Personal identity in adolescent football players: An explorative study

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was twofold: a) To investigate dimensions and a structure of a personal identity in adolescent football players. b) To investigate a link between the players' athletic identity as a part of the personal identity and their self-esteem. An interview guide was made according to the objectives. Seven adolescent football players (four girls and three boys), who all played for the national team, were interviewed. The interviews were transcribed and analyzed. Interesting parts were noticed and illustrative quotations were used to present the results.

Twelve identity dimensions were found, six of them had not been regarded in prior studies. Football got a lot of attention in the personal identity but other dimensions were also important. Thus, football did not always have the highest priority in the participants’ lives. The relation between identity importance and prioritized behavior seemed more complicated than prior research have suggested. Public attention due to athletic success was one of the factors enhancing self-esteem. Athletic failures did, according to the participants, affect their self-esteem, in different amount however.

The author discusses the results in relation to relevant literature in the identity and self-esteem area. Identity commitment theory (Stryker, 1980; Stryker & Serpe, 1994) seemed difficult to apply to the result. The link between the participants’ athletic identity and their self-esteem seemed to be more complex than prior studies have shown. It is suggested that the discrepancy between the actual-self and the ideal-self (Higgins, 1987, 1989), the disruption of the identity feedback loop (Burke, 1991) and perfectionism (Flett & Hewitt, 2002) has a stronger affect on the adolescent football players than the need for self-enhancement (Leary, 1999; Leary & Baumeister, 2000).

The study implicates that significant others in the athletes’ surrounding ought to emphasize other dimensions of the athletes’ personal identity to avoid athletic identity foreclosure, thus prevent unsuccessful career transitions.

Keywords: Identity, Athletic identity, Self-esteem, Adolescence, Football

Sammanfattning

Syftet med studien var tvåfaldigt: a) Att undersöka dimensioner och en struktur i unga fotbollsspelares personliga identitet och b) att undersöka en länk mellan spelarnas idrottsliga identitet som en del av deras personliga identitet och deras självkänsla. En intervjuguide framställdes för att möta studiens syfte. Sju unga fotbollsspelare (fyra kvinnor och tre män), vilka alla spelade i landslaget, intervjuades. Intervjuerna transkriberades och analyserades. Intressanta delar noterades och illustrativa citat användes för att presentera resultaten.

Tolv identitetsdimensioner upptäcktes, sex av dem hade inte påvisats i tidigare studier. Fotboll fick mycket uppmärksamhet i den personliga identiteten men andra dimensioner var också viktiga. Fotboll hade alltså inte alltid den högsta prioriteringen i deltagarnas liv. Relationen mellan hur viktig en identitet är och prioriterat beteende verkade vara mer komplicerad än tidigare forskning visat. En av de faktorer som ökade deltagarnas självkänsla var den uppmärksamhet som de kunde få genom sin idrottsliga framgång. Idrottsliga misslyckanden påverkade, enligt deltagarna, deras självkänsla, dock i olika grad.


Undersökningen implicerar, bland annat, att viktiga människor i idrottarens närhet bör uppmärksamma andra dimensioner av idrottarens personliga identitet för att undvika idrottslig identitetsslutning, vilket skulle förhindra misslyckade karriärövergångar.

 Nyckelord: Identitet, Idrottslig identitet, Självkänsla, Ungdomar, Fotboll
Introduction

There is a great current interest of athletic identity due to the issues of career termination in sports. There have been some tragic cases in the history of career termination. Most of us immediately come to think about Mikael Ljungberg, who tragically took his own life after terminating his career. Two other recent cases have been Mikael “Roddarn” Andersson, whom is alive but became very unhappy after ending his career (Andersson, 2007) and Martin Bengtsson, a former professional football player who tried to commit suicide (Bengtsson, 2007a). These are only three people that have been overtly attributed to this issue; they are probably only the tip of the iceberg, however. Many athletes experience the same problem even if they have not expressed their problems in public.

Martin Bengtsson (2007b) argued that the problem with his situation was to break or change his own identity from a professional football player to a normal adolescent. When Bengtsson made this statement, he caught all the set of background problems that this study aims to investigate. What was really going on in Martin Bengtsson’s mind when he made the decision to commit suicide because of his inability to change his own identity?

It has been argued that the concept of athletic identity must be expanded (Nasco & Webb, 2006). Much attention has been given to the concept of athletic identity and athletic identity foreclosure. A new way of expanding the concept of athletic identity would be to investigate athletes’ personal identity. In the sport psychological identity research personal identity in adolescent athletes has been neglected; even though there seems to be issues in the applied intervention area (e.g. career termination) that would benefit from this research (Brewer, Van Raalte & petitpas, 2000).

What is really taking into account when talking about identity? It seems difficult to define; philosophers, sociologists and psychologists have all tried to find out what identity means. Descartes, around 1640 (Carlshamre, 1998; Gaarder 1991), claimed that although humans change (during their development), there is something in the individual that never changes. Descartes argued that the thoughts humans think change, but “the thing” which thinks the thoughts never changes (Carlshamre, 1998). The Scottish philosopher, David Hume (1711-1778), objected Descartes’ argument by arguing that if the self would be unchangeable, the individual should be able to notice it when he or she examines his or her psychological life (Carlshamre, 1998). Instead, Hume stated that there was no such thing as a self, which is apparent when people try to get in to the core of the self. It is nothing more than impressions of heat, cold, light, dark, love or hate (Carlshamre, 1998); it is impossible to perceive the self without attaching the self to an impression. This leads to the conclusion that I think that I am the same person as I was ten years ago or ten seconds ago – but I am wrong.

Definition of key concepts

Identity seems to be hard to define. A comprehensive approach to the concept is: “An individual’s sense of self defined by (a) a set of physical and psychological characteristics that is not wholly shared with any other person and (b) a range of social and interpersonal affiliations (e.g., ethnicity) and social roles. Identity involves a sense of continuity: the feeling that one is the same person today that one was yesterday or last year (despite physical or other changes). Such a sense is derived from one’s body sensations, one’s body image, and the feeling that one’s memories, purposes, values, and experiences belong to the self.” (VandenBos, 2007, p 463).

Identity is one part of the human’s self. According to Baumeister (1995) the self is a highly complex structure and includes three things: (1) the body; (2) the social identity, that can be understood as a cluster of meaningful things that become attached to the body, for instance,
name, social roles and other attributes; and (3) the self as an active agent involved in making decisions. Another definition is “The totality of the individual, consisting of all characteristic attributes, conscious and unconscious, mental and physical. Apart from its basic reference to personal identity, being and experience, the term’s use in psychology is extremely wide ranging and lacks uniformity.” (VandenBos, 2007, p 827).

The self-concept can be referred to: “One’s conception and evaluation of oneself, including psychological and physical characteristics, qualities, and skills. Self-concepts contribute to the individual’s sense of identity over time. The conscious representation of self-concept is dependent in part on unconscious schematization of the self. Although self-concepts are usually available to some degree to the consciousness, they may be inhibited from behavioral patterns.” (VandenBos, 2007, p 828). The self-concept is seen as a hierarchical and multifaceted structure (Marsh & Shavelson, 1985), which means that different domains (e.g. school, family, peers) and parts of specific domains (e.g. mathematics or English as subjects in school) construct the individual’s self-concept.

Self-esteem is an ambiguous concept to define. Some researchers define it in one way, others define it in different ways, and many either take the term for granted or define it as broadly as possible (Mruk, 2006). However, in this paper self-esteem will be defined as a person’s appraisal of his or her value (Leary & Baumeister, 2000). The self-esteem can then be divided into global self-esteem, which reflects a person’s global value judgment about the self, and a domain-specific self-esteem, which involves appraisals of a person’s value in a particular situation (Leary & Baumeister, 2000). This is the definition of the concept, thus it does not say anything about the consequences, connotations or implications different levels of self-esteem have.

**Psycho dynamic perspective**

Erik Homburger Erikson was one of the pioneering theorists in the work of identity. Erikson considered the person in a life cycle perspective, as an agent searching for identity and influenced by the socio cultural-context. Thereby he extended the work of Freud to consider more than just the childhood years (Evenshaug & Hallen, 2001); even though he emphasized the importance of secure childhood attachment as a cornerstone for a vital personality (Erikson, 1968). Through the eyes of Erikson, human life is a developmental span with different psychosocial stages where every stage has a specific order and assignment; he called this process the “Epigenetic schema of human life” (Erikson, 1982).

Every critical stage in the Epigenetic schema is dependent on the development and success of every other stage. A successful identity formation depends on the accomplishment of the prior stages in the psychosocial development process. According to Erikson (1982) an analogy of his psychosocial development may be seen in the contemporary theory of that time of embryo development. If the eye is not established at exactly the right time it will never be able to totally develop, because the parts of other organs will already be forming. This implies that adult psychological disorders are always the result of an unsuccessful development in any prior psychosocial stage. Every psychosocial stage is therefore a potential crisis situation (Erikson, 1968). The word “crisis”, however, should be seen in a developmental perspective; not as a catastrophe but as a turning point — a critical period with increased vulnerability and opportunities. This is why the crisis is the ontogenetic spring to productive strength, increased opportunities but also a risk period for maladaptation (Erikson, 1968).

The identity formation, in form of identity crisis, is most overt, as a psychosocial stage in the late adolescence. However, it neither starts nor ends in the adolescence; it is a lifelong development largely unconscious to the individual and to the society (Erikson, 1959). Though
Erikson has made more than one definition of identity, according to Marcia (2001), a comprehensive one is:

“The integration now taking place in the form of the ego identity is more than the sum of the childhood identifications. It is the inner capital accrued from all of those experiences of each successful alignment of the individual’s basic drives with his endowment and his opportunities. In psychoanalyses we ascribe such successful alignments to ‘ego synthesis’…”

(Erikson, 1959, p. 94, italics in original)

The ego synthesis, as the final identity, is fixed at the end of adolescence. It is superior to any other identification with significant others of the past. Though it includes every other identification it alters them to make a unique and reasonable entity of them (Erikson, 1959). The identity is then based on two, for the individual, simultaneous observations: (1) the instant perception of one’s selfsameness and continuity over a period of time; and (2), the simultaneous perception that others recognize one’s sameness and continuity.

Erikson also stresses the importance of mastery experience and sense of occupational identification for the strength of the identity (Erikson, 1959, 1968, 1982). The identity gains real strength from wholehearted and consistent perception of real achievement, which must have meaning in the individual’s culture. An adolescent who does not feel the sense of mastery experience will become bored no matter how busy he or she is. If this person also fails to find an occupational identity, it will result in an over-identification with people from small groups of the society; the person will be despising others who do not commit to the group norms.

The identity formation also depends on the mutual process between the groups the individual is a part of (Erikson, 1959). The young individual must learn to be most herself where she means most to others, the others that means most to her. There is therefore a reciprocal effect of the group and the individual. In order to find a genuine identity, the individual must find sameness within his or herself and a persistent sharing of some kind of essential characters with others.

In general, those who criticize Erikson refer to the indistinctiveness in explaining the theoretical questions (Evenshaug & Hallen, 2001). Erikson was aware of this and meant that his artistic background could explain but not forgive this fact. Due to the vagueness of Erikson’s theories, little research has been done to support them with one exception which will now be presented.

**Research on Erikson’s theories**

Marcia (1966) developed Erikson’s theories and tested them scientifically. Erikson saw the identity formation as a continuum with identity achievement at one end, and identity confusion at the opposite end. Marcia’s research found that there are four statuses of an identity formation as a result of reaction to the identity crisis. The first status Marcia (1966) defines is the identity achievement subject. This is a person who has experienced an identity crisis and is now committed to an occupation and ideology. The second is the identity diffusion subject. This person may or may not have experienced a crisis period. The subject has neither committed to an occupation nor to an ideology, and it does not bother him/her. The third status is the identity moratorium subject which is in the crisis period. This subject is distinguished from the diffusion subject because he/she is actively struggling to make an identity commitment. The last status, the identity foreclosure subject is a person who has not experienced an identity crisis, but is still expressing commitment.
Marcia confirmed a part of Erikson’s identity theories. Even though Erikson was the pioneer and in somehow the architect of the identity (Marcia, 2001), there is a lack of scientific support for his theories (Evenhaug & Hallen, 2001). Modern identity research is basically constructed from the social cognitive and sociological perspective, which is the next area of investigation.

**Sociological perspective**

The sociological approach to identity begins with the postulation that there is a reciprocal relationship between the self and society (Stryker, 1980). The self influences society through human behavior, which results in creation of groups, networks and institutions. Reciprocally, society affects the self with the shared language and meanings that enable people to make social interactions, take other peoples’ roles and reflect on oneself as objects. The sociological perspective, therefore, takes into account both the human and the social context in the study of the self.

Even though the sociological perspective has unity in the approach towards the self, there are differences between sociological definitions of the human self. More specifically, there are multiple views of identity in the study of sociology (Stryker, 2000). Some researchers take a cultural or collective approach to identity research (Stets & Burke, 2003). This view does not take individual differences of human behavior into account, but it can present identity of social groups and is often used in the work of ethnic identity. Another view of identity is the social identity (Tajfel, 1981). This perspective sees identity as embedded in a social group or category (Stets & Burke, 2003). The weakness of this perspective is the lack of explanation of in-group behavior and role relationships between group members. A third perspective, and most interesting for this study, grows out of the symbolic interaction tradition (Stets & Burke, 2003). This perspective takes into account the individual role relationship and identity variability, motivation and differentiation.

Stets and Burke (2000) define the core of the identity to be the categorization of the self as an occupant of a role and incorporating into the self the meanings and expectations associated with the role and its execution. They emphasize the self as an occupant of a social role, which will guide the human internal dynamics. This is a synthesis of role identity and personal identity. However, the definition constructed by these authors has been influenced from other ideas about identity.

