind this is due to the vast distance between me and the respondents, with them coming from different parts of the country. Jacobsen (2018, p.152) states that it is usually important to conduct interviews in places and spaces where respondents are comfortable and feel at home. I believe "Zoom" acts as a catalyst in allowing people to feel comfortable, due to them choosing their own location where they feel most safe and at home, in addition to not having to be seen on camera, maybe relieving additional pressure. The "Diktafon" app was used to record the interviews, to allow the data to be stored with encryption on the "Nettskjema" website. The interviews began with me explaining

the project and their personal rights during the process. It then moved onto the interview itself, with me following the interview guide. The respondents' answers allowed me to introduce follow-up questions that were not prepared, however allowed for more interesting and relevant findings. Occasionally the respondents would cover unasked areas, to which I would not interrupt them, allowing for a more conversational and relaxed interview process. Some of the respondents opened the door to unexpected yet relevant areas which also provided interesting and comprehensive data to further analyse.

3.6 Method of analysis

As I used the Diktafon app to record the interviews, I was able to deliver them directly to be encrypted and stored on the Nettskjema website. The interviews were conducted in Norwegian and transcribed automatically by Nettskjema's built in AI transcription bot. The transcriptions provided were precise and were further translated to English. After transcription, I started to code the interviews, which makes navigating through data and finding the essence of what was said by the participants a lot easier (Jacobsen, 2018, p.207). Lofland et al. (2005, p. 200) describes the essence of coding as *"the process of sorting your data into various categories that organize it and render it meaningful from the vantage point of one or more frameworks or sets of ideas"*. In simpler terms, organizing one's data into different groups based on pre-existing ideas or frameworks to make it easier to understand. One must define what the data is all about by relating the data to preexisting framework and ideas (Lofland et al., 2005, p.200). The answers received from the respondents is the data that needs to be organized, and this constitutes coding (Lofland et al., 2005, pp 200-201). These are the themes that stand for a group of similar terms, ideas, and phenomena that one can find throughout their data (Lofland et al., 2005, pp.200-201). This is something I put into practice, and started by identifying the key reoccurring themes that came up in the transcriptions. These main themes were decided on due to their ability to answer the research question, and initially I landed on a large number of codes that contributed to alternate parts of the question (retirement, retirement process, motivation, preparation, predictability, expectations, uncertainty, social group, transition, transferable skills, awareness, resilience, social skills, work ethic, identity, master identity, identity crisis, challenges, doubt, support systems, success and values). These themes are what is known as "initial coding" or "open coding", when one begins to condense and organize the data into the categories that make sense in relevance to my research questions (Charmaz, 2001: Lofland et al., 2005, pp.200-201)

Although initial coding is generally quite numerous and varied, as one can see from my own results, "focused coding" is the next step to allow for a more selective and conceptual coding system (Charmaz, 2001: Lofland et al., 2005, pp 201-202). Focused coding is one that builds on initial

coding: by usually starting after initial coding is well underway and has accumulated, by using a selection of the more analytically interesting initial codes to weave larger amounts of data together, and by using these new codes as the basis of asking more directed and analytical questions (Lofland et al., 2005, p.202). As I completed my initial code, the focused coding had already started, as I decided that some of my earlier codes were appropriate for categorization of data and further analytic elaboration (Lofland et al., 2005, p.202). In the process of initial coding, I was also simultaneously doing focused coding, and was weeding out the less useful codes, with some codes beginning to arise with a status of overarching ideas that will inhabit an important part of my analysis (Lofland et al., 2005, p.202). Narrowing down the codes contributed to a more tangible working experience, and in the end, I settled for four main overarching codes that would best explain and answer my research question: “transition period”, “transferrable skills”, “identity”, “success”.

I then introduced sub-codes within the main codes. For “transition period”, I used the sub-codes “experience” and “predictability vs unpredictability” where the respondents discuss their own experiences of the transition and the feeling of predictability and unpredictability that arose during transition. Transferrable skills are the second main code in which I used the sub-codes “specific skills vs challenges”, “cultural capital” and “awareness”. The first sub code are the main skills that the respondents believed to have fostered through an athletic career and were transferrable to their new occupation. This is also where I introduce the challenge of competing without experience against others in a new occupation, and how specific skills help them overcome such challenges. The second sub-code is looking at these skills through the lens of Bourdieu’s cultural capital. Lastly, the sub code awareness refers to the extent in which the athletes were aware of said skills and how they can help them. The third main code, “identity,” included the sub-codes “identity crisis” and “adaptation”. These sub-codes represent the respondents’ explanations of how a career transition led to an identity crisis and the need to adapt one’s master identity. Lastly, in the fourth main code “success” I used the sub-code “ideas of success.” In these sub codes I aim to explain ideas of success and the respondents own personal ideas of what a successful transition is. In the next section of my thesis, I will present my findings and analysis, along with discussing the respondents’ answers within the codes, with the relevant overarching theory.

