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Telemark Skiing: The Ultimate Norwegian Sport and a Class Phenomenon

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Abstract: In this paper, we scrutinize telemark skiing with regard to gender and social class and other sociological variables. In so doing, we apply Bourdieu's framework to analyse the surveys – one representative nationwide and one from a specific telemark race – that are our methodological approach. National statistics is utilized as an additional source. Main findings are that telemark skiing is dominated by boys, and more than other ski disciplines and other sports have a distinct class profile, especially related to higher education. Telemark skiing can be seen as both a class distinction and a sign of individualization, as it is a rather “new” sport. Analytically, it is suggested that the theses of individualization and of social inequality are interrelated; it is more likely to be individualized if you belong to a higher social class, because the economic and cultural capital needed to make choices are concentrated in that specific area of social space.

Keywords: Telemark skiing, Bourdieu, quantitative, social class, individualization

Introduction

Recently, there has been a growing conviction that the nature of sport participation is changing as a result of broader social transformations (Breivik, 2011; Breivik et al., 2011; Coakley, 2010; DaCosta & Miragaya, 2002). Influential sociologists have introduced a twofold concept of reflexivity as the pivotal mechanism involved in this late-modern shift (Beck et al., 1994; Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002). First, structural reflexivity refers to the self-undermining and self-transforming effects of the natural logic of post-industrial development. It is held that the guiding ideas and core institutional responses of traditional modernity are no longer self-evident or infallible. Secondly, self-reflexivity refers to individuals' reflection on these changing institutional conditions. Self-reflexivity involves a shift from the collective monitoring of agents to the autonomous, active and permanent self-monitoring of individual biographies. As a consequence of the reflexive mode follows the ability to choose to take up traditions (Beck et al., 1994; Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2002). In that respect, Norwegian telemark skiing offers an interesting case, which we return to.

Somewhat contrary to the reflexive individualization thesis, a review of studies of sport participation found clear socio-economic patterns (Ståhl et al., 2001). People with higher education and high income are more likely to be active than lower educated and low salaried persons. Also in Norway, which is traditionally considered an egalitarian welfare state with a less distinct class structure than most countries (Esping-Andersen, 1990), sport participation is class dependent, across generations (Breivik, 2011; Breivik et al., 2011; Krange & Strandbu, 2004; Seippel et al., 2011). Youth from middle-class families, with highly educated parents and above average income, are more likely to participate in sport than adolescents from other sociocultural backgrounds (Krange & Strandbu, 2004; Seippel et al., 2011). Gender is also associated significantly with sport participation. Women exercise more, if physical activity is seen as broader than organized sport, but both international studies (Ståhl et al., 2001) as well as Norwegian (Breivik, 2011; Breivik et al., 2011; Krange & Strandbu, 2004; Seippel et al., 2011) indicate that boys participate more within the sporting field, and that ideas such as

muscularity, masculinity and organized sport fit well with the identity development of young men (Næss, 2001). Both traditional competitive sport and alternative sport, such as skateboard and snowboard, are male dominated (Beal, 1996; Breivik, 2011; Breivik et al., 2011; Christensen, 2001). Also in this regard, the telemark case is interesting, because it stands out as a new sport and can be compared to other new sports.

In sum, empirical research in sport sociology shows no major change in the relations of inequality between major groups of society (Ohl, 2000). Regarding skiing more particularly, few scholarly sources treat gender and social class. Nevertheless, Allen Guttmann (1989) pointed out two decades ago that there were more similarities than dissimilarities between the American and German peoples – especially when it comes to participation in high prestigious sports such as skiing, tennis, sailing, horseback riding, surfing, golf, and flying/gliding. In these sports a balanced gender profile was also revealed compared to many other sports. However, historical research from Germany suggests that it is the middle class (employees) and not the upper class which was the principal agent when skiing was developed (Stumpp, 2010). According to Stumpp the German middle class used skiing as a symbolic expression of their contribution to modernization and as a tool to climb the social ladder.

The aim of this paper is to explore the social characteristics of Norwegian telemark skiers in general, and of the participants of the most popular annual telemark in particular (Galdhøpiggen, in context below). The following research questions are considered:

1. What are the socio-economic characteristics of telemark skiers in Norway?
2. What are the socio-economic characteristics of participants of Galdhøpiggen?
3. In what respect are the findings of Questions 1 and 2 comparable:
 - a) with participants in other skiing activities;
 - b) in comparison to the rest of the population?

Context

In order to contextualize this study, we first identify the difference between telemark skiing and alpine skiing. Second, we refer to the history of skiing (Allen, 2007; Alnæs, 2008; Bomann-Larsen, 1993; Huntford, 2006), showing waves where alpine skiing and telemark skiing have dominated alternately. Third, we contextualize the specific ski race that we looked into: Galdhøpiggen. Regarding telemark versus alpine skiing, there is an obvious difference in technique which relates to different equipment. While the alpine skier has parallel skis with both heels fixed, the telemark skier bends one of the knees so that one ski is in front of the other. These techniques are based on the different bindings where the alpine skier has the heel attached to the ski while the telemark skier's foot is attached to the ski only in the toe region, keeping the heel free. Moreover, the natural environment around the alpine skier and the telemark skier often differ – one which is also associated with different cultures. While alpine skiing usually takes place in a prepared resort, the telemark skier is often off piste or back country.¹

¹ Of course, it is possible – and not unusual – for an alpine skier to go back country, and vice versa for the telemark skier. In addition, the popularity of randoné or ski alpinism is increasing. Randoné is going up with the heel free, and skiing down with the heel attached to the ski.