There are two premises in this sociological identity theory: (1) to form an identity there has to be social interaction; and (2) from this social interaction a shared meaning of symbols and classifications will emerge among people (Stets and Burke, 2003). This is the basic principle for constructing an identity. McCall and Simmons (1978, ref in Stets & Burke, 2003) indicated that a role identity has a “conventional” structure and an “idiosyncratic” structure. The role identity was described as the role one person devises to himself as an occupant of a particular social position. The conventional structure refers to the ‘role’ of the role identity that implies expectations to the social position; for instance, how to behave if you are a doctor or a teacher. If the world only had conventional structure in the identity, all doctors and teachers would behave in exactly the same way depending on the social context. The idiosyncratic structure of the identity describes the unique interpretations every individual brings to their role. The variance in a role identity depends on the idiosyncratic versus conventional proportion every person has of a particular role. McCall and Simmons (1978, ref in Stets & Burke, 2003) figured that one person must have more than one role identity. Therefore the roles must be organized in a hierarchy with the most prominent and “ideal self” identity on top.

The prominence of the identity is determined by degree to which one: (1) gets support from others for an identity; (2) is committed to the identity; and (3) receives extrinsic and
intrinsic rewards from the role identity. An identity is more likely to be activated in a situation if it has more prominence.

Stryker (1980) also sees the role identity organized in a hierarchy based on the salience of the identity. The salience of an identity depends on the degree of commitment one has to the identity (Stryker & Serpe, 1994). The commitment has two aspects: a quantitative and a qualitative. The quantitative portion of the identity is decided by the number of human connections one has through one particular identity. For instance, if a person in his social context has ten people that see him as a football player and only two people that expect him to be a student, his football player interactions will be more dominant resulting in more football player congruent behavior, which increases the salience of that identity.

The qualitative aspect of the identity refers to the strength and depth in the connections to others through an identity. The commitment is higher when the ties to others through that identity are stronger. For instance, if two individuals expect a person to be a hockey player and two different individuals expect the same person to be a piano player, the salience of that particular person will be decided through the strength and depth in the connection to the other persons. Every identity’s rang in the salience hierarchy depends on the commitment to the identity, which is the result of the qualitative and quantitative aspect of the social interactions.

The works of McCall, Simmons and Stryker focus on the structure of different role identities. The internal dynamics of the identity has not been regarded in the same amount. Questions like how the identity is being activated in a situation have been neglected, thus, leaving a big part of the identity puzzle unsolved.

Powers (1973, ref in Stets & Burke, 2003) constructed a theory that has influenced the consecutive research (Burke, 1991, Burke & Reitzes, 1991; Riley & Burke, 1995). The premise of this theory is that an identity is a set of meanings attached to the self in a social role, which serves as a standard for the person. When a specific identity is activated in a situation, this starts a feedback loop (Burke & Stets, 2003). The loop has four components: (1) the standard; (2) a perceptual input of self-relevant meanings from the situation, including how one sees oneself (meaningful feedback in the form of reflected appraisals); (3) a process that compares the perceptual input with the standard; and (4) output to the environment (meaningful behavior) that is a result of the comparison.

The goal of the loop is to maintain congruence between the perception and the standard whereby the behavior adjusts to the environment so that the congruent stimuli can be perceived. The cybernetic model sees behavior as a combination between environment and internal self-meanings. For instance, if a girl perceives herself as a basketball player and realizes that others also perceive her like that she will continue to behave like she does. On the other hand, if the girl perceives that others view her as a golfer she will change her behavior to change other’s perception about her resulting in a behavior dissociating from golf and associating to basketball.

This introduction has reviewed Erikson’s identity theories followed by a broad sociological perspective and ended with a narrower sociological perspective. The next section will consider the personal identity from the social cognitive perspective.

Social cognitive perspective

In the Social-cognitive approach identity is conceptualized as a self-theory – a self-constructed theory of oneself (Berzonsky, 2004). It contains procedural knowledge for making decisions and solving problems as well as representational schemas for understanding events and personal experience. This social-cognitive statement is based on a constructivist view that people create who they think they are and the world in which they live (Berzonsky, 1993). Humans do not see themselves totally objective. Facts and stimuli are always interpreted by a human biased in cognitive structures that determine how and what to interpret
Even though we know that the identity is a self-theory about oneself, we do not know what is so special about this self-theory and how it works or if there are other assumptions about identity in the social-cognitive perspective.

When talking about a theory of the self, the distance to the concept of the self is not long. To theorize or conceptualize oneself might almost be the same kind of process. Self-concept is defined as a composite view of oneself (Bong & Skaalvik, 2003); it is the total organized amount of information that any given person has about him or herself and it is constructed of different distinct beliefs about the self, called self-schemas (Baumeister, 1995). Many different distinct information units about the self construct the total concept of the self; for instance, one’s self as a football player. The self-concept has therefore come to be defined as hierarchical and multidimensional (Marsh & Shavelson, 1985). But the idea that plain knowledge about oneself is the core of the personal identity seems too simple. It is hard to understand how the identity can be the force to emotion and motivation (Higgins, 1987) if it is just an explicit and implicit knowledge about oneself. The core of the personal identity seems to be something else.

Baumeister (1995, p 52-53) constructs a definition that includes more than the explicit knowledge about the self (see definition of key concepts). According to him, the identity is something that is incorporated in to the self. But it is diffused and difficult to see what is incorporated. What is it really that we do have inside of ourselves?

Higgins (1987, 1989) argues that people have expectations about how they ideally shall be and how they ought to be. These expectations are constructed by themselves and significant others (e.g. parents). In turn the expectations construct their so called self-guides. All behaviors are evaluated and compared to the guide. The self-guide then directs behaviors with signals from emotions. If a behavior falls short of how the person ought to be, agitated feelings like anxiety will arise in the person. On the other hand, if the person is falling short of the ideal self, he or she will tend to experience unpleasant, low-arousal emotions such as sadness and depression. This theory implicates emotion as a motivational guide that directs human behavior. Critics to this theory argue that Higgins does not explain what the sources of motivation are in the first place (Epstein, 1992). According to Epstein (1992), pleasurable feelings are not taken into account in Higgins theory, neither are more complex states that are sources to human influence, such as threats to self-esteem.

Perhaps the concept of identity must be defined in an indistinct way for it to work as a theoretical concept. If something is very hard to describe, the logical definition will not be easy to understand. Hitlin (2003) makes a brave attempt to solve the identity mystery when he states that human values are the core of the personal identity. According to Hitlin (2003, p 121) “personal identity [is] at the core of the self, experienced as unique but subject to social patterning through the concept of values”. He departs from this definition and argues that values, referring to desirable goals that serve as guiding principles at a higher level than attitudes, work as the core in the personal identity. The values direct the individual’s behavior not per se but through the value-identity.

It is hard to get a unified view of the social-cognitive research on the identity issue. The scientists choose to view identity through a very narrow perspective for the most part; for instance, as memory (Kihlstrom, Beer & Klein, 2003), self-knowledge organization (Showers & Hill, 2003) or as an implicit structure (Devos & Banaji, 2003). Even though this gives a very detailed and accurate picture of the identity concept and its complexity, it is hard to apply it to a broader holistic perspective.

**Athletic identity**

The athletic identity has been defined as “the degree to which an individual identifies with the athlete role” (Brewer, Van Raalte & Linder, 1993, p 237). Brewer et al., (1993) argue that
people do not make overall assessment of themselves, rather they make domain specific judgment about their competence and personal worth in that domain because of the multidimensional self-concept (Marsh & Shavelson, 1985). For instance, a person may feel high in personal competence in academic situations but low in competence in athletic situations. Self-concept may even influence the self-esteem of a person. The level of importance attributed to a specific domain will determine the level of influence the domain competence has on the self-esteem (Harter, 1990). Brewer et al., (1993) claim that the athletic identity is a part of a person’s self-concept and the athletic identity’s influence on the persons self-esteem is being determined by the competence and importance the person attributes to the athletic domain. Important to notice in the discussion of the multifaceted self-concept is the declaration of Baumeister (1995), who argues that even though we are talking about a multifaceted self we have always only one self. The multifaceted self is working inside of one unique person and no matter which self-schema is being activated, it always refers to oneself. Someone who imagines him- or herself as a football player is different from someone else imagining being a football player.

The athletic identity can be seen in different depths. Referring to Brewer et al. (1993), in a narrow and deep perspective the athletic identity can be seen as a self-schema (Markus, 1977) that guides and categorizes self-relevant information. In its broadest sense, Brewer et al (1993) argue the athletic identity can be seen as a social role. To assess the athletic identity, Brewer et al. (1993) stated that the strength and exclusiveness of the athletic identity must be measured and therefore created the Athletic Identity Measurement Scale (AIMS).

The athletic identity has been correlated with athletic, health, and exercise behaviors (Brewer et al., 1993). It has also been negatively correlated with student athlete’s career maturation (Murphy, Petitpas & Brewer, 1996), which implicated that a strong athletic identity has the power to exclude other career opportunities for youth athletes resulting in identity foreclosure. The more individuals involve themselves in sport participation the more they will identify with the athlete role (Good, Brewer, Petitpas, Van Raalte & Mahar, 1993), and the more likely they are to experience identity crisis and disruption when their sport career ends (Stephan and Brewer, 2007). To make it even more complicated, the athletic identity has shown to be essential to reach the elite sports level (Tusak, Faganel & Bednarik, 2005) even though a high athletic identity does not guarantee its attainment. This means that an athletic identity can contribute to successful performance and therefore be a resource. In oppose, when the athlete is retiring from sport the athletic identity can be a barrier. This double-edged sword of athletic identity is obvious in athletic career transitions (Alfermann & Stambulova, 2007). High athletic identity is coherent with pursuing a career in sport whereas low athletic identity contributes to career termination. But the other side of the coin shows that individuals with high athletic identity have problems with adaptation to critical life events, such as non-normative career transitions (e.g. injuries, deselection) and career termination in general.

One recent study (Nasco & Webb, 2006) has argued that the AIMS does not take into account the public dimension of the athletic identity. The public dimension describes the degree to which an athlete engages in athletic behavior because of external rewards and recognition. Nasco and Webb (2006) claim that AIMS only regards the private dimension of the athletic identity, which describes the individual’s internalization of the athlete label. According to Nasco and Webb, the athletic identity should be assessed through the perspective of both private and public dimensions.

The original AIMS is constructed of four dimensions (i.e. social identity, exclusivity, negative affectivity and self-identity). These four dimensions were argued to capture the extent of athletic identity in athletes (Brewer et al., 1993). Cieslak (2004) argued that the four dimensions of the AIMS should be expanded to five dimensions. Therefore Cieslak added
positive affectivity as one dimension and consequently constructed the AIMS Plus which Cieslak argues to be a more accurate measure of the athletic identity. AIMS Plus is probably the most updated version of instruments that claim to measure athletic identity.

Brewer and Stephan (2007) made an exploration study with the purpose to investigate the factors that contribute to identification with the athletic role. The feeling of being an athlete was determined by an organization of social and personal factors. Social factors included having a part-time job, the sport environment, contact with teammates and global social recognition. Personal factors consisted of identification with the elite sport lifestyle and the bodily dimension of elite sports. A particular interesting result of the study was that a part-time job served as a factor increasing the feeling of being an athlete. Logically the part-time job should be interpreted as something outside of the athletic domain thus, decreasing the athletic identity. In oppose, the part-time job became an athletic identity facilitator because of the individuals’ athletic recognition among the co-workers.

Even though it is obvious that a high athletic identity leads to an active involvement in sports and therefore becomes a circular relationship (Brewer, Van Raalte & Petitpas, 2000), changes in athletic identity can occur in response to team selection (Grove, Fish & Eklund, 2004). This was shown when 47 female athletes, vying for team selection, were tested on athletic identity. Before team selection there were no differences in athletic identity between the groups of selected girls and non-selected girls. The same day, a few hours after the team selection was announced, there were significant differences in athletic identity between the athletes who became selected to the team and those who were not. The players who did not make the team had significantly lower athletic identity in comparison to the selected athletes. After two weeks the same difference was maintained. The difference is argued to be a result of self-protecting which occurs when people use cognitive and/or behavioral processes to reduce the negative aspect of the self (Grove, Fish & Eklund, 2004).

The study of Grove, Fish & Eklund (2004) implicates the importance of a distributed self-concept for coping with athletic defeat. Even though this is a common opinion in the athletic identity research, Horton & Mack (2000) found no evidence that marathon runners with high athletic identity would neglect other aspects of life in order to fulfill the role of an athlete. Relative to low athletic identity, high athletic identity was correlated to better performance, more commitment to running, larger social network and more frequent experience of both negative and positive effects of marathon training.

These different findings insist that it is less the athletic identity per se that leads to negative consequences (e.g. neglect other aspects of life) but more the identity foreclosure (Alfermann & Stambulova, 2007). However, to be able to move forward from where the research is today, some investigation should be made from a holistic perspective. And more than the athletes’ athletic identity should be taken into account in the identity research. Some of the future research should regard the personal identity of athletes.

Objectives for the study are:

a) To investigate dimensions and a structure of a personal identity in adolescent football players.
b) To investigate a link between the players' athletic identity as a part of the personal identity and their self-esteem.

Method

Participants
The participants were seven football players (3 males and 4 females) born in 1989-1990. They were all active football players on elite level, thus, playing for elite clubs and the Swedish
national team for their age groups. One of the participants reported once in a while playing handball if the former team suffered a lack of players. Otherwise, football was their only sport even though most of them had tested and played other sports parallel to football in younger age.

All of the participants went to high schools of football in Sweden. The four females went to a high school with a national admission. One of the males went to a smaller football high school and the other two went to a high school that cooperates with their football club so they could train with their regular football team on school time. These two males had an individualized schedule which was prolonged to four, instead of three, years. This was because they should have the possibility to prioritize football without falling behind in school.

All of the participants were residents in the south of Sweden. All of the males lived in their own apartments because it would take too long to commute between their parental homes and school and practice. Conversely, all of the females lived in their parental homes.