4. Analysis & Discussion

During this part of my thesis, I will present and further analyse the empirical findings from the qualitative interviews that were conducted. I aim to discuss the data within the guiding theoretical framework of this thesis, however I won’t empty the theoretical concepts of their contents, instead I will use them in accordance with my empirical findings, something that maybe challenges the dogma of sociology in needing to further advance theory (Besbris & Khan, 2017, p.147). The discussion of

the empirical findings will also take place with the overarching main codes and sub codes as explained previously in the methodology section.

4.1 Transition Period

To achieve my wanted answers, a further understanding and analysis of transition is required. The transitional period is one in which the understanding is hard to grasp without first specifying the reason for transition. All three respondents in this study experienced a “normative transition”. This meant the respondents retired from their athletic careers on their own terms, where the probability for retirement was high, leading the transition to be normative (Stambulova et al., 2009: Zaichowsky, Kane, Blann, Hawkins, 1993, p.786) This next section aims to examine the respondents transitional experience after a normative transition, the advantages and disadvantages experienced, and the predictability and unpredictability that transition bore.

4.1.1 Experience

Firstly, I believe it to be important to present the experience of the respondents using their own perception and answers. This allows for a more empirical understanding of the data, and sheds light on the participants and their stories.

Hugh - It was my inner motivation; I had already decided on retirement within myself over the last two to three months of my career. I landed on the fact that it was the best decision for myself to retire, and felt liberated, an extreme feeling of delight at not having sports hanging over me anymore.

One could argue that Hugh had this reaction due to a pre-planned retirement, however Mike and Steve both had planned their retirement, and as Hugh, credited their lack of motivation as the main factor of retirement, with Steve likening it to a “candle slowly burning out”. This mirrors the idea of “anticipatory socialization”, which is a key factor believed to help athletes achieve smoother transition and refers to the proactive response of preparing for career termination and retirement before it happens (McKnight K et al., 2009: Crook & Robertson, 1991).

Although Hugh had a different reaction to immediate transition, the respondents shared a common experience of the transitional period. One could argue that Hugh may exhibit a higher form of self-efficacy which constituted for a more positive view on immediate transition (Mayocchi & Hanrahan, 1997). However, all three respondent’s states that not having exterior factors such as coaches and teammates around them proved to be difficult in transitioning, and self-efficacy was something they had not relied much on in their sporting career (McKnight. K et al., 2009). This brings me to the next sub-code of “transition period”: “Predictability vs Unpredictability”.

4.1.2 Predictability vs Unpredictability

As of now, I have presented the respondents' ideas on their immediate transition, however I would like to further present a finding that came up multiple times across all three interviews. Transitional experience is important to look at, but one cannot leave out certain factors that contribute to that experience, and the main ones that repeatedly appeared in the data were "predictability" and "unpredictability". Firstly, as all three transitions were "normative", the respondents entered a predictable transition willingly after a certainty in their decision to retire (Stambulova et al., 2009). However, although predictability and unpredictability were present in all the respondent's answers, Mike's view on these two-phenomenon differed to the other two.

Mike - I felt I was at a point in my career where I wanted and needed a more stable and predictable life. My main reason for termination beyond my motivational issues was the need for predictability. Football can throw you around from club to club and provide an unpredictable future, something I didn't want at that age.

Danish (1993) theory of "contextual purity" is one that arises within Mike's answer. Although the guiding idea is that transition leads to a lot of negative events such as less contact with teammates, less financial resource, and less activity levels, it seems Mike holds these in lower regard to the event of extended free and family time (Danish et al., 1993).

Mike - although I had a large fear of missing out on the camaraderie and social aspect of the sporting world, I felt my biggest goal was to start a family with my girlfriend, and if someone has plans to start a family, then retiring from an athletic career makes it a lot easier.

For Mike, being an athlete was not valued higher than starting a family. In turn he seemed to disregard the "negative" effects of contextual purity and only focus on the ones that could prove positive to his goal of a family.

However, the same cannot be stated for both Steve and Hugh. When stepping into the transition period, both Steve and Hugh felt an overwhelming sense of unpredictability. Unlike Mike, they reflect on the negative effects of events that happened simultaneously, that provided them with an unpredictable and unsure future (Danish et al., 1993).

Steve - In football things were always done for you. You have a kit manager, a physio, a coach and an assistant coach, a personal trainer and much more, you know what the plan is, everything is taken care of. Then when real life hits, you start all over again, from scratch, and on your own. It was almost too much at the start and I had no idea how to get through it.

Hugh - Every day, you knew where you would be and you knew what was going to happen, everything was sorted for you. Going into the real world was scary and meant starting over, and I didn't have anyone to lean on and help me through it.

These answers also find similarities with Holstein's studies of the NFL bubble. From the answers we can see that everything they knew was gone, and they were ultimately ripped out of their own football bubble (Holstein et al., 2015).