Until the 1920, telemark was the only form of downhill skiing, but commencing in the 1920s ski equipment developed rapidly, and since the 1930s alpine skiing has dominated. Hence, telemark skiing lacked popularity and consequently was no longer dominant for the next fifty years (Allen, 2007; Huntford, 2006; Kleppen, 1986). The revival of telemark skiing started in the United States in the early 1970s. Skiing teachers in Colorado were seeking a technique to be used outside the prepared slopes. They looked into the Scandinavian way of skiing, largely cross country, but still felt that something was missing. The standard explanation is that these ski teachers were inspired by a picture in Stein Eriksen's book, *Come ski with me*, from 1966 (Droste & Strotmann, 2002; Parker, 2001; Kleppen, 1986). The picture shows Eriksen's father making a telemark turn. The skiers in Colorado tried to imitate the technique and started experimenting. During the 1970s these pioneers travelled around to perform telemark skiing, and the traditional sport underwent a revival; it was demonstrated and propagated.

The modern wave of telemark skiing was gaining popularity. Although the literature lacks detailed information on how the activity was diffused from Colorado to the rest of the world, it is evident that the phenomenon of telemark skiing returned to Norway during the 1980s. In that respect, ski and binding manufacturers perceived a need for an event in order to promote the sport. As part of the return of telemark skiing, the Galdhøpiggen was revived when an employee at one major ski manufacturer in Norway was commissioned to reconstruct the story of the former version of Galdhøpiggen. This event had previously existed from 1934 until 1956 in the form of an alpine ski race with downhill and slalom. This was the early era of Norwegian alpine skiing, and seen from the view of the few but eager Norwegian alpinists at the time the country needed a race that could compete with the well-known slopes in Austria and Switzerland (Bergsland, 1934).

Looking at the history of telemark skiing in general and Galdhøpiggen in particular, two analytical points occur. First, the revival of telemark skiing follows the logic of what Hobsbawm (1983) calls invention of tradition. According to Hobsbawm, traditions are invented by resourceful people in order to connect the present with the past. The products of the invention can include ceremonies, such as sport events and secondly, the resumption of Galdhøpiggen after three decades, built on myths of the historic version of the ski race. It was nevertheless a myth which was believed and thus contributed to the future construction of reality (Goksøyr, 2004; Krüger, 1995). In both respects, the point is that a myth is a widely held belief and that people, presumably powerful or resourceful people, make this construction. Due to the aim of the research, analysing the social characteristics of telemark skiers, a theoretical framework is needed that offers a vocabulary to analyse social differences.

In that respect, we consider telemark skiing as particularly relevant as a target of observation in a study applying the framework offered by Bourdieu. The relevance is especially related to the theoretical contradiction of viewing telemark as a "new" sport and therefore relevant when understood as a modern and individualized phenomenon (cf. Introduction). According to Bourdieu, all social phenomena – including sport participation –

undergo a process that leads to patterns which are measurable as social distinctions or class related (Bourdieu, 1984, 1988).

Theoretical framework

Participation in sport in general and skiing in particular is a complex phenomenon and includes various behaviours which may be determined by many factors like for example gender or class (Coakley, 2010; Guttmann, 1989; Sallis et al., 2000). Sporting practices are considered as the outcome of the relation between demand and supply; on the one side, there has to be a sport offer; on the other side somebody has to use that sport offer in order to make it sustain or increase. We can reconceptualise it and distinguish between what Bourdieu calls the individual's habitus and the social field (Bourdieu, 1984, 1988). Following Bourdieu (1978, 1984), the ability to absorb appropriate embodied actions is the key to the development of specific feelings that enable an individual to be at ease with his or her own self and with others. Given that social actors choose between the different sporting practices which are available within any given time and space, it is possible to identify particular patterns in terms of who (that is, what kind of person, for example in terms of their social class) participates in selected activities (Bourdieu, 1978, 1984, 1988).

Preferences in relation to social practices are to a high degree socially constructed (Berger & Luckmann, 1991; Bourdieu, 1984), and involve a blending of conscious and unconscious aspects. Bourdieu refers to this as habitus, a theoretical concept which describes the magnitude and types of capital which structure – but which do not determine – an individual's preferences for social practice. The habitus is the interconnection between the macro (the group's culture) and the micro (Bourdieu, 1978, 1984). Micro elements in this regard, can be referred to as the individual's incorporation of culture and as preferences. As with other forms of culture, it is difficult to separate the conscious from the sub-conscious.

In this study we focus on observable social attributes such as gender, age and class, which structure the respondent's place in social space, and their dispositions for participating in the field of telemark skiing, where the learning of sport and other leisure activities is associated with socialization and the influence of significant others (Bourdieu, 1984, 1988). The concept of habitus allows for some more theoretical considerations, going beyond the empirical evidence (related to gender, age and class, for example).

Methods

This study is based on two sets of primary data: A survey of the participants of the Galdhøpiggen 2010 (16 year-olds and above), and Norsk Monitor, a biannual survey representative of the Norwegian population (15 year-olds and above). In 2010, one of the authors administrated a self-constructed questionnaire among the participants of Galdhøpiggen (n = 200, response rate 66%). The questionnaire was constructed on the basis of one used in earlier studies of sociological characteristics and preferences for sport participation (Skille, 2005; Skille & Østerås, 2011). It was slightly altered in order to fit into a telemark context ('sport' was typically replaced with 'telemark' or 'Galdhøpiggen' in the new questionnaire). Here, gender and age are considered, and education and income are explored in order to find class characteristics. Place and county of origin and county of

contemporary residence are scrutinized in order to identify the profile of Galdhøpiggenet participants.

The questionnaire was distributed during race participants' arrival the evening prior to the race, and collected immediately. As there is no reason to believe that selection mechanisms were in force in order to determine who should receive a questionnaire, we consider the sample as representative for participants at Galdhøpiggenet.