Instrument
An interview guide (see Appendix A) was composed to meet the objectives of the study. Thus, the interview guide served to explore dimensions and a structure in athletes’ personal identity as well as exploring a link between athletes’ self-esteem and their athletic identity.

The first section of the interview guide was made to get an apprehension of the athletes’ level of self-reflection. It was also thought as a conversation starter that would make it easy to slide over to the key questions. However, the athletes’ background narratives make up an interesting part of who they are and how they remember themselves as.

The purpose of the second section, in the interview guide, was to explore the dimensions in the personal identity. The interviewees’ were asked to describe and tell about the social roles they experience as a part of who they were. This gave the interviewer an understanding about the identity dimensions that were being processed in the mind of an athlete.

In order to explore the structure of the personal identity dimensions the interview guide’s third section used the five dimensions from the Athletic Identity Measurement Scale Plus (AIMS Plus) (Cieslak, 2004), but with a qualitative method approach, as an influence to the questions being asked. The dimensions are social identification, self-identification, exclusivity, negative affect and positive affect. To make it easy to answer for the interviewees and easy to understand for the readers, the interviewees were asked to fill in “pie charts” for answers. For instance, in question 3.1 the interviewee shall rate the importance in his or her different identities. Instead of ranking the dimensions the interviewee is asked to fill in the pie chart so the share of every identity reflects the identity importance. Thus, the greatest share of the pie chart will go to the most important identity. So the size of the share should also represent the importance the identity dimension has in the interviewee’s life in comparison to his or her other identities. In this way the author would not only be able to see the order in the identity dimensions but also how important one identity dimension is in comparison to other identity dimensions.

Procedure
Contact with the participants was established through the Swedish football association. Through the association, two football trainers working with the desired target group were contacted via telephone. One of the trainers informed his players about when to meet the interviewer. No contact between the author and the participants was established before the interview. The other trainer gave contact information to two of his players so contact could be established between the author and the players. One of the participants was contacted directly by the author, without any mediator, since the player had been interviewed by the author.
before and contact information was known. Date and time for the interviews were decided and all of the interviews were conducted in the participants’ respective hometowns.

Four of the interviews were conducted in the library on Sven Eriksson Gymnasiet in Borås. In the library there were some quiet reading rooms where the interview could be accomplished without disturbing sounds. Two of the interviews were done in a VIP section on the Olympia Stadium in Helsingborg. This place also had all the necessary conditions for an interview situation. The final interview was conducted in a quiet room on Aspero Gymnasiet in Halmstad.

All of the interviews started like common conversations, for instance about school, football or life in general. The goal was to make the interviewee comfortable in the situation and make them talkative (Gordon, 1978). Optimally, the interviewee should not notice a gap between the introducing conversation and the formal interview. However, before the interviews started the participants were informed about: a) the purpose of the study, b) that they were free to withdraw at any time without explaining why and without receiving penalty, c) that the interview would be audio taped, d) that all the information about the participants would be treated with confidentiality. This is in accordance with ethical guidelines for psychological studies with humans (American psychological association [APA], 1992; Mitchell & Jolley, 2007).

During the interviews the conversations was not strictly regulated by the interview guide. The interviewees all got the opportunity to think free and associate to what ever they wanted. Every little idea was followed up with questions; this is what made the study explorative.

The interviews were recorded and transcribed. Every participant received the finished transcription of their own interview. They were asked to read their transcribed interview and send it back if they wanted to correct or make something clearer.

Data analyses
The oral interviews were transcribed literally according to Kvale (1997). Pauses, repetitions and hesitations were taken into account when doing the transcriptions (see an example of a full interview text transcribed in Appendix B). However, much of the paralinguistic language was not affecting the analysis of the conversations. The explicit answers to the questions were usually most interesting in regard to the objectives of the paper.

When the transcription was done one copy was sent to respective interviewee for judgment and comments. By doing so the interviewees had the chance to adjust and/or correct what they had said but did not agree with afterwards. If the participants did not adjust anything they were at the same time confirming that what they had said was correct. Five of the seven participants did send back their confirmation of the transcription. This procedure was supposed to enhance the reliability of the study.

The analyses of the transcriptions were made according to an ad hoc strategy (Kvale, 1997). To treat the data confidentially the transcriptions were named from A-F. The interviews were read more than once to get familiar with the answers. All transcriptions were then analyzed together question by question. Interesting parts were noticed no matter the number of times being mentioned from the interviewee’s. The answers were then summarized and illustrative quotations were used to present the results.
Results

Dimensions in the athletes’ personal identity

A dimension in a personal identity refers to a social role a person identifies with. Therefore, dimension, social role and identity can, in the result presentation, be used as equal concepts even though identity will be used most often.

All together the athletes came up with twelve different identities. Five identities were chosen by them all, as can be seen in figure C1, Appendix C. Every identity was described by the athletes who had chosen them. Following section will summarize the athletes’ own descriptions of their identity dimensions and their perceived feelings in that identity. The identities are structured due to the importance rating that the athletes did.

Athletic identity

In the athletic identity (that later will be referred to as Football identity) the athletes perceived themselves as football players. All of the seven participants stated that football was a part of who they were. In the role as football players they felt confident, goal oriented, hard working and persistent to reach their goals. All of them wanted to become good football players even though only some of them explicitly said that they were aiming towards a professional career.

The role as a football player was different from other roles in some characteristics in the role. For instance, leadership roles and responsibility was mentioned when talking about football player. Because of the confidence, associated with the football player role, the athletes could show more assertiveness and could communicate in a more straight way towards their team mates. However, this could be seen as a problem, if the friends in the team are the same as the athletes’ friends outside of the football court.

All of the three males had left their homes to invest and develop in football. One male (athlete F) meant that his environment is so focused on football so it is impossible for him to not get in contact with it during an ordinary day.

"The football feels like how ever I may turn I will always get into football because of the life I am living now… the football feels like it is coming to me all the time, when I wake up it will be something with the football, that is, something that is guaranteed to be football so to speak”

The football identity was perceived as mostly positive. The positive feelings consisted of the mere love to the game but also the cohesion and spirit of the football team (e.g., friendship), as well as the social identification with the athlete role. The negative part of the feelings was due to injuries, teammate conflicts and performance anxiety.

Family identity

The family identity was one of the basic identities every athlete chose to be a part of who they are. The family identity was usually described as an identity where the athlete was calm and had the opportunity to relax and rest. The athletes perceived the family as “an oasis” where they could step out of other identities, for instance football player. However, in their family identity, they still perceived themselves to a great extent as being football players because much of the family identity contended football elements, such as watching siblings play and generally talk about football.

"It feels like everything comes together since the family is so involved in my sport. It is like one part”
There was a low ratio of negative feelings experienced in the family identity. The negative part stood for conflicts with siblings (although sometimes it was perceived as fun), and irritation that was projected to the family although the family did not have anything to do with the cause of the irritation from the beginning.

The family identity can be described with the quotation from athlete F:

“When I am at home I do not want them to see me as a serious football player. Then I almost want to shut that door so it does not get too much so to say. When I’m at home it should be possible to hold a conversation like ordinary people so to say. I am indeed still the same son to my parents no matter what I do”

**Friend identity**

All the interview subjects claimed the friend identity to be a part of who they are. Athlete A describes his friend identity like this:

“You can let go when you are with friends. You can joke a little bit more and things like that. Of course you can do so with the family as well but it is dependent on what friends you are with. But there you are also pretty relieved but you cannot relax the same way as you can with your parents. So friends, you can be cool but still you are, it is hard to explain but it is still a little bit more tensed when you are with friends than with the family”

In comparison to his family identity he is a little bit more tensed in his friend identity. However, the athletes perceived their friend identity as being very joyful and important. Some of the athletes had already moved out of their parental home because of the football and therefore lost a big part of their social network. Thus, much of their friend identity was constructed mainly of interpersonal relations through football but also some through school.

Compared to the other identities, the friend identity had, in mean, the highest amount of perceived positive feelings. The only times negative feelings were experienced was when conflicts to friends emerged and when the athletes preferred to be alone instead of being with friends. Otherwise it was only positive emotions associated with friends.

**Private identity**

The private identity was chosen by all of the interviewed athletes. It was described to be activated when the athletes did not wanted to be with anyone else except themselves. When they were in their private identity they relaxed, watched a movie, listened to music and had the opportunity to reflect about upcoming events or just to structure their day.

In their private identity they felt as themselves. In a few cases this could be a composition between some other identities, for instance family, friends and football player, and it could also be that they did not identify with their student identity when they were alone. However, most of the athletes did not feel that some other identity was dominating who they were when they were alone.

Nearly all of them found it comfortable to be alone but there was a higher amount of negative feelings connected to the private identity than to many other identities. The negative feelings consisted of, especially, anxiety when thinking about school and homework. Other negative thoughts, which were not activated to the same amount during interpersonal contacts, could also be generated in the private identity. The positive feelings emerged from relaxing, absence of interpersonal contact and calmness.
The following is a quotation from the interview with subject B. This is how she came up with and talked about her loneliness identity:

”...it should be towards myself then, yes, I really like to be alone and things like that. I am not that good at attending parties. Or it is like; I do not have any need to be with anyone during the weekend or so. I can just be with myself and watch TV or with my mom and dad”

**Romance identity**

None of the athletes were in romantic relationships at the time of interview. They described themselves as interested in romantic relationships; however, this identity was not prioritized. The participants were pretty uncommunicative about their romantic identity even though they considered it to be a basic need.

One of the participants wished to have a partner but was unwilling to spend all the time it would take to nurture the relationship. The same participant emphasized that she had no interest for partners in the same age group as hers. The reason for this was the inability for young men to prioritize and their preference for having sex with many girls instead of a steady relationship. Because of this she preferred older guys.

Even if none of the athletes were in a relationship they, who choose to have it as a social role/identity, still claimed romance to be part of who they were. This could be explained as a football player that is injured but still perceives him/herself as a football player. The fact that they wanted to have a partner but did not have one was a major contributor to negative feelings associated in the romantic role. The share of negative and positive emotions had a wide range in this identity. The highest estimated amount of positive feelings was 90 percent and the lowest was 10 percent.

There were two athletes who did not see romance as an identity in themselves, even though they were interested in having a partner. This choice was due to the low prioritizing rank of the romance role.

**Student identity**

The athletes could, in terms of their student role, be separated in two parts; those who prioritized the student role and those who did not. There were two participants, one female and one male, that emphasized their involvement and dedication to school. They found it important and necessary to do well in school mainly because of the consequences bad grades can lead to. For instance, they do not want to waste time on “gymnasium” school work when they are 25, thus, they wanted to have the opportunity to go to university and to get a good job if their career did not evolve as planned. They had both good grades and did not find it hard to learn. However, they still perceived the school as an obligation and it definitely had the potential to create anxiety when thinking about it.

The other athletes did not find school that important. Often their student role was described as a burden, something that was necessary to do and a spring force to negative emotions, even if this was not specific characteristic for these athletes only. Those who did not prioritize school, to the same extent as the others, believed that the problem would solve itself in the future. Some athletes’ opinion was that the football career would take care of the problem. Some could see a problem about only relying on football as a future career but they believed their grades would get them into college or they could take a job as something that has to do with football (e.g. trainer) if they failed on their professional career.

Athlete F described his disregard for school as follows:
Most of my time is consumed by football and school only. But I prioritize football. It is just the way it has been. One is supposed to have control over them both but it feels like I spend more time in football even so… Football is the thing I like, it feels like, one has moved here because of the football not for anything else, broadly speaking.”

Among all the social roles/identities the student identity was the one with the most perceived negative emotions. The negative emotions came from the feelings of obligation and compulsion. These things, and the fact that the athletes had not done their homework or were falling behind in school, awakened anxiety emotions in the athletes. It was especially the thought that they ought to do something they had not done (e.g. homework or examination assignments) that generated feelings of anxiety. The positive emotions were due to the socialisation in school. All of them perceived it as fun to be in school because of the interaction with peers.

Religious identity
The religious identity was chosen by one participant, athlete E, who was a Christian. Her family, relatives and herself was very dedicated to their beliefs. She regularly goes to church and according to herself she thinks more about her conduct because of her Christian beliefs. For instance, she would not use swear words or other bad language when she is thinking about herself as a Christian.

The negative feelings in the religious identity were generated from a lack of knowledge about the Christian religion. The positive feelings could not be specified but the identity as a whole was perceived as positive.

Extra work identity
Only two of the participants (athlete B and C) mentioned the extra work identity as a part of who they were. There were no explicit behaviours that were associated with the extra work identity. One of the participants thought it was fun to work and associated it with a high amount of positive feelings. This participant did work approximately every other weekend and was stationed in a sports shop. The other participant did not interpret it just as fun as the first one. She worked in the middle of the week when the business was short on staff. This participant’s work had nothing to do with sports and the participant had a relatively low amount of positive feeling associated with the identity even if the positive feelings were some more than the negative.

Public identity
The public identity concerns the identity the individual has when interacting in public environments. It was only one of the subjects who could see himself in a public identity even though there was one more participant who noticed the role. However, she did not want to define it as an identity.

The participant spends a lot of time traveling by train and when he does he becomes a totally different person. This is how athlete F describes his public identity:

“I often travel by train and things like that. Then I am a totally different person towards others. But I do not know how to [explain]… one becomes different. You behave in a totally different way if you meet someone when you go by train for instance. You become a different nice person in some way, I can feel that I behave differently, I do not know how to explain”
He sees it as an identity that is compulsory. It does not mean very much to him but still it is important to him how other people perceive him the first time he meet them. Even though he does not talk to everyone when acting in public he emphasizes that he moves and behaves in a special way which is hard to describe according to him. The public role is not similar to any other role he has but he still behaves in some special way every time he is in the public role, this makes the public identity specific and different to any other role.