4.2 Transferrable skills

All three respondents experienced a "smoother transition" into their new occupational careers, thanks to transferrable skills. This finds a direct link to ideas that athletes who can capitalize on transferrable skills, experience a more smooth and successful transition (McKnight et al., 2009). But what are the skills that the respondents discuss in the interviews? This next section aims to delve into the nuances of the specific skills they discuss, and how they became transferrable to a new occupation, allowing for smooth transition.

4.2.1 Specific skills vs challenges

Although the term transferrable skills are one which covers a wide variety of skills (Nagele & Stalder, 2017), I believe there is an importance in specifying the transferrable skills that the respondents discussed in their answers. After analysing the responses, I found the respondents shared a common skillset in which they believed have been paramount to achieving a smooth transition into their new occupation. The skills specified by the respondents are "social skills", "goal orientated" and "resilience". Starting with "goal orientated, all three discuss that their athletic careers have been filled with a motivation and dedication to achieving their goals, and these have been transferrable to their new careers.

Steve – My only motivation as a footballer was to become as good as I possibly could. That was my main goal, and I did everything I could every day to achieve it. Nowadays, I feel like I still have that same drive to achieve goals that I set, whether it be in life or at work. I feel like the desire to achieve my goals also helps me at work, as I spent years fighting for wins with teammates and having a common goal is almost second nature to me.

However, on their quest to achieve set goals, they met an unnerving number of challenges and setbacks, allowing them to foster the skill of "resilience".

Hugh – When you're a footballer, you are constantly fighting for a place in the starting team, a new contract and ultimately your life's work. Being put on the bench or being released were things both me and I assume everyone who has played football has experienced. Overcoming these things and being resilient is something that every footballer knows of, and it's something that's also helped me in later life.

Mike's answers concurred with this idea and said, "The resilience I have has helped massively in the hardest challenge during transition, which was competing with others for a new job." Mike's main challenge finds a strong link to the research of immediate termination being somewhat traumatic after a long sporting career, as he had had no prior pursuits or other interests other than sports (McKnight et al., 2009).

Mike – it's the same as competing for a starting place in a football team, when I was playing football, my peers were already educated and working their way up the ladder. While I was on the pitch learning to score goals, others were learning how to score in the game of life. Here I am sending in my CV versus a person who has worked the last 10 years, it's a battle that's almost dead-on arrival. It was exhausting yes, but I'd been through so much in football already and was pretty much immune to setbacks, so I just pushed on forwards and continued towards my goal of winning a job.

Although Mike paints a clear picture with his answer, one must remember that unlike Steve and Hugh, Mike had no formal education when entering transition, and therefore may have competing with others more challenging.

Moving on to the respondents' ideas on "social skills". All three respondents believe the transferrable skill that has helped them the most in transition and their new career has been "social skill". Social skill was even credited as being Steve's strongest skill:

Steve - My strongest skill learnt in my career is my social competence; this is something that has evolved throughout the years of being part of a changing room with teammates.

Here, Steve's answer provided me with an interesting new idea to analyse and I asked Steve a follow up question on being part of a "changing room".

Steve - Honestly, inside the walls of the changing room is what has made me who I am today, that is a fact. Us footballers spend countless hours inside a changing room with teammates and coaches, every day before training and after training. You're always part of a social circle in there, and it becomes your second home. Nearly everything I've learnt socially has happened in the changing room, and I think I speak for all footballers when I say we are a product of the changing room. And you didn't ask but God do I miss being in there.

One can argue that this can find a direct correlation with Bourdieu's theory of "habitus": *"The learned set of preferences or dispositions by which a person orients to the social world"* (Bourdieu, 2002, p.27). Without any knowledge of Bourdieu or "habitus", Steve believed that his social skill was moulded and formed within the walls of the changing room amongst other teammates. Unfortunately, as Mike was my first respondent, I did not have the chance to ask about the changing room, however I asked Hugh and he shed light on the fact that the years spent amongst peers and teammates within these walls have had major implications on the way he also orients the social world.

Hugh – Joining the team at a young age allowed me to navigate my own way through the social arena of the changing room, finding my place amongst the rest of the group. I wouldn't say I agree with everything people said in the changing room but most of what I stand for and resonate with comes from within those walls. I remember how the older teammates took me under their wing, especially the captain. I think that has stuck with me throughout life and in my new job, although I've only been there two years, I try to do the same to new employees.

His answers showed that his set of preferences and dispositions were ultimately learned through social interaction with teammates (Bourdieu, 2002). This can be likened to the "sporting bubble", where the changing room acted as a bubble providing the players with a cultural toolkit to habitually craft everyday features of their lives (Holstein et al., 2015).

But how exactly did the respondents leverage their social skill to help navigate a smooth transition into a new career? This brings me to the next sub-code, "cultural capital".