Norsk Monitor is a combination of self-administrated questionnaires and interviews, aiming first at mapping Norwegian people's fundamental attitudes, convictions and socio-cultural values. Second, it aims at mapping the population's attitudes and behaviour. It is believed that the values express peoples' fundamental perceptions of right and wrong, how one should behave in various situations, what is desired and valuable, what individuals' goals are in various fields, and which means are considered in order to achieve those goals (Synovate, 2010). The sport and physical activity part of Norsk Monitor is administered by the Norwegian School of Sport Sciences and one of the authors of this article.

From Norsk Monitor, we used data from the collection points 1997–2009, and mainly the item: “Which of these activities are you doing at least once a month during the season?” This formulation has a somewhat lower threshold to be identified as a telemark skier, but similar questions and replies on telemark skiing, cross-country skiing, alpine skiing, skiing in the forest and on the mountain and also snowboarding, make comparisons possible. This was explored in relation to gender, age, education, and income.

In addition to our own two data sets, publicly accessible data from Statistics Norway are used (in addition to mean values from Norsk Monitor) enabling comparison of data from Galdhøpiggenet with average values from the Norwegian population. Through the online service StatBank Norway (SSB, 2011) tables on key figures – for example income – can be created compiled according to need. All statistics are descriptively presented. Comparison of descriptive statistics from the three sources provides the basis for discussion. Both Norsk Monitor data and Statistics Norway data are representative for the Norwegian adult population.

Results

Gender

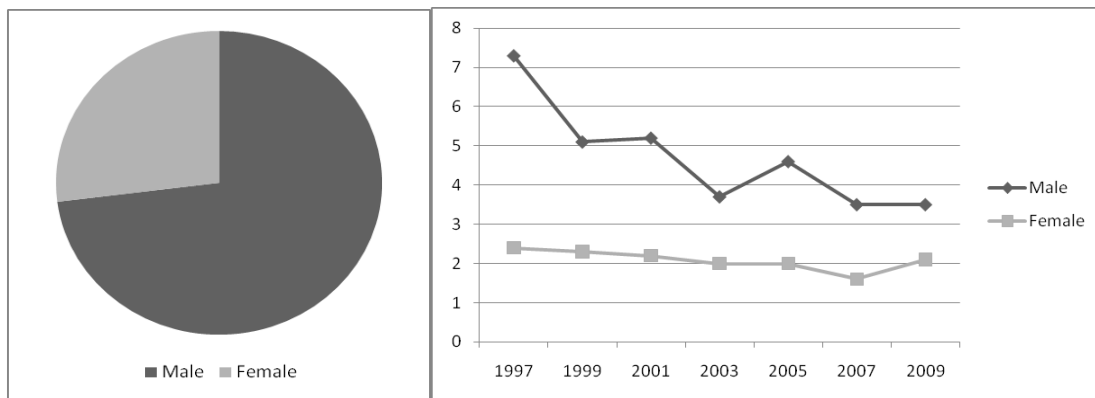


Figure 1a (left): Gender distribution at Galdhøpiggen (Galdhøpiggen sample, $n = 200$).

Figure 1b (right): Percentage of telemark skiers in the Norwegian population, split by gender (Norsk Monitor sample; male $n = 1461-1765$, female $n = 1576-1819$).

Of the participants at Galdhøpiggen, 27% are females and 73% are males. Among the Norwegian telemark skiers more generally, the same tendency is found but the gender difference is somewhat smaller, and decreasing. In 1997, when telemark skiing was at its peak (according to available figures; telemark was first included in the Norsk Monitor survey in 1997), the gender ratio was one to three: 2.4% females versus 7.3% males. In recent years, the ratio has been one to two, and on some occasions even lower (in 2007, it was 2.3% females versus 3.5% males who skied telemark. (See Figures 1a and 1b).

Age

The participants of Galdhøpiggen extend over a wide age-range, from 16 years for the youngest (which is the limit for participation in senior telemark races in Norway) to 57 years for the oldest (Figure 2a+b). The majority of the participants are between 25 and 35 years of age; the average age is 33 years. Comparing the age of Galdhøpiggen participants with the age of telemark skiers in Norway more generally, two results emerge. First, to a high degree, the age profile of Galdhøpiggen participants reflects Norwegian telemark skiers more generally (Figure 2b). On the other hand, the mean age of Galdhøpiggen participants is higher than the mean age of the telemark skiers in the general population (30 years). This could be interpreted as an indication of the continuing attraction of Galdhøpiggen for those who have participated for many years and continue for a few more years than the average active telemark skier. We return to the generation aspect in the discussion, linking it to reflections on reflexive individualization.