The public role is not only activated when he travels by train. He can see himself in the public role when he asks someone what the clock is, when he goes into town or when he enters a disco or when ever he is at a place where he does not know the people in his surrounding.

The public identity was seen as mostly positive with a ratio of 75 percent positive feelings and 25 percent negative. The 25 negative percents were due to the compulsory part of the identity. The positive feelings were generated from a general joy in the identity.

Dream identity
The dream identity considered the role one has in one’s dream. This identity was only mentioned by one of the participants, athlete B. When she talked in terms of dreams, what she meant was the dreams when she was asleep. According to her the dream could be an expression of another life and maybe clues of a life after this. She also referred to Freud and said that dreams may be conscious and unconscious aspirations, from the awaken state of mind in real life, that do come true in the dreams. For instance, she often dreamt about males and referred this to be conscious aspirations but did also see an unconscious aspiration due to the urgent desire for a boyfriend. However, she also said that she had dreamt a lot of her recent perceptions during the day and noticed that these impressions are stored in the cortex. All of her thoughts about dreams emerged from her Swedish lessons where they had had assignments that treated the concept of dreams.

In her dream identity she estimated 50 percent of the experienced feelings to be positive. The negative part consisted of the disappointment of waking up.

Internet identity
The internet identity was interrelated to both friendship and romance but was so different in the way of behaving so it was seen as a distinct role in one athlete’s personal identity. One participant that did chose internet to be a part of his identity, athlete F, did so due to the difference in communication through internet compared to a physical verbal contact. It was not that he had a special identity, in terms of a different name or a fantasy character, which made the internet identity a distinct identity.

However, he found it hard to describe this identity because of its interrelation to friends and romantic partners. He did stress the fact that they communicated in a different way and that he meet people he has never met before. The conversations through internet are not only about internet related topics but also about things that would have been discussed in a regular (face to face) conversation. He also plays games on websites and talks to the people there. He saw these people as friends but emphasized the difference in communication channels.

The internet identity was perceived as very positive with a share of 95 percent positive feelings in the role and logically only 5 percent negative.

Relative identity
Relative identity was also chosen by only one participant, athlete E. She had some of her relatives in a different country because her mother and father had immigrated to Sweden, although she was born in Sweden. She thought it was very interesting and fun to go visit her relatives in her mother and father’s home country, and she has done this a number of times.
Even though the war has ended she does understand, to some extent, how life was during the time of war. This understanding constructs a reflection inside of her about how good life is in Sweden.

Even though many of her relatives are abroad she has some relatives in Sweden as well. When she is in the role of her relative identity she sees herself as more helpful. Relatives are always prioritized before friends and others and her relatives are just as close to her as her family (mother, father and siblings). According to her this is different from how Swedish families are in relation to their relatives. For instance, if she wants to visit her relatives she feels free to do so without announcing her arrival before she comes. Swedish families always phone their relatives before they visit and this is, according to her, a different way to raise children due to what country the parents are from.

To her the relatives means just as much as the family does. She sees this only as fun and there is no desire, from her side, to be alone with her family without her relatives.

Structure in the athletes’ personal identity
To investigate the structure in the athletes’ personal identity five categories from AIMS Plus (Cieslak, 2004) were used (see Instrument in the Method section).

Exclusivity - Identity importance
The mean distribution of identity importance can be seen in Figure C2 (Appendix C). Two individual results can be seen in Figure D7 and D8 (Appendix D). The participants could mention underlying factors that decided the importance of their identities. These factors were: “because it is fun”, “best for the future”, “most prioritized”, “successful”, “friendship”, and “physical activity”. The family identity was important just because it was important. It was sometimes hard for the participants to give a good explanation to why something is more important than other things.

Some participants emphasized that it was hard to say that a special identity always was more important than another one. For instance, even though family was most important it sometimes had to step aside for school and football. However, it became more clear to the participants what was most important to them when they thought about what identity they least of all wanted to lose.

However, the complexity of the importance distribution can be illustrated with a quotation from athlete B:

“The school is very important as well. But it does not take ten percent of the importance percent even though I spend the half of an ordinary day to study. Family is more important than studies, or in some way it is not. I do prefer to study than go with my family to an amusement park if have an examination in school the day after, so to say.”

Social identification – How they believe others perceive them
The result of how the athletes believe other people in general perceive them can be seen in figure C3 (Appendix C). Two individual results can be seen in Figure D9 and D10 (Appendix D). The result says that most athletes believe that others recognize them to be football players. This was due to that many people can read about them in newspapers and that they meet a lot of people through football. The underlying factor which could affect the participants answer was the flow of people that were met through the identity.

When the question was asked how they believed significant others (e.g. family, friends etc) perceived them the pie did get a different distribution (figure C4, Appendix C) (see two individual samples in Figure D11 and D12, Appendix D). Those who meant most to them saw
them mostly as family members. This was obviously because they had strongest relations to their families.

**Self-identification - Perceived strength in identity.**
The strength in the different identities was distributed as Figure C5, Appendix C, shows. Two individual results can be seen in Figure D13 and D14 (Appendix D). When estimating the perceived identity strength the participants were told to think about what identity they represented the most.

Factors that contributed to identity strength were: a believe about what should be strongest, self-identification with the identity, self-image, when the identity is something you really want to be, when it consumes time, when you want to succeed, and when your interest is congruent with the identity.

Athlete C motivates her identity strength distribution as follows:

“The football is a thing that I really want to do and it is on arranged times. So you have to adjust your other life to football. So I do prioritize one thing and then the other things have to be in the background.”

**Positive and negative affect - experienced emotions in the identities.**
The distribution of emotions associated to respective identity was presented above together with the dimensions in athletes’ personal identity. A closer description of what generated these feelings is provided here.

The negative feelings was generated by conflicts, perceived demands, not feeling good enough, meaninglessness, failure and others’ social loafing. The positive feelings were generated by learning things, meeting friends, having fun, being comfortable in ones role, developing and delightedness.

It was emphasized that in some way a positive emotion in one role could be more positive than a positive emotion in another role. Thus, experiencing positive or negative emotions in one role does not have to be the same as feeling it in another role, according to the participants. Also, when receiving a good comment in football it felt better if the comment came from a skilled player than a less skilled player.

**Exclusivity - Sacrifices of some roles to be successful in other roles.**
There were some dimensions in the athletes’ identities that were sacrificed to become more successful in other dimensions. The only two dimensions being prioritized, at the expense of others, were football and student. Football was most frequent prioritized and student only in one case. The sacrificed dimensions were friends, student, romance, extra work, and in one case football.

The reasons for prioritizing one thing before another were that it was not fun to study, there was an ambition to become best in football, football was something they really wanted to do, they were aiming to become better in football and they did feel stronger for the dimensions they prioritized.

When the student identity was prioritized, athlete B still wanted to become more successful in football than in school but she did not prioritize it however:

“I want to be more successful in football than in school because it is much more fun. But if I do have an examination the day after I will not go out for a run instead of study the day before.”
**The link between athletic identity and self-esteem**

The athletes did generally feel good about themselves. To be a valuable person some claimed that it is just enough to be a person, thus, everybody is valuable. Some had more specific criteria for how a valuable person behaves. This could be that the person needs to show helpfulness and cross situational self-consistency. Some stated that the worth is changing depending on the persons that are evaluating. However, even if they sometimes could feel bad about themselves, all of them knew that they meant something to someone.

Athlete C says like this about her general self-esteem:

> “Yes, I do believe that I am valuable or both “yes” and “no” actually. Some days I do feel totally worthless or like I am useless, but you still know that you are valuable. But sometimes you have down periods. You feel plainly down. Everything is bad and useless. But you still know at heart that you mean something to other people”

**Distribution of dimensions contributing to self-esteem.**

The mean distribution of how the identity dimensions are contributing to athletes’ self-esteem can be seen in Figure C6, Appendix C. Two individual results can be seen in Figure D15 and D16 (Appendix D). Family is the major contributor to athletes’ self-esteem, followed by friends and football.

Family was seen as a safe base that never would disappoint or intentionally hurt the athletes’ feelings. In football there was a perceived risk of failing and receiving negative feedback as well in friends even though not to the same extent. The family was in one case perceived as most honest and therefore affected and contributed to the athlete’s self-esteem the most. In comparison, friends in school did not give honest feedback which affected the athlete’s self-esteem negatively, according to the athlete.

In one case it was emphasized that all feedback, regardless from whom, could affect the self-esteem. However, it was mostly comments about success in football that could enhance the self-esteem.

The following is a quotation from Athlete E’s reasoning:

> “Then the family has to come first because they would never pull me down. I do feel valuable as a player as well but when you do get criticism it is hard. But you can get good criticism as well. So I do not really know how to distribute”

**Athletic success and self-esteem.**

It can be summarized that athletic success, according to the participants, does affect self-esteem. One athlete’s self-esteem increases when he receives the honor to be captain of the team. They are all very proud of playing in the national team which enhances their self-esteem. They also feel good about themselves when they get to hear good comments about their football performance from others, regardless if it is people from their extra work, school, their family or friends. When interacting with those people they experience high self-esteem.

When self-esteem was enhanced due to football performances some athletes became more motivated and inspired to develop a professional career. One athlete did emphasize that she felt good about herself when she got rewards from the local newspaper. Even though she saw school as very important it could not be compared with football in terms of self-esteem enhancement. Football enhanced the self-esteem more than school did and this was due to the attention and social recognition football elicited from her environment.

Quotation from athlete B:
“The football has a much more public appearance. Everybody can see and notice it in a different way. If I get a good grade on a test at school I only tell my family about it and then they say ‘that was good’. In football you receive much more attention”

Athletic failure and self-esteem.
Just as athletic success, athletic failure does affect the participants’ self-esteem, according to themselves. However, in what way it affected could differ between athletes. Athletic failure could directly harm the self-esteem but also in an indirect way by affecting other dimensions in the personal identity. Football and friend were claimed to have the ability to affect the most. According to one athlete, they were attached to each other and so important that they could affect all of the other dimensions.

Athlete C stated that the athletic failures affected the self-esteem much more in younger age. Then it could take enormous proportions and become negative loops where one negative thing lead to another and no positive feedback were able to break these loops. Athletic failures did also affect the self-esteem when the athlete did see herself as the best player of the team. She did put too much pressure on herself and always wanted to be the best, which afterwards seems like unmanageable demands for a young player, according to herself. The demand to always be the best changed when she got graded to play with the senior team of the club and the national team, which made her realize that she was not the best and that mistakes were ok. Then she started to play football because it was fun. Today, failures do affect her self-esteem but only in short periods.

Failures did also affect the self-esteem because the athletes did not feel that they received the same amount of attention from other people when failing. It could also affect the game of football because low self-esteem caused by failures lead to negative thoughts and too many thoughts.

Athlete E explains the complexity of athletic failure and self-esteem as follows:

“Well it does affect [athletic failures on self-esteem] but it is really not that much. It does affect all the other parts though. Because if the football was not going my way then it for sure would go bad in school as well. They do affect each other; it is a social life so to speak. If you feel down because school is going poorly then friends and football will start to go poorly as well. It is probably important that I do good in everything so everything do work”

Discussion

Summary of results
The objectives for the study was: a) to investigate dimensions and a structure of a personal identity in adolescent football players and b) to investigate a link between the players' athletic identity as a part of the personal identity and their self-esteem.

Twelve identity dimensions were found. These were athletic-, family-, friend-, private-, romance-, student-, religious-, extra work-, public-, dream-, internet- and relative-identity.

The athletes found family, football (athletic) and friends to be important dimensions of their lives, in different amount, however. They perceived football to be a strong identity, for instance because of their interest and love to the game. Negative emotions were experienced when the athletes did perceive demands, pressure, conflicts and failure. Positive emotions were experienced when they felt successful, comfortable in their role and when they had fun.
They did sacrifice some of their identity dimensions to become more successful in other dimensions. For instance, student, family and friends could be reduced. Football and student were the only two identities that were prioritized at the cost of some other identity.

The athletic identity did contribute to and affect the athletes’ self-esteem. Athletic success made them feel more valuable and gave them more attention and social recognition. On the other hand, according to them athletic failure did also affect their self-esteem. They did feel bad when they could not perform well even though the negative feeling was not persistent. However, in younger age, athletic failure did affect the athletes’ self esteem more vigorously and persistently.

Dimensions in the athletes’ personal identity
Cieslak (2004) uses six different identity dimensions (Family, friendship, athletics, academics, religion and romance) to rate identity importance. Except these six, this study found six other dimensions which were: loneliness, extra work, public, dream, internet and relative. Every newfound identity, and those already found, had a special pattern of behaviors attached to them. However, in some identities the significant behaviors could be difficult to distinguish, define and describe. From the perspective of Stets and Burke (2000), who define the core of the identity to be the categorization of the self as an occupant of a role and incorporating into the self the meanings and expectations associated with the role and its execution, these additional dimensions ought to be seen as identities.

One of the identities, private, is different from the other identities because of the absence of social interaction. According to Stets and Burke (2003), to form an identity there has to be a social interaction. This premise should be reconsidered when thinking about that people’s active withdrawal from social interaction also affects other people, and not only the presence in the interaction. As some of the participants said, there is a need to be alone and mind your own things, which definitely affects those who are withdrawn from. However, the outcome of Burke’s (1991) intrapersonal identity processing model does not prohibit loneliness from being an identity dimension.

Even though every identity had its own pattern of behaviors some of the identities were overlapping each other in terms of the behaviors attached to them. For instance, the football identity became influenced and in somehow depending on the friend identity because the friends to a big extent were the same as the football players. Also, some of the results do indicate that the different dimensions have the power to affect each other. Many of the participants stated that failure in one important identity dimension could make one feel and/or do worse in other dimensions as well. The intervening and reciprocal influence of the identity dimensions does question the strict self-concept model of Marsh and Shavelson (1985). Even though Marsh and Shavelson argue that the general self-concept is stable there seems to be something missing in terms of the reciprocally influence the different concepts have on each other.