4.2.2 Cultural Capital

If we take the definition used earlier of cultural capital being like money in one's wallet, except the currency is culture (Besbris & Khan, 2017), we can ultimately do the same for transferrable skills, except the currency is skill. Firstly, Mike stated that the choice he made when applying for jobs was largely based on what he believed to be his best skill. A correlation with the ideas of Besbris & Khan (2017) cultural capital arises, as already early in transition Mike decided to leverage himself into a position and had ultimately opened his wallet and pulled out his currency of social skill to help him transition into a new occupation.

Furthermore, the respondents discussed experiences in which their social skill gave them value in their new occupation, just as cultural capital such as education gives a person value in society (Bourdieu, 2002).

Hugh "In my career I learnt that when you are new in a football team, you have to dip your toes in the water socially before completely exerting yourself. I feel this was extremely transferrable into my new

occupation, as when I was new, I used the experiences I learnt in sport to be cautious, curious and humble, and after a while I was able to fully use my social skills to help advance the company.”

Here we can find a clear use of the respondent’s social skill currency. Hugh uses his learned experiences and social skill through his athletic career and leverages them in the same way in his new occupation. Treading carefully at the start, just as he did in his athletic career, allowed him to fully use the extent of his social skills and leverage them in a way which proved beneficial for himself and the company. Transferrable skills and Bourdieu’s cultural capital are ideas in which we can draw parallels. However, what if an individual has transferrable skills, but is not aware of how to fully leverage them? This leads to the next sub-code of transferrable skills, awareness.

4.2.3 Awareness

Danish et al. (1993) outlined how awareness of transferrable skills could be a barrier during transition. The answers I received aligned with this idea, and the ideas of Mayocchi & Hanrahan (2020), that increasing awareness of transferrable skills could produce a positive effect towards career transition.

Steve – it was very hard at the start, as I had all these skills from football, but I didn’t even realise that they were transferrable to a new career, I was under assumption I was starting from scratch. So yes, if I was fully aware that some of my skills were transferrable, I think the transition into a new career would have been much easier, as I would have known what I am worth and what I have in my toolbox. If I knew this, I would have known how to write a better CV and to showcase my strengths that I previously thought to be useless in a normal life.

The response received showed similarities with McKnight et al. (2009) ideas that with awareness of their skills, individuals would pose a better chance of explaining to employers of their skillsets and how they can be useful in their occupational career.

Transferrable skills are a phenomenon in transition that can constitute both a rougher and easier transition. Another phenomenon is that of identity. During this next section, I will present the findings of identity and the relevant sub-codes.

4.3 Identity

One can argue it is hard to understand transition in athletes without looking at identity. Firstly, I find it relevant to present the respondent’s own ideas of their identity and tie it together with the overarching theories of this thesis. Like George Mead’s ideas of the “self” in his symbolic interaction theory, the respondents all refer to their identities being constructed through interaction with other individuals; teammates, coaches, and staff (Mead, 1934). This mirrors the idea in the last section of the respondent’s ideas of themselves being “moulded and formed within the changing room walls.”

However, does this identity change when moving into a new occupation, and are there implications of this? This brings me to the next part of analysis, the “identity-crisis” sub-code.

4.3.1 Identity Crisis

Although there is no theory in this thesis on the term “identity crisis”, one can draw similarities to the idea that athletes experience a disruption to their identity more than others, due to spending their lives honing their craft, whilst disregarding other occupations (Danish et al., 1993). This disruption to identity may be the catalyst for the respondents to refer to it as an “identity crisis”.

Mike “When I retired from football I felt a sense of identity crisis. I had just stopped doing what I loved and dedicated myself to for the last 10 years. It was just everyday life for me, and I didn't know anything else. Going from something so normal to something so different meant I was afraid to not succeed and lose myself and my identity in my new occupation. It felt like I had to change who I was to succeed in my new life”.

The answer here shows a sense of “athletic identity” but also a “foreclosed identity”, where Mike spent his whole life disregarding other occupations, and solely committing to football (Beamon, 2012, p.196: Danish et al.,1993). We can see from the answer that Mike’s own sense of identity felt uncomfortable during transition. This finds a link to Holstein’s ideas of social isolation, as Mike was ripped out of the bubble, he spent the last 10 years in, and ultimately entered a new broader world with where he was faced with uncertainty and confusion (Holstein et al., 2015).

4.3.2 Adaptation

The respondent’s refer to the adaptation of their identities as an important part of transitioning into their new occupations. They all provide a similar explanation of their experience of adapting their identities to their new workplace, However Steve paints the clearest picture.

Steve - When I was a footballer both myself and others knew who I was and what I was capable of. When I moved into my new career, people only knew me as the footballer, and I felt as if I had to find a way to get away from that label. When I interacted with colleagues, I felt I had to adapt my identity so that they would take me seriously in the workplace.