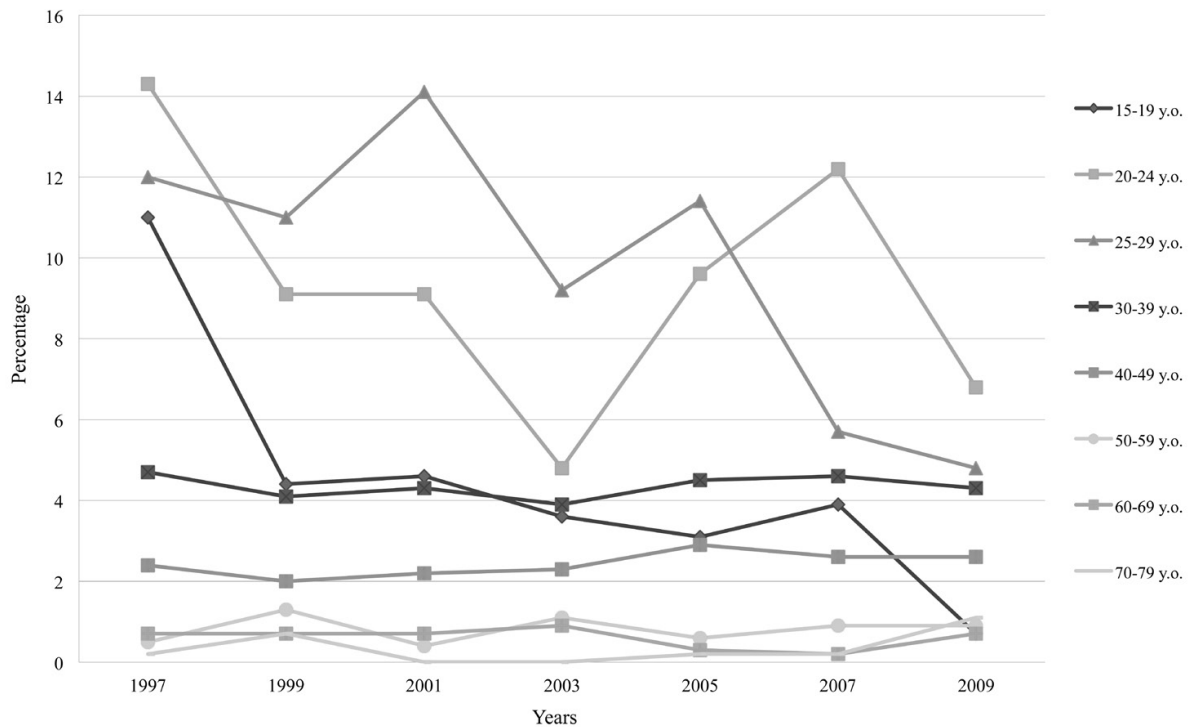
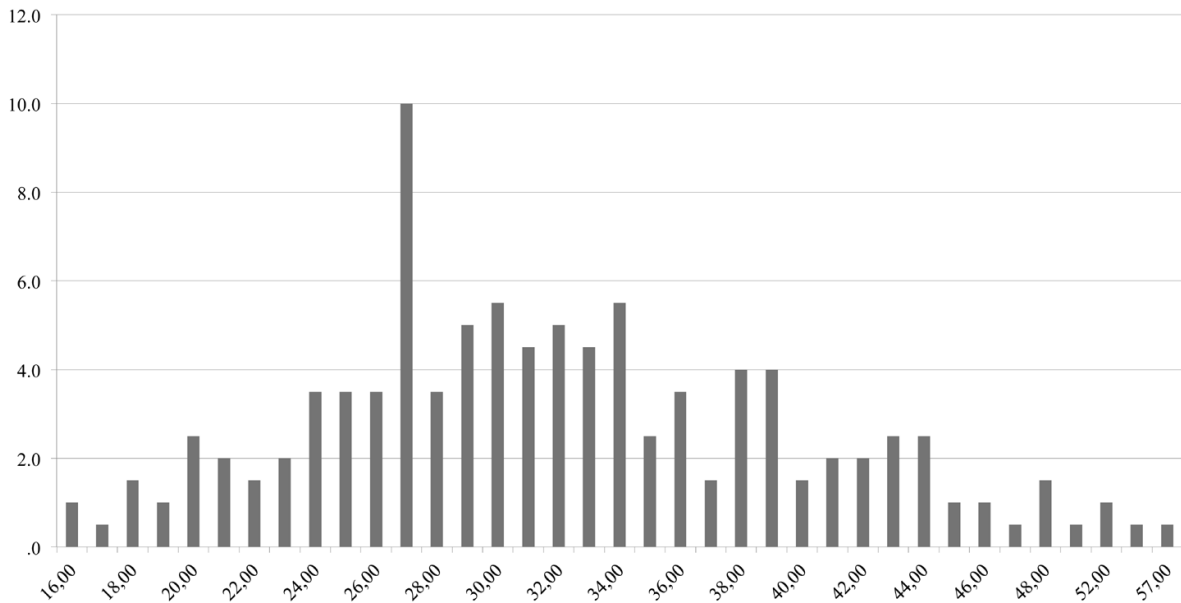


Figure 2a (top): Age distribution of Galdhøpiggenet participants (Galdhøpiggenet sample, $n = 200$).

Figure 2b (bottom): Percentage of telemark skiers in the Norwegian population, by age group (Norsk Monitor sample, $n = 3024-3584$).

Education

Class can be related to both cultural and economic capital measured by education and income respectively (Bourdieu, 1984). The educational level of Galdhøpiggenet participants is particularly evident in the high proportion of highly educated people. Of the

Galdhøpiggen participants 77% had higher education (defined as college or university level), and 44% had extended higher education (defined as four years or more at college or university). The corresponding percentage for the Norwegian population is 28% and 7% respectively (SSB, 2011) (See Figure 3.) Although the measure of educational level is somewhat different in Norsk Monitor, the educational profile of telemark skiers is similar to that of Galdhøpiggen participants. There is a much higher educational level among telemark skiers indicating a positive correlation between the proportion of telemark skiers and level of education (see Figure 4a).