The positive and negative emotions (affect) that are experienced in the different identities can be ambiguous to interpret. According to the participants, just because a dimension has a high amount of positive feelings this must not be the consequence of great degree of identification with that dimension. Cieslak (2004) argues that the positive affect represents the degree to which an individual feels good or encouraged in response to desirable outcomes of sport participation. However, some of the participants did emphasize that it required very big success for them to feel good about themselves. This implicates that the fulfillment of their day to day goals are not enough to make them satisfied. It was also said that the same feeling could be interpreted differently depending on what identity dimension it was experienced. For instance, a positive feeling could be worth more in football than in the family. The result was the same for negative feelings. This indicates that there is a more
complex connection between perceived feelings and the extent of identification and that positive feelings are not always a reliable indicator for degree of identification.

Especially two of the identity dimensions generated different emotions when self-discrepancy emerged. Self-discrepancy in the student identity (e.g. skip homework) lead to agitation-related emotions (e.g. anxiety). In contrary, self-discrepancy in the football identity (e.g. injury, team rejection) generated dejection-related emotions (e.g. depression). In terms of Higgins' (1987, 1989) self-discrepancy theory, this is a consequence of school being an ought self and football an ideal self. This implicates that the participants see school as an obligation which is a representation from the participants’ own or significant others’ expectations about them. On the other hand, football works as the individual’s own or significant others’ hopes, wishes or aspirations for themselves.

Structure in the athletes’ personal identity
According to McCall and Simmons (1978, ref in Stets & Burke, 2003) one person must have more than one role identity. Therefore the roles must be organized in a hierarchy with the most prominent and “ideal self” identity on top. An identity is more likely to be activated in a situation if it has more prominence. The result of this study indicated that it sometimes can be more complex than this. Even though the participants stated that one identity is more important than another one the relationship between identity and behavior could be ambiguous. The family identity was very important but sometimes lower importance ranked identities (e.g. student) could be prioritized at the expense of the family. Of course McCall and Simmons do not say that this is not the case but their theory does not account for the complexity in relations between motivation and identity.

When the participants were asked to distribute their different identities in terms of how they believe others perceive them, football got a big portion. According to Stryker (1980) and Stryker and Serpe (1994) this could be interpreted as a result of commitment to the identity. They argue that a person’s belief of how others perceive him or her will determine the commitment to a particular identity. In this study the football identity should have the strongest commitment towards the participants thus be the strongest identity in the participants. However, Stryker (1980) and Stryker and Serpe (1994) also argue that the degree of commitment is decided from the strength in the relationships through the identity. When the participants of the present study distributed their identity dimensions in terms of how significant others perceive them the family got the biggest share. This means that they meet a lot of people through their football identity but those who mean most to them see them as family members. In this case it is difficult to define the most salient identity which makes this theory hard to apply to adolescence football players.

As Baumeister (1995) makes clear, even though we are talking about a multifaceted self we have always only one self. Even if the authors of the hierarchical and multifaceted self-concept (Marsh and Shavelson, 1985) emphasize the stability of the general self-concept they do neither explain the motivation processes between the dimensions in the self-concept nor how the stability is expressed in behaviors. Some of the participants stated that they do feel and act as the same persons no matter what identity dimensions they are active in. In some cases they could even despise the fact that peers did not act in a consistent way in different situations. This implies that the consistency in behavior and cognition is more pervasive than it is argued in the self-concept model of Marsh and Shavelson (1985). However, the model does not consider the connection between the dimensions in the self-concept.

In regards of the prioritized and sacrificed dimensions it seems like those dimensions that did have power to generate feelings (e.g. anxiety and depression) were also able to be prioritized. Likewise, those dimensions that did not generate any unpleasant feelings were easier to sacrifice. However, the anxiety feelings could also be the motive for not executing
the identity congruent behavior. Discrepancy between the actual-self and the ideal-self in the football identity was a strong generator of depressive emotions. This is an indicator of football working as an own/others’ ideal-self in youth athletes (Higgins, 1987, 1989), which also can explain the high degree of priority to football. Conversely, the student identity was most overtly associated to anxiety. Even if anxiety most often led to behaviors that reduced the anxiety (e.g. doing the homework that generated the anxiety) sometimes the anxiety and pressure became too high which led to rejection of the problem.

Even if many studies have been conducted to investigate the athletic identity and the identity in general (see introduction) no research that examine the athletic identity as a part of the personal identity was to be found by the author of the present study. Athletic Identity Measurement Scale (Brewer, Van Raalte & Linder, 1993) does consider the exclusiveness of the athletic identity but it is still neglecting the other personal dimensions of the identity. The updated version, called Athletic Identity Measurement Scale Plus (Cieslak, 2004), do consider more than athletic identity. However the author does not show any explorative intention towards the dimensions of the personal identity. Thus, this area can be seen as unexplored in the sport psychological research.

The link between athletic identity and self-esteem
Family, friend and football were the three biggest contributors to the participants’ self-esteem. The family was in most cases the number one self-esteem contributor because the family would never disappoint or purposely harm. According to Leary (1999) and Leary and Baumeister (2000) defending self-esteem is a strong motive in human beings. Their so called Sociometer theory explains self-esteem not as a purpose per se but rather as an indicator of social devaluation and rejection. For instance, when receiving a comment about something that is not favourable when connecting with others (e.g. bad breath) the self-esteem may decrease. In the family identity the participants are not at risk in regard of devaluation in their social relationships as in their friendship relations, thus, they perceive family as helping them to keep high self-esteem.

Self-esteem can also be seen as the person’s feeling towards its own self-concept (Buckworth & Dishman, 2002). When applying this definition the choice of the family as the number one self-esteem contributor can be explained with that the family is evaluating the person’s self-concept most positively compared to other dimensions. Thus, the self-esteem increases the most when being around the family.

What both theories have in common when applying them is the fact that the participants do evaluate themselves through the eyes of others, which is a phenomenon called the “looking glass self” (Cooley, ref in Stryker 1980). According to this theory, people do evaluate themselves in terms of how they believe others perceive them. When talking to the participants this phenomenon became obvious.

Athletic success and self-esteem
The participants increased their self-esteem when they received public rewards (e.g. from newspaper). According to the participants, this was due to the public attention that was generated from the reward. In terms of Cooley’s theory (Stryker 1980) they evaluate themselves more positively because they believe others perceive them as more important. The reward could also be seen as a facilitator to social relationships, thus boosting self-esteem as Leary (1999) and Leary and Baumeister (2000) argue. It was obvious that public rewards did increase self-esteem in a way that more private distinctions (e.g. good grades) did not.

When the self-esteem increased due to athletic success the participants did feel motivated to involve and invest even more in the football identity. This could be a logical consequence of the self-esteem’s influence on human behaviour. Because of the motive of
seeking high self-esteem (Leary, 1999; Leary and Baumeister, 2000), people should be willing to develop skills and invest in areas where they are likely to make social relationships and receive social attention.

**Athletic failures and self-esteem**

Long term injuries that stopped the athletes from participating in sports did generate depressive emotions. As written before, this could be a result of the discrepancy between the actual-self and the ideal-self (Higgins, 1987, 1989). The generated depressive emotion could also be seen as a consequence of a discrepancy in the identity feedback loop (Burke, 1991). In terms of self-esteem, the depressive emotions are most likely a consequence of devaluation and rejection in social relationship (Leary, 1999; Leary and Baumeister, 2000). The participants did emphasize the lack of social attention as being a reason for decreased self-esteem.

Athletic failures did affect the participants’ self-esteem in a negative way. Even though all of them stated that failures did not last very long, some participants indicated that they were more sensitive to athletic failures in younger age then they were now. In younger age they were demanded to be the best players in their team, and when they did not fulfill this demand they perceived themselves as failures. As Burke’s (1991) feedback loop implicates, a standard that is difficult to live up to will generate more failures, thus, generate more negative feelings.

The problem of negative reactions to athletic failures could also be associated with perfectionism. Perfectionism is the striving for flawlessness (Flett & Hewitt, 2002). One participant said that her athletic failures could develop into negative spirals where one negative thing lead to another and no positive feedback was able to break this negative spiral. So even if other players told the participant that she had done well she could not see this as something positive; instead she maintained her own evaluation of her performance. This could mean that the positive feedback did not work as an enhancer of the self-esteem. According to the theory of the “looking glass self”, positive feedback should facilitate a positive evaluation of the self (even if it is the person’s own believe of others’ evaluation that determines the evaluation of the self), thus increasing the self-esteem. In some way the discrepancy between the actual-self and the ideal-self (Higgins, 1987, 1989) or the disruption of the identity feedback loop (Burke, 1991) or the perfectionism (Flett & Hewitt, 2002) has a stronger affect on the person than the need for self-enhancement (Leary, 1999; Leary and Baumeister, 2000).

When the participant was moved up to the senior team she changed her own standard after a period of setbacks and failures due to others being better. She then realized that she was not the best player in the team and therefore allowed herself to make mistakes. In this way she lowered her identity standard, thus making it easier to be congruent. Maybe the change of identity standard followed the same principal as the decrease in athletic identity followed by team selection (Grove, Fish & Eklund, 2004). In terms of the Sociometer theory (Leary, 1999; Leary and Baumeister, 2000) this would be a way of dealing with the dejection in social relationship, a kind of dissonance effect (Festinger, 1957; Aronson 1997).

If enhancing one’s self-esteem is a strong motive in human beings, and if the self-esteem is an indicator of one’s social relationships (Leary, 1999; Leary and Baumeister, 2000), then it is rather strange that the participants do want to be alone, and see this as a part of their identity. Maybe the Sociometer theory does not consider the fact of human introversion.

**Limitations of the study**

One limitation of the study is due to the interview situation. The interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee is one factor determining the quality of the interview. Even if
the interviewer did feel confident and calm in the interview situation maybe a different approach or person chemistry would enhance the quality of the interview and therefore make it more accurate to the objectives of the study. Accomplishing an interview is a challenge. It is a skill and it takes a lot of knowledge to make it right. The interviewer of this study is not very experienced in the interview process and therefore this becomes a limitation of the study.

The duration of the interviews became rather long. The shortest one was one and a half hour and the longest was two hours and five minutes. Both the interviewer and the interviewee became tired and energy deprived at the end of the interviews. Because of interesting conversations the long duration gave substance to the result. However, the interviewee had probably been able to give more accurate answers at the end of the interview if the interview had been shorter.

To make the study more valid the interview transcriptions should have been triangulated in a more accurate way. For instance, some with psychological knowledge should have inspected the interview material to be able to give his/her opinion on the analyses made by the author. No triangulation like this was done because of the time consuming consequences. However, all the participants had the opportunity to correct his/her interview transcription. Five of the seven participants did approve the text. The author interprets the absence of the remaining two participants’ approve as a quiet accept.

Even if the study is built on a relative comprehensive literature review the study of identity is complex, complicated, theoretical, and hard to grasp. A number of complex concepts associated with identity can generate concept confusion. Because the concept of identity is hard to define it becomes hard to investigate the concept and its connotations.

**Implications**
The problematic consequences of the athletic identity in adolescence still remain. This study has explored different identity dimensions in adolescent athletes. According to Brewer, Van Raalte and Petitpas (2000) one fruitful intervention, when dealing with athletes in career transitions, is to help the athletes to reduce their exclusive identification with the athletic role and to invest more in other sources of identification. This study has provided a suggestion of different identity dimensions that can be worked with and improved to reduce the exclusivity of the athletic identity.

More research has to be done about the athletic identity and the personal identity in athletes. Until we receive more knowledge in the area, coaches, and especially youth coaches, must take precaution when working with athletes in terms of exclusivity of athletic identity. Coaches that exclusively focus and stress the athletic identity in the athletes may be a contributing factor to the athletic identity foreclosure which in turn probably is the main contributor to an unsuccessful career termination (Alfermann & Stambulova, 2007). However, this problem is not only the coaches’ responsibility. All of the other identity dimensions that include personal interaction may contribute to the athletes’ social identification as an athlete. It may not be the exclusivity of the athletic identity that is the real problem; instead it may be other identities’ focus on the athletic role that creates the athletic identity foreclosure (e.g. that the family sees the adolescent more as an athlete than as a family member). Thus, all people in the athletes’ surrounding may consider the problem of athletic identity foreclosure. Desirable would be if they sometimes would stress other parts of the human being in the athlete role.

**Future directions**
This study has investigated the personal identity in seven adolescent football players. The idea with the qualitative approach was to investigate and explore the personal identity in adolescent athletes. In this way suggestions for future hypothesis about the subject can be
created. First, however, future studies should investigate the subject in a quantitative approach, thus including more participants. Such studies would make it possible to see patterns in the personal identity of adolescent athletes.

An instrument for measuring personal identity in athletes, like AIMS measures the athletic identity, could be useful to see the other part of the human, than only the athletic role. Such instrument for measuring the personal identity could be used in correlation studies. The result of this study implicates that it would be of interest to correlate the personal identity in adolescent athletes with, for instance, self-esteem and perfectionism.
References


Appendixes

Appendix A. Interview guide

Appendix B. Transcription of interview

Appendix C. Figures of dimensions and structures in athletes’ personal identity

Appendix D. Figures of individual results in athletes’ personal identity structure
Appendix A

Personal Identity of Adolescent Athletes
Interview guide

1 General self-reflections

1.1 - Please, tell about yourself and your life.
   - Follow up

1.2 - Do you ever think of who you are?
   - In what way? How?

2 Dimensions of the personal identity

2.1 - With what social roles do you identify yourself?
   - Please, describe all your current social roles.
     (Related: family, friendship, athletics, academics, religion, romance)

2.2 - Please, tell about yourself as a…! (Identities identified above, e.g. student, peer)

3 Structure of the personal identity

Can you compare your various identities in terms of:

3.1 - What identity is most and least important to you? (Pie)
   - Please, make a pie of importance including all of your identities!
   - Why?