This answer agrees with Cooley and Mead’s ideas of identity being continually shaped and negotiated through social interaction but disagrees with their idea of identities not being fixed (Cooley, 1902: Mead, 1934). One could argue that due to the disregard of other occupation for so many years, Steve still feels a feeling of “foreclosed identity”, and still feels a sense of an “athletic identity” (Beamon, 2012, p. 196: Danish et al., 1993). I wanted to explore further and put a challenge to Mead’s ideas of symbolic interactionism, so I asked if Steve’s colleagues or employees still saw him as “the footballer”.

Steve – No, surprisingly I feel like that part of me has faded to them. I'm not sure if it is because I have adapted my identity to fit in or if my colleagues have realised that I'm not just a footballer, but also someone who is worth something in the workplace. However, deep down I'm always going to be a footballer to myself. Sorry, ex footballer.

This completely disregards Mead's ideas of the "self" being shaped by social interaction with others (Mead, 1934). Regardless of his new occupation, adaptation, the social interaction and reinforcement with colleagues, Steve's view of his own identity seems to be stuck in stone. He may well still have a "foreclosed identity" due to the years spent in sports while disregarding other occupations (Beamon, 2012; Danish et al., 1993), and one could argue that this may finally change when they have been in their new occupation long enough.

4.4 Success

What is it that defines a successful transition? Is it overcoming challenges? Or is it something entirely different? Firstly, we must remember that each respondent voluntarily entered transition, and research suggests that this is a key factor in starting a successful transition (McKnight et al., 2009; McPherson, 1980). However the answers received from the respondents differ, and this final section of analysis aims to delve into the respondent's personal ideas of a successful transition. It seems futile to only research the athletes' perceptions of the discussed phenomenon without introducing their own ideas of success. I will introduce the sub-code "ideas of success", to help understand their responses further.

4.4.1 Ideas of success

Mike – Success? I mean I have to give credit to the support I received from friends and family at the start of transition. They were the reason I was able to believe in my skillset and who I was and to not give up the chase for a new job. Now that I've been working a while, I think being recognized and worthy in the workplace, feeling that I'm good enough the way I am, is the biggest success.

Mike's answers find similarities with Crook and Robertson's fourth point, social support systems, in their five-point success factors (Crook & Robertson, 1991) and believes this to be the starting point of success in transition. He also credits overall success to feeling "worthy" and "good enough", something that mirrors the idea of a lowered self-esteem causing a negative transition. (Botterill, 1981; Crook & Robertson, 1991).

Steve – I think my idea of success is that support systems should be put in place for footballers, as we are so used to everything always being in place for us. When we go out on our own into the big world it's almost as if it's a culture shock to us, and I think with support we can all achieve successful transition.

One can draw parallels here with Mayocchi & Hanrahan's research that athletes who exhibit a higher self-efficacy constitute a more likely successful transition (Mayocchi & Hanrahan, 1997). His use of "culture shock" also brought forth a meaningful similarity to Holstein et al. (2015) ideas of leaving one's athletic bubble, that has insulated the athlete from other ways of seeing and doing everyday life.

Finally, Hugh's idea of a successful transition was one that resonated with Stambulova et al. (2009) ideas of success in transition.

Hugh – I feel like success for me is the fact that I'm now using the skills I learnt in my football career in my new job. I just recently got offered a leadership role in my finance job and I felt an overwhelming sense of success that I managed to become a leader in my new occupation, just as I was a captain of my old football team.

This also finds a link with Bourdieu's ideas that cultural capital is inextricably linked to its source, as Hugh managed to leverage his skills of being a leader on the football pitch, into a new occupation allowing a successful transition to occur (Bourdieu, 1986).

5. Conclusion

This thesis aimed to investigate the complexities of footballers transitioning from a professional sporting career to a new occupational one, focusing on their personal experiences and the phenomenon of transferrable skills, identity, and the perception of success. Through qualitative interviews, I found that the empirical data provided a fruitful insight into both individual and collective experiences and perceptions of the individuals navigating a significant transition in their life course. According to the theory, there are multiple factors that implicate negative and successful transitions. I found that there were factors that allowed for an advantage in achieving a successful transition. Firstly, as the retirement was voluntary for Mike, Steve and Hugh, it allowed them to grasp greater control of their future through anticipatory socialization. Preparing for retirement ultimately mitigated potential disaster and aligned with the idea of normative transitions constituting successful transitions, where athletes retire on their own terms. Secondly, the respondent's abilities to leverage their own transferrable skills, or cultural capital, proved advantageous in their transition period. Hugh's leadership skills seamlessly transitioned into his new role, allowing for his own success, whereas Steve's goal-oriented mindset and drive acted as a catalyst for success in transition. Mike's resilience skill is one that stood the test of time, as he was the only one with no prior education. He fought on regardless of competing with others with years of experience and credits his resilience that was fostered throughout his sporting career.