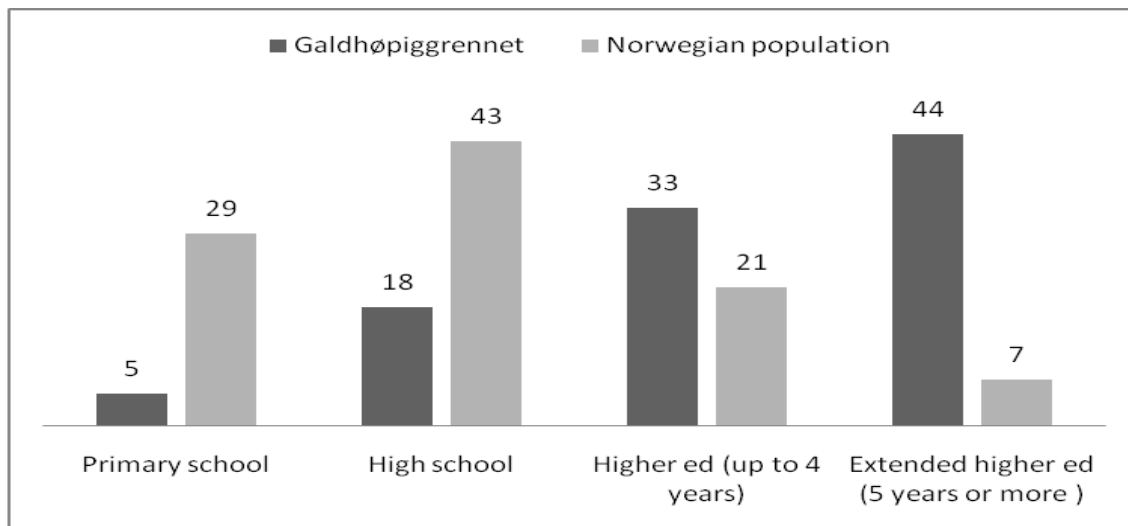


Figure 3: Galdhøpiggen participants by educational level groups (dark bars, Galdhøpiggen sample, $n = 200$), and corresponding in average population (light bars, $n = 3.706.831$, SSB, 2011).

Comparing telemark skiing with other skiing activities, two observations are made (see Figures 4a–4d). First, telemark skiing is the least common form of skiing. Second, telemark has a somewhat steep profile in the diagram (Figure 4a). Cross-country skiing (Figure 4b) also shows a clear profile in relation to educational level, while alpine skiing as well as skiing in mountain or forest terrain at least once a month during the season is an activity with a more egalitarian profile (Figures 4c and 4d). In any respect, telemark skiing appears to be exclusive in relation to class, a point included in the subsequent discussion.

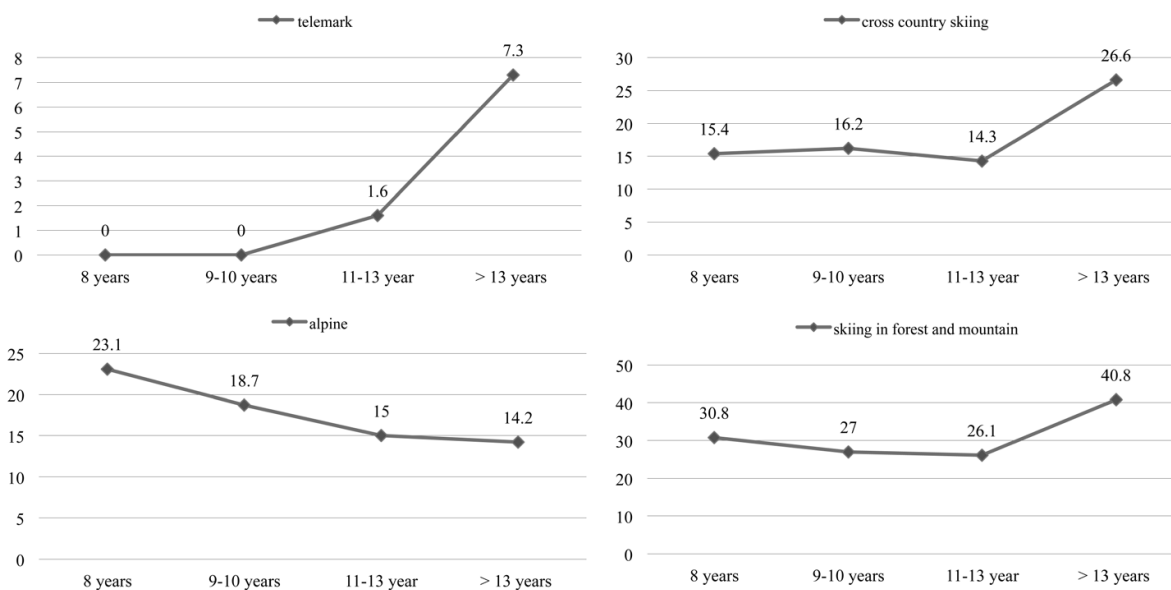


Figure 4a (upper left): Percentage of telemark skiers in the Norwegian population, split by educational level groups (Norsk Monitor sample, $n = 2503$).

Figure 4b (upper right): Percentage of cross country skiers in the Norwegian population, split by groups of educational level (Norsk Monitor sample, $n = 2504$).

Figure 4c (lower left): Percentage of alpine skiers in the Norwegian population, split by groups of educational level (Norsk Monitor sample, $n = 2505$).

Figure 4d (lower right): Percentage of the Norwegian population skiing in the mountain or the forest, split by groups of educational level (Norsk Monitor sample, $n = 2504$).

Income

Another class indicator is income, which is a measure for economic capital (Bourdieu, 1984). The average income among Galdhøpiggen participants (among those who were working, students excluded) is NOK 497,000 (equivalent to 64,000 Euro or 90,000 USD), while the average income of the Norwegian working population is NOK 395,000 (51,000 Euro or 72,000 USD) (SSB, 2011). A cross-table analysis of the Monitor data shows that among the telemark skiers, a higher proportion is earning more than NOK 400,000² (51,000 Euro or 72,000 USD). Although the numbers in the high income groups are small, the trend towards a higher percentage with high income of telemark skiers compared with the general population is especially visible there. These groups (> NOK 800,000; > 104,000 Euro or > 146,000 USD) comprise 4.5 per cent of telemark skiers but less than two per cent of the overall population.