3.2 - How do you think other people see/perceive you? (Pie, quantity and quality).
   - Why?

3.3 - What is your strongest identity? (Pie)
   - Why?

3.4 - How is the distribution amongst positive and negative emotions, that you experience, in each of your identities? (Pie)
   - Why?

3.5 - Do you sacrifice yourself in some areas of your life to be successful in other areas?
   - If yes, tell in what way, how and why you do this?

4 Self-esteem

4.1 - Do you feel/think that you are a worthy person?
   - Why?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Question</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>How do your different identities contribute to your feelings of worthiness? (Pie)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>How important are your athletic success to your feelings of worthiness?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>How do your athletic failures affect your feelings of worthiness?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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- Why?
T: kan du berätta om dig själv och ditt liv?
X: ja mitt liv…det har ju nästan alltid kretsat kring fotboll, om man ska dra paralleller till idrotten, har levt med mina föräldrar innan ett ganska tryggt och lugnt liv har jag upplevt, så det har ju varit en bra grund om man säger så nu när jag flyttade hemifrån, så hade jag tryggheten med mig hemifrån…vad ska man berätta…vi är ju en fotbolls och idrottsfamilj så mycket av fritiden har ju handlat om fotboll…
T: det har det?
X: ja det har det…jag vet inte vad jag ska berätta om…
T: om du gör en livslinje, här föddes du och här är du nu, kan du sätta ut vad du gjorde, i stora drag, i olika åldrar.
X: mmm, vid fem år började fotbollen, det är ju det man har mest minne av så det är det man kommer ihåg mest,
T: mmm
X: skolan började ju året efter, en stor bit också ju…
T: ja
X: här någonstans byter vi skola, ny skola, efter sexan
T: ok, till högstadiet då?
X: ja, men det är ju ganska likt, det var inte så stor skillnad att byta skola när jag fortfarande bor hemma hos föräldrar
T: ok
X: här blir det ju ny skola och flytta hemifrån
T: mmm
X: det var ju ett större stege om man säger så, att både flytta hemifrån och byta till en så pass annorlunda skola, men det största steget var ju att flytta egentligen, här börjar jag ju i (nuvarande fotbollslaget) också, nytt fotbollslag och så, så det kräver lite omställning också
T: ok, allt det här skedde samtidigt?
X: ja det skedde samtidigt, jag flyttade, när jag flyttade ner hit då började jag ju i (nuvarande fotbollslaget), jag gick ju över när jag började skolan. Så alla de tre punkterna kom ju när skolan började så det blev en stor omställning, sen har det varit ganska likt fram tills nu, det har ju varit samma skola och fotbollen har fortsatt och så
T: och nu går du i årskurs?
X: två
T: ok, tänker du någon gång på vem du själv är?
X: ja, det kommer ju alltid tankar liksom, varför jag blev jag och sådana grejer, varför det blev jag och sådana frågor som man inte har något riktigt bra svar på, det är självklart man tänker på det men man har inget riktigt bra svar på det men det är inte så att man tänker på det ofta, det är ju ibland men inte ofta
T: hur tänker du då? Kan du vara mer specifik?
X: eee, nå men man tänker liksom vad det är som gjort att jag fått just mina egenskaper, min personlighet, då relaterar man det till föräldrarna men det är ju inte alltid det stämmer det heller, det är nog det jag tänker på mest, hur har jag blivit jag, min personlighet eller såhär då, inte just varför jag föddes eller så, mer på personligheten…
T: hur du har blivit formad?
X: ja precis…mmm
T: så du reflektar lite över hur du har formats och när du tänker i de banorna så tänker du hur är mina föräldrar?
X: ja hur har jag formats i min uppostran, hur stor roll det har spelat eller så, eller om jag föddes till att bli såhär, men där har man inte heller något riktigt bra svar men det är väl lite en blandning…
T: mmm, reflektar du någon gång över att du till exempel framgångsrik fotbollsspelare, reflektar du någon gång över det att varför är jag just fotbollsspelare, varför är jag inte musiker?
X: ja det är klart man tänker att jag kanske hade blivit bättre i någon annan sport eller kanske musik då, men troligtvis inte eftersom jag inte har så mycket taktkänsla, men om man tänker till någon annan idrott om jag hade satsat på det, om man tänker ishockey att jag kanske hade blivit bättre där, men det är ingen idé att ångra sig för nu är det ändå för sent att byta…men det är klart att man tänker på varför man valde det och varför det blev så
T: mmm
X: men man kör på, det känns ju bra nu så man kör på
T: är det några speciella situationer du känner mer att du tänker i sådana banor?
X: ja det är väl, om man tänker att min kroppsbyggnad hade kanske varit mer lämpad för ishockey om man tänker på man tänker så, och har man då någon i fotbollslaget som är riktigt snabb och någon kan hoppa riktigt högt eller så och så kanske jag ligger lite däremellan, inte riktigt bra på någonting men inte riktigt dålig på någonting heller, då tänker man kanske om jag spelat ishockey hade jag varit riktigt bra på någonting då och så liksom, det är väl i de situationerna när man har lite fystester om man inte kommer upp riktigt bra som vissa andra, då tänker man att tänk om jag valt den idrotten då kanske jag varit bäst på det där…
T: så det är i situationer då du jämför dig med andra och du känner att du ligger på lite lägre nivå?
X: ja, ja ligger man över de andra då är det ju självklart då känns det ju bra, att man ligger över, men ligger man lite under och man känner att man jobbar med det men man kommer ändå inte riktigt ifatt liksom, man har kanske det att kroppen inte kan bli bättre på det eller så, då är det ju självklart att då känns det inte riktigt bra, och då tänker man lite på hur det blivit om man valt annorlunda
T: ok, jättebra tack, det jag är intresserad av nu är (intervjupersonens namn) i sociala roller, man kan säga att en social roll är som du nämnde innan din familj där är du sonen och då kan man säga att en social roll är att vara en son helt enkelt, så i ett läge kan du vara son och i ett läge kan du vara fotbollsspelare till exempel…kan du nämna fler sociala roller?
X: ja sen så när jag bor här nere i veckorna då har ju jag hand om min lägenhet då bestämmer jag där, sen kan man väl säga när man är med kompisar då är man ju…det finns ju de kompisar som hörs mycket som alltid skall synas men jag har nog inte riktigt den rollen, jag är nog inte den som hörs och syns mest, men i alla de situationerna, familjen lägenheten och kompisarna har jag väl en ganska så lugn attityd om man säger så, så den ändras inte så mycket beroende på roll…sen vet jag inte mer…
T: du kan ju skriva här på pappret så blir det kanske enklare…
X: mmm, då skriver jag familjen här, i lägenheten, kompisar, det är ju de tre, sen vet jag inte några andra faktiskt, inte som jag kommer på just nu
T: mmm, om du tänker en normal dag för dig, hur ser den ut? Din dag idag till exempel, vilka sociala roller har du ingått i idag tror du?
X: eee, jag har ju, när jag är i skolan är jag ju med kompisar så då har vi den rollen där, sen går man kanske ner på stan, då har man en roll där även om man inte umgås med folket som går förbi man pratar ju inte med så många eller så, sen kommer jag hem på kvällen till
lägenheten och då är det ju jag som bestämmer så det är väl de roller som jag har en vanlig dag.

T: mmm, känner du att du har någon särskild roll som fotbollsspelare?
X: jaaa, i och med att jag spelar ju i (nuvarande fotbollslaget) då är jag ju (nuvarande fotbollslaget)-spelare utanför planen också även i skolan och så och det speglar ju av sig, allt vi gör…om vi beter oss dåligt i skolan då reflekterar de andra det till, de ser ju oss som (nuvarande fotbollslaget)-spelare också, så de drar kanske paralleller emellan och så…vi måste ju uppföra oss bra utanför planen i och med att vi är så pass, vi tränar på ganska hög nivå och representerar (nuvarande fotbollslaget).

T: så din roll som fotbollsspelare kan man säga påverkar både din skola och dina kompisar?
X: ja det kan man ju säga, jag är ju fotbollsspelare och (nuvarande fotbollslaget)-spelare dygnet runt, det är jag faktiskt, det hänger ju ihop med det andra också, det gör det, det hänger ihop dygnet runt

T: så om du skulle kunna lägga till någon identitet så skulle det kunna vara idrottsidentiteten eller fotbollsidentiteten? Eller ser du det inte så?
X: ja det kan man nästan säga det är nog den största i och med att den rollen är jag hela tiden

T: ja
X: och sen lägger man ju på de här andra rollerna eftersom då…så man identifierar sig nog med en fotbollsidentitet

T: ja
X: det är rätt där ja (lägger till fotboll som social roll)

T: varför tror du att du inte kom på den direktt?

X: det är nog så att den ligger med hela tiden, lite i grunden om man säger så, den ligger lite bakom de andra men det är där hela tiden, så de här (de andra identiteterna) är lättare att komma på och se, det var nog därför.

T: ok, då har du alltså fyra stycken olika identiteter nu känner du?
X: mm

T: är det någon mer som du påverkar ditt dagliga liv eller som du tänker på lite då och då?

X: nä, inte vad jag kommer på, inte vad jag vet nu, vi har ju kommit på fotbollsspelare så det finns ju säkert fler att komma på här

T: mmm, du sa innan att du går upp och så går du till skolan och så och här är du med kompisar,

X:mmmm

T: finns det en del av dig som är studenten eller eleven (intervjupersonens namn)?

X: jaaa, på lektionerna och så vidare, då är man ju elev, och när man är i vissa situationer då får man rätta sig efter situationerna men när man är på lektionerna då är man ju där för att lära sig något och för att försöka få bra betyg, så egenskaperna i mig ändras väl lite i olika situationer,

T: de ändras lite?

X: ja på lektionerna då är man kanske lite mer uppmärksam än när man är med kompisar, det är ju lite olika vad man prioriterar när man är med de olika också, så elev också…

T: mmm

X: det finns säkert en hel del fler också

T: känner du att du inte har tänkt på detta tidigare?

X: nå det har jag faktiskt inte gjort

T: nå det är ju fullt förståeligt, nu har du listat fem olika identiteter, kan du berätta om dig själv i familjeeidentiteten?

X: ja, när man är i familjen då…tillskinnad från när man är i lägenheten man tar kanske lika stort ansvar över alla grejorna som kommer, man tar ju så klart ansvar över sina grejor och hjälper de andra men är man i lägenheten då har man ju ansvar över alltihopa då blir
man...man slappnar kanske av lite mer när man är med familjen och blir lite mer lugnare alltså, det känner man ju när man kommer hem på helgerna, då slappnar man ju av och tar det lugnt och så och är med familjen, och sen när man kommer ner till lägenheten då, då har man ju hand om allt, allt som skall fixas och sånt,
T: så du känner att du blir lite mer ansvarsfri i familjen då?
X: ja i familjen blir man ju lite mer ansvarsfri, där är det ju föräldrarna som tar hand om mig i så fall brukar det ju va, men sen i lägenheten blir ju jag förälder där tar ju jag ansvar för alltihop
X: om jag går med kompisar, vad ska man säga...man kan ju släppa loss och så med kompisar man kan ju skoja lite mer och så, det kan man ju såklart göra med familjen också men det är ju skillnad på vilka kompisar man är med också, men där är man också ganska avslappnad men man kan ju inte vila på samma sätt som man gör när man är med familjen men har man en bra blandning mellan familj och kompisar så tycker jag man får en bra blandning eller så...så kompisarna, man kan ta det lugnt men man är ändå, det är svårt att förklara men...det är ändå lite mer spändt med kompisarna än med familjen...
T: du sa att det var lite olika beroende på vilka kompisar det rör sig om, kan det skilja sig åt lite där?
X: ja en kompis har kanske andra intressen och då gör man andra grejer med homon och den andra kompsen gör man något annat med och samtidigt är det inte alla kompisar man öppnar sig för, även om är kompisar så kanske man inte pratar om vissa grejer med dem men vissa andra kompisar gör det jättebra att prata med, så där är det ju en skillnad också hur deras egenskaper är och så, om man vägar prata med dem eller...
T: så det kan finnas olika nivåer i kompisarna?
X: ja det kan det, vissa kompisar, det känns som om man är med familjen för man kan prata om alltihopa men vissa kompisar pratar man inte med allt om men man har ändå kul med dem, så det skiljer sig helt klart mellan kompisar också...
T: ok, om du tänker på att du har olika nivåer av kompisar, har du nivåer i tex familjen också?
X: det beror ju på vad du menar med nivåer,
T: om du tex ser dig på ett sett när du är med mamma och ett sett när du är med pappa eller med syskon?
X: ja det skiljer sig helt klart åt det också, det är samma sak där man gör ju olika saker, är man själv med pappa gör man olika grejer och är man med mamma så gör man andra saker, de har ju inte samma intresse de heller så det blir ju lite som med kompisar, och sen så med syskon, man kan ju inte jämföra dem med kompisar men ändå lite, det är ju med syskongen som man spenderar mest tid
T: det är det?
X: ja på dagarna och så när man är hemma och de är ju en kompis i familjen, man kan berätta nästan allt för dem och man kan hitta på saker med dem, de är som en kompis och en familjemedlem
T: en blandning alltså
X: ja en blandning
T: ok, kan du berätta om dig själv som fotbollsspelare?
X: ja när jag är fotbollsspelare så är jag också ganska ansvarsfull eller så som kanske i lägenheten då, jag tar mycket ansvar, på planen brukar jag ta en ledarroll eller så, så det hör nog ihop med ansvarsfull då...när jag är med kompisar då går jag inte ut som någon ledare men det gör jag inom fotbollen
T: tar du för dig mer som fotbollsspelare?
X: ja det gör jag, som fotbollsspelare tar jag för mig mycket mer, utanför planen är man kanske lite mer blyg men när man kommer på fotbollsplanen då vet man att det är man bra på
så då släpper den spärren där, det känns ju skönt att man bara kan släppa loss och köra sitt race på planen annars hade det ju inte funkat
T: nå
X: så så hade jag nog beskrivit mig som fotbollsspelare, ganska ansvarsfull och så
T: om vi går ner till nästa, kan du berätta om dig själv som elev?
X: jaa eee, som elev försöker man vara ganska ansvarsfull också ju, det är en viktig del om studierna skall funka, sen så är det ju inte alla ens kompisar som är ansvarsfulla, ibland smittar det ju av sig men man försöker göra sitt bästa i skolan det är det man måste göra, sen så…om man är i klassrummet eller så där hörs man ju inte som på fotbollssplanen, i skolan blir man mer en i mängden eller så, och det ska man väl va i skolan också
T: så du har lite mer framträdande roll som fotbollsspelare?
X: ja det har man, vi har ju några i skolan som hörs väldigt mycket utanför plan men på plan är det kanske tvärtom, så som i skolan och på fritiden då träder de fram och jag är nog lite tvärtom när jag träd ut och blir bak och när jag träd bak går de fram…
T: ok, du sa att när du är med familjen, din mamma kan ha ett intresse dina pappa ett och sen när du är med kompisar så är du också lite olika och i skolan kan ointresset smitta av sig ibland, kan du känna att du blir påverkad av de du är med?
X: ja det är självklart att man blir påverkad, men bara till en viss grad eller så, det är ju inte alltid, det är ju inte så att de påverkar en så att, om man tar skolan då, så att man skiter i skolan eller så, utan man blir påverkad i viss grad med vem man än är med men inte jättemycket, utan till en viss grad, men det kan skilja sig hur mycket de olika och från tillfälle till tillfälle, om det är ett tråkigt ämne tex då blir man mer påverkad än om det är ett intressant ämne, då kör man mer sitt eget race
T: kan du känna att du har fler områden i livet mer än skola, fotboll, kompisar, familj och ditt privata själv? Finns det fler områden som du kommer in i ibland
X:…det är svårt…man tänker det sociala, blir ju med kompisar…
T: kan religion påverka? Är det något du kommer i kontakt med?
X: nå religion kommer jag inte i kontakt med…
T: så du känner inte att det är en del av dig?
X: nå det känner jag inte, min familj är ju inte religiös eller så…jag har absolut inget emot det eller så men det är inte en del av mig…
T: om du ser på relationer och såhär, alltså pojk- flickvän och sådana saker, är det en del av dig?
X: ja eee hur menar du liksom?
T: intresse för tjejer eller killar…
X: jo självklart är det ju en del av mig också, ja…det är ju en del av mig som allt annat...(skratt)
T: men den är ändå inte så stor att du skulle nämnna den eller är det mycket som kretsar kring sådana saker?
X: ja det är det väl men frågar någon mig hur jag är då är ju inte det första jag säger att jag är på jakt efter tjejer eller så…man kanske inte säger det alls för att man kanske tycker att det är så självklart, eller så…utan man tar upp de andra sakerna som kan variera lite från person till person, och det kan det ju med tjejer också men det känns liksom självklart för mig och därför kanske man inte tar upp det…
T: ok, så på något vis är det svårt att reflektera över sig själv i självklara situationer som fotbollsspelare eller elev eftersom det är så pass mycket vardag?
X: ja det är det ju, fotbollsspelare och de det har ju blivit självklart eftersom jag hållit på med det så länge men en dag kanske jag slutar som fotbollsspelare och då är inte det en lika stor del av mitt liv längre, men om man relaterar till tjejer då så kommer det ju att finnas där hela
livet hoppas man ju, så det känns som om att det sitter i benmärgen och är där hela tiden, det är självlukt det är därför man inte tänker på det på samma sätt…