While the respondents experienced factors that allowed for a more successful transition, they were not without disadvantages. Challenges faced by the respondents such as unpredictability, competition with

others, identity problems, lack of awareness of their transferrable skills and ultimately leaving their own “football bubble” causing a sense of social isolation presented them with significant hurdles. Mike’s foreclosed identity, after committing solely to football led to feelings of confusion and a lowered self-esteem. Steve’s lack of awareness of his transferrable skills ultimately left him feeling as if he was starting all over again. In addition, Hugh’s “football bubble” in which he lived was one that fostered his own set dispositions and beliefs, and ultimately the reason behind his fright in entering a new world or bubble. Lastly, all the respondents bring forth a sense of social isolation and loss of support systems such as coaches, teammates, and staff. Their whole social structure was no longer a part of their lives and proved to provide an uncomfortable and uncertain future into the broader world.

In conclusion, transition is a complex interplay of factors that prove to be advantageous and disadvantageous in soliciting success. Understanding these dynamics are crucial when studying transition in footballers, and I found that it is crucial to research these factors to allow for a developed understanding of what an athlete needs during transition, and how they can help themselves, and social support systems can help them in navigating a successful post athletic transition and career.

Sources

Aspers, P., & Corte, U. (2019). What is Qualitative in Qualitative Research. *Qualitative Sociology*, 42(2), 139–160. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11133-019-9413-7>

Beamon, K. (2012). "I'm a Baller": Athletic Identity Foreclosure among African-American Former Student-Athletes. *Journal of African American Studies (New Brunswick, N.J.)*, 16(2), 195–208. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12111-012-9211-8>

Besbris, M., & Khan, S. (2017). Less Theory. More Description. *Sociological Theory*, 35(2), 147–153. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0735275117709776>

Bergsland, M. D., & Jæger, H. (2014). *Bacheloroppgaven i barnehagelærerutdanningen*.

Charmaz, K. (2001). 32 Qualitative Interviewing and Grounded Theory Analysis. In *Handbook of Interview Research* (p. 675). SAGE Publications, Inc. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781412973588.n39>

Cooley, C.H. (1902). Human Nature and the Social Order. *New York: Scribner's*, 179-185.

Crook, J. M., & Robertson, S. E. (1991). Transitions out of elite sport. *International Journal of Sport Psychology*, 22(2), 115–127.

Danish, S.J., Petitpas, A.J., & Hale, B.D. (1993). Life development intervention for athletes. *The counseling psychologist*, 21 (3), 352–385. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0011000093213002>.

Halvorsen, K. (2008). Å forske på samfunnet. En Innføring I Samfunnsvitenskapelig Metode (5th ed). Oslo: Cappelen Akademisk Forlag.

Hickey, C., & Roderick, M. (2023). Career transitions from the English Premier League: Cooling out the mark with possible selves. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 58(6), 1050–1072. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10126902221142143>

Holstein, J.A., Jones, R.S., & Koonce JR, G.E. (2015). *Is there life after football: Surviving the NFL*. New York University Press

Jacobsen, D. I. (2018). *Hvordan gjennomføre undersøkelser? Innføring i samfunnsvitenskapelig metode* (3rd ed.) Oslo: Cappelen Damm.

Kerr, G., & Dacyshyn, A. (2000). *The retirement experiences of elite, female gymnasts*. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology*, 12, 115-133.

Lofland, J., Snow, D.A., Anderson, L., & Lofland, L.H. (2005). *Analysing Social Settings: A Guide to Qualitative Observation and Analysis*. 4th ed. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing.

Mayocchi, L. and Hanrahan, S.J., (2000). Transferable skills for career change. *Career transitions in sport: international perspectives*. Morgantown, WV: Fitness Information Technology, 161–168.

McKnight, K. M., Bernes, K. B., Gunn, T., Chorney, D., Orr, D. T., & Bardick, A. D. (2009). *Life After Sport: Athletic Career Transition and Transferable Skills*. *Journal of Excellence*, 13, 63-77.
<https://hdl.handle.net/10133/1175>

Mead, G.H., (1934). *Mind, Self and Society from the Standpoint of a Social Behaviourist*. University of Chicago press: Chicago

Nägele, C., Stalder, B.E. (2017). *Competence and the Need for Transferable Skills*. In: Mulder, M. (eds) *Competence-based Vocational and Professional Education. Technical and Vocational Education and Training: Issues, Concerns and Prospects*, vol 23. Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-41713-4_34

Schlossberg, N. K. (1981). *A model for analysing human adaptation to transition*. *The Counseling Psychologist*, 9(2), 2-18.

Stambulova, N., et al., 2009. ISSP position stand: Career development and transitions of athletes. *International journal of sport and exercise psychology*, 7 (4), 395–412.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/1612197X.2009.9671916>.

Stauber, B., Walther, A., & Settersten, R. A., Jr. (2022). *Doing Transitions in the Life Course: Processes and Practices*. (Vol. v.16). Springer Nature.

Werthner, P., & Orlick, T. (1986). *Retirement experiences of successful Olympic athletes*. *International Journal of Sport Psychology*, 17, 337-363.