² This is considered a natural cut off point because it is close to the average income (SSB, 2011).

Table 1: Personal income: telemark skiers and the Norwegian population. Percentage in each income group (Norsk Monitor sample, n = 18.743)

Income (NOK)	Telemark	Population
< 100,000	22.9	15.7
100-199,000	9.7	18.2
200-299,000	17.4	25.5
300-399,000	23.9	21.5
400-499,000	12.4	9.8
500-599,000	5.0	4.4
600-799,000	4.3	3.1
800-999,000	2.2	0.9
> 1,000,000	2.3	0.8

Geography

When discussing telemark skiers in space, geographical variables are also required to be considered. Table 2 shows that 55 per cent grew up in rural districts and 45 per cent live in urban areas; that is, many participants have moved from rural to urban areas.

Table 2: Place of origin and place of residence (city, town/village, countryside) (Galdhøpiggen sample, n = 200).

	Place of origin (%)	Place of living (%)
City	20.7	45.2
Town/village	20.7	16.1
Countryside	55.1	36.2
Other	3.5	3.5
Total	118	100

Table 3 shows the six counties with the highest percentage of Galdhøpiggen participants. (All the remaining 14 counties account for five per cent or less.) Most striking is the difference within Oslo (the capital of Norway) between the number of participants having Oslo as the place of origin and as the place of residence. This confirms the urbanization process among telemark skiers, indicated in Table 2, showing the population numbers coming from the rural districts but now residing in an urban area. In addition, Table 3 shows that most Galdhøpiggen participants come from counties with ski resorts.

Table 3: County of origin and county of residence (top 6 of 19 counties) (Galdhøpiggrønnen sample, n = 200).

	County of origin (%)	County of residence (%)
Oslo	5.0	18.5
Oppland	22.0	20.0
Akershus	14.5	11.5
Buskerud	13.5	11.0
Hedmark	8.5	12.0
Møre og Romsdal	7.0	9.5
Others	29.5	27.5
Total	118	118

Discussion

When examining the data on Galdhøpiggrønnen and telemark skiing for the Norwegian population generally, some important points need to be borne in mind. The concept of ‘participation’ may differ from the idea of participation in conventional sport, which usually implies a high level of activity involvement and training several times a week. In relation to the Galdhøpiggrønnen, participation is measured as involvement in one particular annual event (the race 2010).³ Being defined as ‘telemark active’ in the Norsk Monitor study, the (self-reported) criterion is to participate in this activity at least once a month during the season. This may include irregular or intermittent participation, and (necessarily with regard to skiing) it includes seasonally-based activities. Nevertheless, put together, the two data sets give an appropriate picture of telemark skiing in the Norwegian population above the age of 15. Moreover, as long as participation in other activities reported (cross-country skiing, alpine skiing, skiing in mountain and forest areas, and snowboarding) are measured likewise, the relative differences are considered a qualified base for discussion.

The key point here is to discuss why telemark skiing, which could be expected to be special since it is both traditional and modern, exhibit both similarities and differences in relation to socio-economic variables compared to other ski activities and sports more generally (Breivik, 2011; Breivik et al., 2011; Coakley, 2010). The clear class profile in the different ski contexts indicates that although telemark skiing was initiated by groups who wanted something new, one of the primary consequences of the initiation and establishment of telemark skiing has been a reinforcement of class structures already existent in skiing more generally. In this sense, it can be argued that telemark skiing reflects and reproduces the relationships which already exist in terms of sporting participation, thus benefiting those who are already inside the sporting ‘field’, and maintaining the hegemony of those who already have a sporting habitus (Bourdieu, 1978, 1984). On the other hand, an examination of key

³ Three out of four respondents of the survey during the 2010 race had participated at least once previously.

social variables such as gender and class suggests that the telemark skiing does not only reproduce old social patterns of participation and dominance within sport. The data thus suggest a twofold picture: on the one hand the development of telemark skiing seems to reproduce those patterns found in other skiing activities and sport more generally (Breivik, 2011; Breivik et al., 2011; Ståhl et al., 2001) but on the other hand, the ‘new’ activity of telemark skiing appears to challenge some of the established patterns of participation in the sense that it attracts ‘other’ people than, for example, alpine skiing. It might be asked whether this is a sign of individualization.

The gender patterns revealed, with boys dominating telemark skiing in general and Galdhøpiggen in particular, are not unexpected and are in line with the literature both on alternative sport (Beal, 1996; Christensen, 2001), and more conventional sports (Breivik, 2011; Breivik et al., 2011; Coakley, 2010). As noted in one study of young men in Norway: ‘...sport in Norway appears to provide young men with a fairly clear-cut gender script in the face of the “crisis in masculinity”. There is little evidence that traditional stereotypes about masculinity are being challenged within sport ...’ (Næss, 2001, p. 139). However, the gender difference in telemark skiing and in skiing more generally is less clear than in a number of other sports (Breivik, 2011; Breivik et al., 2011; Coakley, 2010; Krangle & Strandbu, 2004; NIF, 2011; Seippel et al., 2011). For example, the numbers in football (soccer), which is the most popular organized sport for females in Norway, the proportion of participants over the age of 16 is 1:4 (in favour of boys) (NIF, 2011). In that respect, there is an important and historically caused gender characteristic of downhill skiing. Alpine skiing as telemark skiing’s closest discipline was one out of first sports where women were included in an early phase. This was during the 1930s (Allen, 2007; Goksøyr, 2008). In fact, it was the only ski discipline that was conceived (by the powerful men within ski and sport policy and organization) as suitable for females to be involved due to its recreational style, compared to cross country skiing which was perceived as too exhaustive, and ski jumping that was regarded as too dangerous.