T: FÖRKLARAR 3:1 PAJEN

X: just nu är det ju, man relaterar sig själv mest till fotbollsspelare det gör man ju…men frågan är hur stor om man jämför med de andra, ja…FYLLER I PAJEN…25%

fotbollsspelare, sen är det ju, jag spenderar ju mer tid i lägenheten än vad jag gör med familjen men jag ser mig ändå mer som en i familjen än själv i lägenheten, så familjen är större än lägenheten även om tidsfördelningen inte är det…

X: jag ser ju mig som en fotbollsspelare, när jag ser mig själv då ser jag mig mest som fotbollsspelare, men kollar man till det sociala då ser jag mig som en i familjen och familjen är väldigt viktig för mig eee sen kommer kompisarna och lägenheten.

T: så du har 25% fotboll, 25% familj och 25% kompisar och sen delar du resten mellan elev och lägenhet…

X: jag ser ju mig som en fotbollsspelare, när jag ser mig själv då ser jag mig mest som fotbollsspelare, men kollar man till det sociala då ser jag mig som en i familjen och familjen är väldigt viktig för mig eee sen kommer kompisarna och lägenheten.

T: x om du ska lista hur du tror att andra människor ser på dig hur skulle du då dela upp pajen?

X: du menar inte bara de på skolan eller?

T: nå det kan vara alla människor i hela världen!

X: ok, då blir ju lägenhet kompisar och elev ganska små, jag kan nog sätta en halv på fotbollsspelare eftersom den är så stor, och sen 25 % på familj och sen får de andra dela på resten där…de flesta ser ju mig till största delen som fotbollsspelare, sen så de man inte kände innan fotbollen började de kanske ser mig som en familjemedlem.

T: om du skulle göra denna uppdelning efter antalet människor, utan att värdera relationen till dem, hur skulle fördelningen ha sett ut då?

X: då skulle ju familjen öka, och sen skulle även elev och det här öka…jag vet inte…

T: ta god tid på dig och tänk…

X: mmm de som är viktigast, då blir det ju familj, den är nog häften då, fotbollen är ju såklart viktig för mig och de tycker att det är kul att det går bra för mig men i grund och botten så är jag en familjemedlem och skulle inte fotbollen finnas så har jag ju familjen där…FYLLER I PAJEN…de som verkliga betyder mycket för mig ser ju mig som familjemedlem och då är det inte bara familjen utan även släkt och nära och kära…

T: ok, så du menar att fler människor ser dig som en fotbollsspelare men de som betyder mycket för dig ser dig mest som en familjemedlem.

X: ja

T: det är väl rätt så intressant att det blev skillnad där?

X: ja det är det för om jag tänker, det kan ju vara sådana personer som jag knappt har träffat som vet vem jag är och de ser mig såklart som en fotbollsspelare för det är ju där jag kommit i kontakt med dem då men även kanske sådana som jag kommit i kontakt med genom familjen man har pratat med dem och så och då ser de mig också som en fotbollsspelare även om jag träffar dem utanför fotbollen då…folk i allmänhet ser mig nog som fotbollsspelare men nära och kära ser mig som familjemedlem

T: ok, om vi går över till vilken som är din starkaste identitet, vilken är mest du?