Zaichkowsky, L., Kane, M. A., Blann, W., & Hawkins, K. (1993). *Career transition needs of athletes: A neglected area of research in sport psychology*. Proceedings: 8th World Congress of Sport Psychology, Lisbon, Portugal, 785-787.

Vil du delta i forskningsprosjektet:

Title: Beyond the Field: Exploring athlete's career transitions and the utilization of transferable skills

Dette er et spørsmål til deg om å delta i et forskningsprosjekt hvor formålet er en bacheloroppgave i sosiologi ved Universitetet i Stavanger (UiS). I dette skrivet gir vi deg informasjon om målene for prosjektet og hva deltakelse vil innebære for deg.

Formål

Prosjektet er en bacheloroppgave som skal undersøke atleter sine karriere overganger fra en idrettskarriere til et yrkesmessig karriere. Oppgaven tar for seg viktige temaer som å legge opp, overganger, overførbare ferdigheter og identitet. Den vil også se på mulige utfordringer ved overgang og hva kjennetegner et suksessfull overgang.

Hvem er ansvarlig for forskningsprosjektet?

UiS (Universitetet i Stavanger), Det samfunnsvitenskapelige fakultet, Institutt for medie-og samfunnsfag er ansvarlig for prosjektet. Studenten har ansvar for oppgaven og Ugo Corte er veileder/prosjektleder og kan kontaktes på ugo.corte@uis.no

Hvorfor får du spørsmål om å delta i prosjektet?

Jeg ønsker at utvalget skal bestå av dere som har drevet med en profesjonell idrettskarriere over lengre tid, og har videre opplevd overgangen til en ny yrkeskarriere. Utvalgskriteriene satt for prosjektet er at informantene er menn, har drevet med profesjonell idrett i minst 5 år, har opplevd og gått gjennom overgangen, og siden det har vært i sin ny yrkeskarriere i minst to år. I første omgang vil jeg spørre 5 personer som jeg gjennom mitt idretts nettverk har klart å samle.

Hva innebærer det for deg å delta?

Jeg tar utgangspunkt i at deltakelsen forbeholder et intervju med kvalitative, semistrukturerte og utfyllende spørsmål. Spørsmålene vil være åpne for tolkning og intervjuet vil vare inntil 1 time. Jeg ønsker å få dine erfaringer, tanker og meninger knyttet til temaet og problemstillingen. Dersom du samtykker å delta i undersøkelsen, vil intervjuet holdes på Zoom og tas opp ved bruk av diktafon appen. Du som deltaker blir behandlet helt anonymt og kan trekke deg under intervjuet til enhver tid. Siden vi ikke møter fysisk, ber jeg om eksplisitt samtykke ved at jeg får tilsendt scannet signatur på Epost.

Det er frivillig å delta

Det er helt frivillig å delta i dette prosjektet. Hvis du velger å delta kan du trekke samtykket når som helst, uten å oppgi grunn. Alle dine personopplysninger vil da bli slettet umiddelbart. Det vil selvsagt ha ingen negative konsekvenser for deg om du ikke vil delta eller senere trekke deg.

Ditt personvern – Hvordan vi oppbevarer og bruker dine opplysninger

Jeg vil bare bruke opplysningene om deg til formålene fortalt om i dette skrevet. Opplysningene dine vil bli behandlet konfidensielt og i samsvar med personvernregelverket.

- Ved Universitetet i Stavanger er det kun meg og min veileder og eventuelt prosjektansvarlig ved instituttet som vil ha tilgang til informasjonen.
- Ingen uvedkommende får tilgang til personopplysningene dine. Navnet og kontaktopplysningene dine vil jeg erstatte med en kode som lagres på egen navneliste adskilt fra øvrige data. Alle data blir lagret innelåst eller kryptert.

Opplysningene dine vil ikke bli offentliggjort og ingen utenfor prosjektet vil ha kunnskap om at du har deltatt i denne undersøkelsen.

Hva skjer med personopplysningene dine etter forskningsprosjektet?

Prosjektet vil etter planen avsluttes 31.07.24. Etter prosjektslutt vil dine personopplysninger og lydopptak av intervju og transkribering slettes umiddelbart. Opplysningene vil også alltid være kodet og ikke identifiserbare.

Hva gir oss rett til å behandle personopplysninger om deg?

Opplysninger om deg blir behandlet basert på ditt samtykke.

På oppdrag fra Universitetet i Stavanger har Sikt – Kunnskapssektorens tjenesteleverandør vurdert at behandlingen av personopplysninger i dette prosjektet er i samsvar med personvernregelverket.