In relation to class, the picture is also clear, whether measured by education as an indicator of cultural capital as a key factor of class, or by income as an indicator of economic capital which can also be considered a key factor in class (Bourdieu, 1984). The data presented here confirm earlier findings which indicated that better-educated persons are more likely to participate in conventional sport (Breivik, 2011; Breivik et al., 2011; Ståhl et al., 2001). The telemark skiers’ class background, measured by variables such as parents’ education and income indicate that this particular form of skiing is strongly related to cultural and economic capital, as are many other sports (Bourdieu, 1978, 1984, 1988; Breivik, 2011; Breivik et al., 2011; Coakley, 2010; Krangle & Strandbu, 2004; Seippel, et al., 2011). As noted by Bourdieu (1978), different segments of the population have different needs for cultural goods, and this is mirrored in sport participation as in other cultural goods (see also Bourdieu, 1984). Bourdieu’s concepts thus allows us to speculate whether ‘sporting habitus’ should be conceptualized not as an entity, but rather as an umbrella for a variety of needs whilst the ‘telemark habitus’ is more specialized. In other words, there is a more specialized habitus need in order to explain participation in the activity telemark skiing, while a number of different habitûs are compatible for explaining sport participation more broadly.

Regarding the thesis of individualization, it is difficult to draw any firm conclusions on the basis of the data presented here. The data presented make clear that the phenomenon – ‘telemark’ fits relatively well with the thesis of social inequality, which is often mistaken as the opposite of the thesis of individualization. In that respect we like to make two interrelated statements in order to add a nuance to that dichotomy. First, following Lash (1990), the individualization thesis and the social inequality thesis are linked, because it is more likely for a person higher on the social ladder to appear and perceive herself as individualized, because the economic and cultural capital needed to make choices are concentrated in that specific area of social space. In that respect, it can – on a theoretical level – be assumed that there are social patterns *and* processes of individualization among telemark skiers in one and the same process. We will return to that point. Second, the number of telemark skiers and their social origin make the sport exclusive. In that respect, it is tempting to draw a parallel to Bourdieu’s (1984) study of the French middle class travel to ski resorts such as Chamonix in order to show their distinction with other parts of the population. This follows Schuessler’s (2000) definition of the ‘logic of expressive choice’ as preference to do things to be recognized as a member of a particular – preferably exclusive – group.

The present data cannot indicate, however, whether it is a question of new, emerging needs being met by the initiation and development of the “new” sport during the 1980s. Is the real issue related to age and the generations in the sense that some people want something different from the more established ski activities, and that this is about to fade away? Alternatively, it could be argued on a theoretical basis (Beck et al., 1994; Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002) that telemark skiers seek more flexible forms of sporting provision than those offered by conventional sports. Further, it can be held that telemark, as a still relatively new form of sporting provision, would not have developed without a growing understanding of the ways in which key social changes have given rise to new requirements for sporting provision (Breivik, 2011; Breivik et al., 2011; DaCosta & Miragaya, 2002). That is to say, the possibility for a more individualized and more reflexive participation in some forms of activities would not have been created without the institutional reflection which led to the initiation of a specific race and a wave of telemark skiers during the 1980s, which is still alive and popular.

Different ‘sporting habitûs’ are constituted for different sporting contexts, suggesting that despite societal change, the thesis of individuality has limited value in describing and explaining mechanisms leading to sport participation. Examining the relationship between objective aspects like gender and class that locate people – in social space, in the case of telemark skiers – the data to some degree can be interpreted according to Bourdieu:

Class [and gender] habitus define the meaning conferred on sporting activity, the profits expected from it; and not the least of these profits being the social value accruing from the pursuit of certain sports by virtue of the distinctive rarity they derive from their class distribution (Bourdieu, 1978, p. 835).

Sport practices are part of the process of inclusion and exclusion that, despite a ‘new’ activity such as telemark skiing, contributes to the reproduction of a social order (Skille, 2005; Bourdieu, 1978, 1984). Moreover, the same activity – for example Telemark skiing – could be appropriated by agents endowed with diverse dispositions, and new sport offers supplement the old ones; in sum, the creation of new activities is not at all free of patterns. What is not

treated here, and which is an essential part of the total or complex understanding of a person's habitus, is the relationship between the objective dimensions such as gender, age, education and income, and the subjective preferences or taste (Bourdieu, 1984). This relates to another of Bourdieu's definitions of capital. While telemark skiers' class background shows how telemark skiing is highly related to cultural and economic capital as with many other sports (Bourdieu, 1978, 1984, 1988), the exclusivity can also be considered in terms of symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1991).

The point is that individualization cannot be seen as a process where all individuals are freed from old patterns. Individualization seems to be a process which some people can join in order to show a distinction (Bourdieu (1984) or to express themselves in particular ways (Schuessler, 2000), apparently to appear as exclusive. In that respect, although we have not studied the subjective elements of habitus, the identification of telemark skiers as an exclusive group fits with Bourdieu's focus 'on choice as a source of identity' (Schuessler, 2000, p. 54). Telemark is thus a choice of cultural expression and a narrative of the skiers themselves. Just like consumption of 'physical goods becomes expressive ... because they provide identity for their consumers', telemark skiing as an activity becomes a 'socially defining act' (Schuessler, 2000, p. 120) – that is an act of distinction (Bourdieu, 1984). Another approach of analysis could be that many of these telemark skiers follow a general trend of modernization, which includes a broader part of the population than in former generations taking higher education, move to the cities – and choose to continue with their rural activity such as skiing.