X: mmm, ja…det är ju samma två som dominerar det är ju familj och fotbollsspelare, vilket som är sterkast jag…FYLLER I PAJEN.
T: detta är alltså så fördelningen ser ut för vilken identitet som är starkast i dig?
X: ja
T: varför tror du att det ser ut såhär?
X: mmm, om jag kollar på, om jag tänker på mig själv, jag tänker ju fotboll när jag tänker på mig själv, men sen samtidigt så...familjen är liksom, man tänker inte så mycket på den i och med att man tycker att den är så självklar eller så kanske att man är en familjemedlem och man kommer hem så ofta man kan och så, eftersom det är så självklart och så därför tänker jag mest när jag tänker på mig själv då tänker jag fotboll, för familjen är så självklar, för fotbollen är ju trots allt inte så självklar, det är väl därför jag ser mig så...de andra tre får ju dela på det ganska mycket...det är nog ganska bra fördelning den stämmer nog bra hoppas jag,
T: ok, då tar vi en ny då, kan du för varje identitet göra en fördelning av positiva och negativa känslor?
X: bara positiva och negativa?
T: ja, skulle du vilja dela in det i fler eller?
X: nå jag tänkte bara om man skulle skriva in saker som ångest och stress och så...men det går ju under negativa egentligen...
T: ja tänk i de banorna
X: ok, det blir ju inte mycket negativt, inte i familjen i alla fall...FYLLER I PAJEN. Där har jag inte mycket negativt man vill ju komma hem till familjen och så och det känns ju positivt
T: ja vad härligt
X: ja det känns bra, det är inte mycket negativt i familjen
T: ok, varför tror du att det är en sådan här uppdelning i familjen?
X: vår familj fungerar jättebra tillsammans och, i och med att jag bor här näre på veckan så känns det mer speciellt att komma hem än när man bodde hemma och kom hem efter skolan då bara kom man hem men nu ser man fram emot helgerna att komma hem och träffa de andra, så det har blivit mer positivt nu sen jag började här nere att komma hem, innan va det så då va man hemma varje dag då kunde nästan, nå, jag tyckte inte att det var jobbigt men man blev lite tröttare på att komma hem kanske och man var tvungen att göra det och det men nu när man är ifrån det så är det bara skönt att komma hem så det känns jättebra
T: mmm, kan du säga att den negativa känslobiten har blivit mindre sen du flyttade hemifrån?
X: ja det har den blivit, det negativa hemma har sjunkit, i och med att jag inte är hemma så mycket så ser man fram emot att komma hem och det är väl därför den har sjunkit
T: mmm, är det på gott eller ont?
X: det känns ju bättre i och med att man spenderar mindre tid hemma och den tiden man har vill man ju utoetia så mycket som möjligt, så den hade nog varit en fjärde del innan, men det känns positivt att den är så pass lite (den negativa)
T: ok, jättebra, då tar vi nästa, lägenheten.
X: där är det lite annorlunda, för man har ju lite krav på sig själv, man vill ju ha det lite ordnat där nere så att det inte ser ut hur som helst...så eee...ja man kan väl dra FYLLER I PAJEN, när jag tänker på det positiva i lägenheten så är ju det att jag ska träna fotboll det är ju det positiva att komma ner till lägenheten, ska jag ta med det som det positiva i lägenheten?
T: hur ser du på dig själv när du är ensam, är du fotbollsspelare då eller, vem är du när du är själv i lägenheten?
X: jaaa om man tänker till matvanor och sånt där är jag ju fotbollsspelare, sen är det ju gott att ta det lugnt och inte bry sig om fotbollen när man är i lägenheten heller...
T: ok, men när du angav dig själv i lägenheten som en av dina identiteter, om du tar just det du tänkte på då och för över det till en fördelning av positiva och negativa känslor oavsett vad det är som gör dig glad
X: ja ok, då blir det nog 60-70% positivt…det är skönt att komma ner också, har man varit en helg med familjen då kanske man vill vara själv lite också i och med att man är van vid det nu…och det är alltid skönt att kunna åka iväg och vara för sig själv lite också
T: ok så det lägenhetsidentiteten står för är när du är själv?
X: ja det känner jag, det kan man säga, när jag är i lägenheten då brukar jag oftast ta det lugnt det är där jag vilar efter träning och skola och så…
T: ok, varför tror du att fördelningen är just såhär i fördelningen mellan positivt och negativt?
X: varför negativt är så pass stor eller?
T: nä den är väl inte så hemskt stor egentligen…
X: nä men om man jämför med familjen
T: ja det är ju klart, men om du ser till varför det ser ut såhär utan att döma att det skulle vara för stort eller för litet…
X: varför det ser ut så är på grund av att när jag kommer ner här har man ju mer krav så att säga, att man ska fixa grejor, det är väl därför det blir lite mer negativt, man måste ju göra mer här nere för att hålla det i ordning, så det är därför det ser ut så…
T: men det är ändå 60-70 % som är positivt?
X: ja så jag har ju inte tröttnat på det än i alla fall…sen känner jag att det kan vara negativt att vara själv hela veckan i lägenheten men där är mamma snäll så hon kommer ner och hälsar på, hon jobbar ju inte alla dagar i veckan så hon kommer när hon är ledig.
T: ok, så det positiva i att du bor själv är egentligen att du kan träna fotboll? alltså hade du fått välja så hade du egentligen bott kvar hemma och samtidigt kunnat träna fotboll?
X: ja det hade jag gjort om det hade gått, det hade varit smidigare av praktiska skäl med disk, mat och tvätt…men mamma hjälper ju mig som mammor gör…så det blir ju lite grann att ta hand om själv
T: ja, jättebra, då tar vi nästa, kompisar.
X: när man är med kompisar då är det ju med dem för att man vill det…det är ju svårt att se det negativa…
T: ok, om du tänker dig att du är med dina kompisar hundra gånger hur många är då negativa och hur många är positiva?
X: det beror ju på hur bra humör man är på om man sovit bra och så… jag umgås ju med kompisarna varje dag i skolan så därför är det skönt att vara själv, vissa är ju med kompisar hela dagarna men det hade inte passat mig bra, jag behöver vara för mig själv också…FYLLER I PAJEN. Det blir ju alltid lite negativt, runt en fjärdedel…
T: så en fjärdedel av dina känslor som är relaterade mot kompisar är relaterade mot det negativa hålet?
X: hmm, kanske inte riktigt en fjärdedel…de negativa jag ser hos kompisar är ju att jag behöver va för mig själv ibland, så jag tror jag ändrar lite här faktiskt, så det går ner till 15 % ungefär…men säkert så blir det ju negativt ibland…
T: och det är mer när du känner att du vill vara själv?
X: ja precis, i och med att jag brukar vara själv rätt mycket så har det ju blivit en vana och då kan det vara svårt att bryta den, det vill man ju inte riktigt…men jag är ju mycket med kompisar i skolan och sen så har vi ju träning och så och då är jag också med kompisarna så det blir ju mycket ändå…
T: ok, två kvar, fotbollsspelare…
X: ja…mmm…positiva…
T: hur tänker du?
X: jag tänker främst på det negativa hur stor den kan vara…det hör ju ihop med stress och prestationsängest…det skiljer faktiskt lite från månad till månad för självförtroendet går ju lite upp och ner,
T: mmm
X: men generellt kan man väl säga att negativa, nu tänker jag framför allt på match då och det hör ju främst ihop med prestationssängest, osäkerhet och nervositet, när jag började i (nuvarande fotbollslaget) var jag ju nervös inför träning men det är jag ju inte nu, jag är fortfarande nervös inför match, men innan va man ju lika nervös inför träning som inför match...men inför match kan man väl säga 20 % negativt...det är främst prestationssängest och osäkerhet...det skiftar ju från match till match om man spelar med juniorlaget eller b-laget eller landslaget...
T: så det är mest inför matcherna du upplever negativa känslor?
X: eee ja, det är det ju, när man spelar då tänker man inte så mycket...
T: efter?
X: ja efter, det beror på hur matchen har gått, men om jag syftar mest på b-laget och landslaget brukar man ju inte vara nöjd efter en match, även om man gjort en bra match så är man inte nöjd för man hade kunnat göra det lite bättre
T: mmm
X: landslaget de ser mig ju bara en eller två matcher och får jag inte ut mest av mig själv då tycker inte jag att de ser hur bra jag är, som tränaen här hemma ser mig ju varje dag och han vet ju vad jag kan...man vill för mycket ibland...
T: men du håller ändå kvar vi det att 20 % av de känslor du upplever är negativa och resten är positiva?
X: ja, innan var det negativa större men nu när man har mer rutin lär man sig hantera det också...
T: hantera?
X: ja motgångar och nervositet man tar press och så mycket bättre, man var mer mottaglig för det innan när man var yngre, första gången i landslaget var jag ju så nervös så att man inte kunde stå på benen, idag vet man bättre vad man kan och vilken nivå man är man känner till motspelare och så vidare...
T: känner du att du har vuxit in i rollen?
X: ja det kan man säga, så känns det faktiskt
T: bra, då tar vi sista, som elev!
X: ja jag får ju erkänna att man har ju blivit lite skoltrött eller vad man skall säga nu i tvåan det går ju inte att komma ifrån, så jag skulle nog säga 50% är negativt, det negativa är då ansvar, press läxor det tar mycket tid, ofta är det så att man kommer hem från skolan till träning hem från träningen gör mat fixar allting sen ska man sätta sig med läxor på kvällen, det tar ju den lilla fritid man hade över, men hade jag inte gått på denna skolan så hade ju det negativa varit ännu större...här har vi anpassat till fotbollen, andra skolor är ju inte anpassade på samma sätt, hade jag inte gått här så hade det nog inte funkat att träna så mycket som man gör...
T: ok, så alla känslor du känner som elev där är ungefär hälften positiva och hälften negativa?
X: ja, det tror jag
T: det är inte mer eller mindre av något utan det är 50-50?
X: ja tänker jag på mig själv som elev så ser det ut så, negativt är ju läxor och press det positiva är ju att man vill lära sig saker och kompisar och bra skola, skolan hjälper jättemycket...
T: ok, om vi går över till ett lite annat område...om jag får fråga såhär: känner du att du är en värdefull person?
X: värdefull?
T: ja
X: när jag hör värdefull då tänker jag på om jag är värdefull för mina nära och kära, det är det som dyker upp först i huvudet på mig, och det skulle jag säga att det är jag...annars som fotbolllspelare eller så liksom, det är svårt att säga, värdefull, det är svårt att svara på, jag är
ju inte mer värdefull än någon annan eller bättre än någon annan, det ser jag ju inte utan det…jag kan ju inte säga att någon är bättre än någon annan, till en viss mängd kan jag väl säga att jag är värdefull, men det beror ju på lite också från person till person hur mycket de tycker om mig och så…
T: mmm, vilka kriterier måste man uppfylla för att vara värdefull då?
X: ojå…eee…det är ju…jag tycker det är hur man beter sig mot andra. Är man bra på en grej så är man ju inte mer värdefull för det för alla är ju bra på något, utan det är hur man beter sig mot andra personer…att man kan hantera framgång att det inte växer en över huvudet…då tycker jag att man är värdefull
T: ok, om jag hade sagt till dig, när du kom hit idag, att du luktar illa då hade du troligtvis känt dig mindre värd, din självkänsla hade sjunkit…
X: ja
T: alla har vi nog någon situation som man kan känna att man fått låg självkänsla i…
X: ja det har man ju…
T: ok, om du tänker på din totala känsla av värde, hur bidrar de olika identiteterna till den då?
X: ok
T: kan du gradera dem som bidrar mest till din känsla av värde och sen gradera nerat?
X: mmm,…(tänker en lång stund)…FYLLER I PAJEN…i lägenheten känner man ju sig värdefull för där får man ta ansvaret för saker och ting själv…som fotbollsspelare, det är nog där det skiftar mest, där kan man liksom gå upp snabbt men ändå gå ner snabbt också, jag känner mig värdefull om jag får vara kapten, så det är ju smågrejer som kan göra det, att man känner sig värdefull, men jag skulle säga att den ligger runt 25 % också…
T: ja
X: eee…sen så är väl, kompisarna är nog lite större än elev…jag går ju fram i fotbollen och tar för mig och går tillbaka lite som elev och det hör väl ihop lite hur bra man tycker om sig själv…
T: och när du är ensam känner du dig värdefull?
X: ja, jag har ju hand om allt i lägenheten, fixar allt och jag är stolt över att kunna göra det, den höjer min självkänsla en del,
T: mmm, och sen har fotboll och familj ungefär lika mycket…?
X: ja det skulle jag säga
T: du sa att fotbollen ändrar lite upp och ner?
X: ja det gör den ju, jag i bra form då känns det ju bättre, även utanför fotbollen känns det bättre, har jag en tung period om jag varit skadad kanske då blir det mer negativt, då kan det negativa öka på de andra också, det kan spegla hur jag känner mig och så, i och med att fotbollen har en så pass stor del av livet, det kanske är en negativ grej att det speglar av sig så mycket om det händer något negativt, det speglar av sig på min personlighet och mitt liv, men sen satsar jag så mycket på fotbollen då är det ju så, det är ju ändå en stor del av mitt liv, T: så din känsla av värde som fotbollsspelare speglar rätt så mycket hur resten av du upplever sin känsla av värde?
X: ja det kan jag säga, det är nog den (fotbollidentiteten) som speglar av sig mest, i och med att familjen där jag vet jag vad de tycker om mig och så…fotbollen där kan ja alla mina medspelare bli sura om jag gör något fel, publik kanske blir sur, det gör att det kan sjunka mycket fortare samtidigt som om jag gör något glad blir ju alla medspelare glada och publikens, därför pendlar det lite mer i fotbollen,
T: ok om vi gör en ny paj och säger att den skall spegla hur mycket varje identitet påverkar din totala självkänsla…
X: då blir det nästan en…FYLLER I PAJEN…familj och lägenhet ändras ju inte så mycket så de påverkar inte så mycket…elev och kompisar påverkar en hel del med…alla andra kan ju påverka en mycket, det är ju ofrånkomligt…
T: så ungefär så…
X: ja
T: kan du specificera hur dina idrottsliga misslyckanden påverkar din känsla av värde?
X: det speglar ju av sig, det är ju en rätt så stor del, det beror lite på vilken typ av match det är, gör jag en tabbe i landslaget så grämmer jag mig mycket mer än om jag gör en tabbe här hemma…det har väl att göra med hur mycket förtroende man har från tränaren och så…landslaget träffas ju inte så mycket så då kan de ju inte veta lika mycket som mina tränare, de kan ha förtroende för mig men vet inte lika mycket…man blir mer nervös då…
T: så dina idrottsliga misslyckanden påverkar i varierad grad din känsla av värde?
X: ja exakt så är det, det är klart att jag bryr mig om misstag här i halmstad också…men det känns ju mycket mer om jag gör misstag i en viktig match…jag blir tyst efter matchen och vill vara för mig själv…
T: ok, speglar det av sig sen i de andra identiteterna du har? Kan det dra ner hela din självkänsla?
X: ja det kan det göra, en viss tid, tills man får komma in på planen igen och bevisa att man kan…så det drar ju ner självkänslan en tid, men sen kan det vara jobbigt om det drar ner självkänslan och så gör man en något mindre match till då blir det jobbigt men man måste ut på planen igen…men det speglar av sig, jag tycker det speglar av sig på det mesta andra också, det drar ner allt lite, det blir lite mer negativt…
T: ok, varför tror du att det är så att det speglar av sig och allting dras ner?
X: det är väl för att fotbollen är så pass viktig för mig, som den är, om jag jämför med skolan här om man misslyckas på ett prov, det är klart att man blir leden att det inte gick bättre men det blir ju inte bättre av att man skiter i provet sen igen utan man får ju ta tag i det, men skolan drar nog inte ner mig i fotbollen eller men det kanske smittar av sig åtta, om man blir lat i skolan så kanske man blir lat på planen det vet man ju inte, men fotbollen har ju såklart störst påverkan på det andra också
T: det har det?
X: ja det har det
T: här skrev du (paj 4:2 påverkan) att fotbollen har lika stor påverkan som elev och kompisar
X: ja när…när jag tänker på elev och kompisar, det är ju alltid så att man kan råka ut för att någon säger en dum grej eller en pik mot en, det drar ju ner självkänslan ganska mycket och det är svårare att jobba upp självkänslan om man blivit utsatt för något som elev eller kompis än vad det är som fotbollsspelare, det tar längre tid att jobba upp på de två (elev och kompis) och de drar ner en längre också skulle jag tro för tillfället då…
T: så du håller kvar vid den paj du gjort fast att du sa att fotbollen påverkar mest?
X: ja det blir två olika sorters självkänsla kan man ju säga, det här är ju självkänslan för att vara med andra, umgås med andra med kompisar med killar med tjejer liksom medan det här påverkar min självkänsla på planen eller mitt kunnande så det här är min självkänsla för det sociala och det här är min självkänsla på planen då…
T: är det någon sorts prestationssjälvkänsla?
X: ja prestationssjälvkänsla precis, det kan man säga…de är lite anorrunda…
T: tror du att din idrottsliga identitet kommer att vara lika viktig för dig om fem år som den är nu?
X: det är jättesvårt att säga, förhoppningsvis spelar jag fortfarande fotboll på en hög nivå, det får man hoppas, men det kan ju ändå va att, kanske inte om fem år att man har familj, men det kommer ju, får jag familj kommer de att gå i första hand, men än så länge kommer den att betyda lika mycket, om man siktar på allsvenskan och kommer dit och sen slutar så kommer den kanske inte att vara lika prioriterad längre, men jag skulle tro att den kommer att vara lika viktig…
T: om du skulle förutse dina sociala roller, vilka roller tror du kommer vara viktigast för dig inom de kommande fem åren?
X: mmm, RITAR PAJEN…,
T: varför tror du att den kommer att se ut så här?
X: ja det är familjen framför allt, den kommer, frågan är om den inte kommer att bli viktigare för mig inom fem år, det vet man ju inte men det känns ju som det pga att man vill va med dem så mycket som möjligt då, de kommer ju inte att finnas där alltid heller…fotbollen är ju samma sak där förhoppningsvis jobbar jag ju med det som fotbollsspelare då och då tar det ju en stor del av mitt liv, det är ju något jag vill hålla på med det är ju både hobby och jobb…kompisar blir nog viktigare, det är viktigt att ha som back-up det kan ju hända något om man blir skadad eller något, det vet man ju inte så då måste man ha något som man kan gå tillbaka på då…kompisarna kommer nog att bli mer viktiga men också när jag har mer tid för dem, har jag inte skola så kommer jag inte att träffa dem på dagarna utan då kanske man har mer tid att umgås med dem privat…
T: ok så det här behovet av att vila dra dig ifrån kommer inte att vara så starkt då?
X: nä inte när jag inte träffar dem i skolan…
T: och sen elev och lägenhet, känner du att det blir en mindre del av dig själv som är ensam eller? Beräknar du att träffa någon eller?
X: ja det hoppas man ju men det är inte säkert att det händer…man kanske får flytta runt lite, jag kanske får flytta hem igen…så lägenheten tror jag kommer att minska…
T: tror du att du kommer att spendera en del tid själv men det kommer inte att vara så viktigt för dig?
X: ja det varken höjer eller sänker min självkänsla så mycket så det kommer kanske inte att spela så stor roll i min självkänsla heller…men jag tror den kommer att minska en hel del…
T: nu har jag inte mer, har du några frågor eller något du vill tillägga?
X: nå det känns bra jag tyckte vi fick ut mycket…det känns bra
T: ok då avslutar vi intervjun här…
Appendix C

Figures of dimensions and structures in athletes’ personal identity

Figures of dimensions in athletes’ personal identity

Figure C1. Dimensions in athletes’ personal identity.

Figures of structures in athletes’ personal identity

Figure C2. Athletes perceived identity importance
Figure C3. How athletes believe others perceive them.

Figure C4. How athletes believe significant others perceive them.
Figure C5. The athletes’ perceived identity strength

Figure C6. Athletes’ perception of identities’ contribution to self-esteem.
Appendix D

Figures of individual results in athletes’ personal identity structure

*Individual results in identity importance*

![Pie chart](image)

Figure D7. Identity importance of athlete D.

![Pie chart](image)

Figure D8. Identity importance of athlete F.
Individual results in how athletes believe others perceive them

Figure D9. Athlete A’s perception of how others perceive him.

Figure D10. Athlete B’s perception of how others perceive her.
Individual results in how athletes believe significant others perceive them

Figure D11. Athlete B’s perception of how significant others perceive her.

Figure D12. Athlete F’s perception of how significant others perceive him.
Individual results in perceived identity strength

Figure D13. Identity strength of athlete D.

Figure D14. Identity strength of athlete G.
**Individual results in identities’ contribution to self-esteem**

Figure D15. Athlete C’s identity contribution to self-esteem.

Figure D16. Athlete F’s identity contribution to self-esteem.