Dine rettigheter

Så lenge du kan identifiseres i datamaterialet, har du rett til:

- innsyn i hvilke opplysninger vi behandler om deg, og å få utlevert en kopi av opplysningene
- å få rettet opplysninger om deg som er feil eller misvisende
- å få slettet personopplysninger om deg
- å sende klage til Datatilsynet om behandlingen av dine personopplysninger

Hvis du har spørsmål til studien, eller ønsker å vite mer om eller benytte deg av dine rettigheter, ta kontakt med:

Universitetet i Stavanger, ved

- Andreas Malde Breimyr, am.breimyr@stud.uis.no tlf: 929 90 958
- Prof Ugo Corte, ugo.corte@uis.no tlf: 518 31 652
- Prosjektansvarlig ved instituttet: Ragnhild Sjurseike, ragnhild.sjurseike@uis.no, tlf: 518 31 680
- Vårt personvernombud ved: Rolf Jegervatn, rolf.jegervatn@uis.no, tlf: 518 33 081

Hvis du har spørsmål knyttet til vurderingen som er gjort av personverntjenestene fra Sikt, kan du ta kontakt via: Epost: personverntjenester@sikt.no eller telefon : 739 84 040.

Samtykkeerklæring

Jeg har motatt og forstått informasjon om prosjektet : **“Beyond the Field: Exploring athlete’s career transitions and the utilization of transferable skills”**, og har fått anledning til å stille å spørsmål.

Jeg samtykker til:

- Å delta I et kvalitativt forskningsintervju
- At det blir brukt diktafon og opptak I intervjuet
- At dataene jeg gir kan brukes og publiseres I bacheloroppgaven
- At studenten kan kontakte meg igjen dersom oppgaven blir underkjent

Jeg samtykker til at mine opplysninger behandles frem til prosjektet er avsluttet, 31.07.2024

(Signert av prosjektdeltaker, dato)

Interview guide

Type of interview: Semi structured qualitative interview

Criteria: 5 years as a professional athlete in sports, 2 years into transitional career, Men

Research question:

Retirement

- What was your decision-making process leading up to retirement?
- Did you prepare for retirement, if so, how?
- Did your expectations align with your reality of the experience?

Transition

- Did you have any plans for life after your athletic career?
- How did you experience the transition period between careers?
- What were the challenges in leaving a sporting career for another occupation?

Transferable skills

- What skills do you believe you developed in your athletic career that have proven valuable in your new career?
- During transition, were you aware of how these skills could help navigate a post sporting career?
- Can you provide any examples of how the skills have contributed directly to your current occupation?
- Do you believe that these skills have shaped your career choices post sports?

Identity

- Do you feel your identity has changed since transitioning from sports, if so, how?
- Have you experienced any challenges with your identity outside of sport?
- Did you feel limited in career options due to your athletic identity during transition?
- Do you still identify as an athlete/ex athlete?

Challenges

- Did you face any challenges during transition? If so, which?
- How did you overcome these challenges?
- Consider transferable skills, do you think some challenges could have been avoided with awareness of these?

- Do you still encounter challenges?

Success

- do you feel you have had a successful transition? If so to what extent? If not, why?
- What is your idea of a successful transition?

Intervju guide (Norsk)

Type intervju: Semistrukturert kvalitativt intervju

Utvalgskriteriene: minst 5 år som profesjonell idrettsutøver, minst 2 år i nytt yrke, mann

Problemstilling:

Pensjonering/Å legge opp

- Hva var din beslutningsprosess frem til du la opp?
- Forbredte du deg på å legge opp? Hvis du gjorde, hvordan?
- Stemte dine forventninger med erfaringens realitet?

Overgang

- Hadde du noen planer for livet etter idrettskarrieren?
- Hvordan opplevde du overgangsperioden mellom karrierer?
- Hva var utfordringene ved å forlate en idrettskarriere til et annet yrke?

Overførbare ferdigheter

- Hvilken ferdigheter tror du at du utviklet i din atletiske karriere som har vist seg verdifull i din ny karriere?
- Under overgangen, var du klar over hvordan disse ferdighetene kunne eventuelt hjelpe deg med å navigere overgangen etter en idrettskarriere?
- Kan du gi noen eksempler på hvordan overførbare ferdigheter har bidratt direkte til ditt nåværende yrke?
- Tror du at disse ferdighetene har formet dine karrierevalg etter idretten?

Identitet

- Føler du identiteten din har endret seg etter overgangen fra idrett? i så fall, hvordan?
- Har du opplevd noen utfordringer med identiteten din utenom idretten?

- Følte du deg begrenset i karrieremuligheter under overgangen, på grunn av den atletiske identiteten din?
- Identifisere du deg fortsatt som idrettsutøver/Ex idrettsutøver?

Utfordringer

- Hva det noen utfordringene du møtte under overgangen? Hvis du gjør, hvilken?
- Hvordan kom du over disse utfordringene?
- Vurder overførbare ferdigheter, tror du noen utfordringer kunne vært unngått med bevissthet om disse?
- Møter du fortsatt på utfordringer?

Sukse

- Føler du at du har hatt en vellykket overgang? Hvis du har, til hvilken grad? Og hvis ikke, hvorfor?
- Hva er din idee om et suksessrikt overgang?