Concluding remarks

Why is that which is "typically Norwegian" only practiced by a distinguished group? And what are the consequences? A tentative analysis suggests an intertwined and complex explanation of which the history is one small but major part. The survey data suggest a number of other reasons for the Galdhøpiggen's success, too. Despite a Norwegian skiing tradition, where the telemark style may be conceived as the real Norwegian way of skiing (Allen, 2007; Kleppen, 1986), there has been a decrease in the number of telemark skiers the last decade. It is impossible to move away from social class, even when taking a modernist theoretical point of departure (Beck et al., 1994; Ohl, 2000; Lash, 1990). Even in Norway, which is often presented as egalitarian compared to many other countries (Esping-Andersen, 1990), sport and ski – and in particular telemark ski – participation is strongly related to position in social space and social class.

The main contribution of this paper, leaning empirically on telemark skiing in Norway, is the relationship between social patterns and individualization. While different social groups do not agree about the advantages expected from participating in sport and physical activity (Bourdieu, 1978, pp. 834-837; 1984, pp. 211-215) it can be noted that different groups have different sporting habitus and participate in different sporting contexts for different reasons. In that respect, an investigation of the motives why people telemark ski and which values they bear more generally would add a contribution to the further understanding of the telemark habitus. An analysis of individual skiers' preferences for telemark skiing can shed more light on and provide further insight to the paradox that the individualization of telemark skiers, understood as a reflexive activity leading to the desire for

something new or something else with regard to skiing or sport more generally, actually leads to an establishment of a rather exclusive group of telemark skiers.

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Figures and Tables

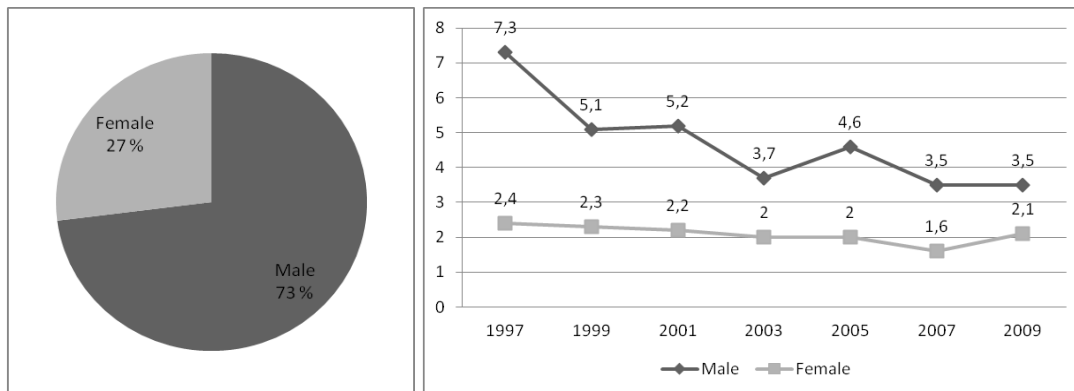


Figure 1a (left): Gender distribution at Galdhøpiggen (Galdhøpiggen sample, n = 200).

Figure 1b (right): Percentage telemark skiers in the Norwegian population, split on gender (Norsk Monitor sample; male n = 1461-1765, female n = 1576-1819).

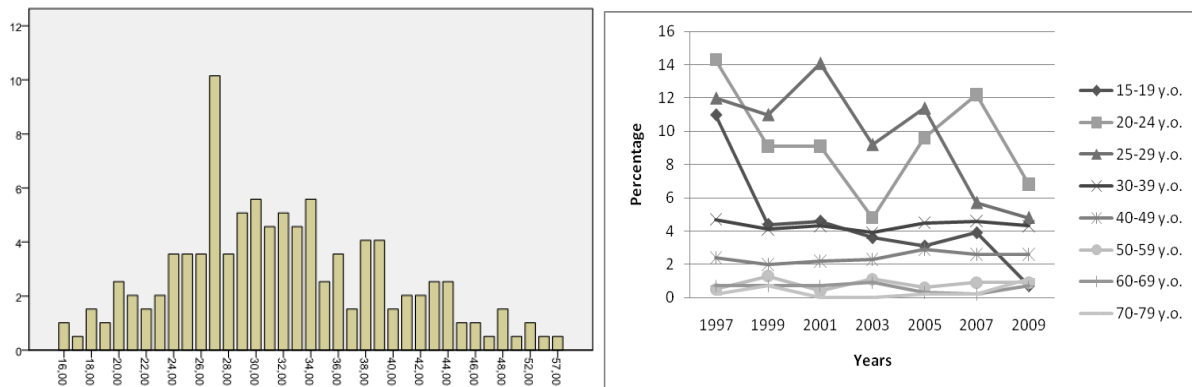


Figure 2a (left): Age distribution of Galdhøpiggen participants (Galdhøpiggen sample, n = 200).

Figure 2b (right): Percentage telemark skiers in the Norwegian population, by age group (Norsk Monitor sample, n = 3024-3584).

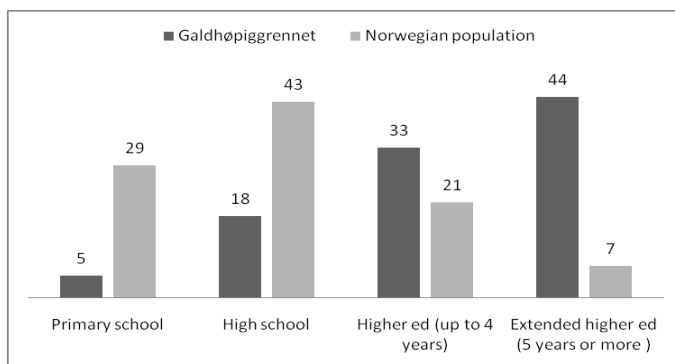


Figure 3: Galdhøpiggen participants in educational level groups (dark poles, Galdhøpiggen sample, n = 200), and corresponding in average population (light poles, n = 3.706.831, SSB, 2011).

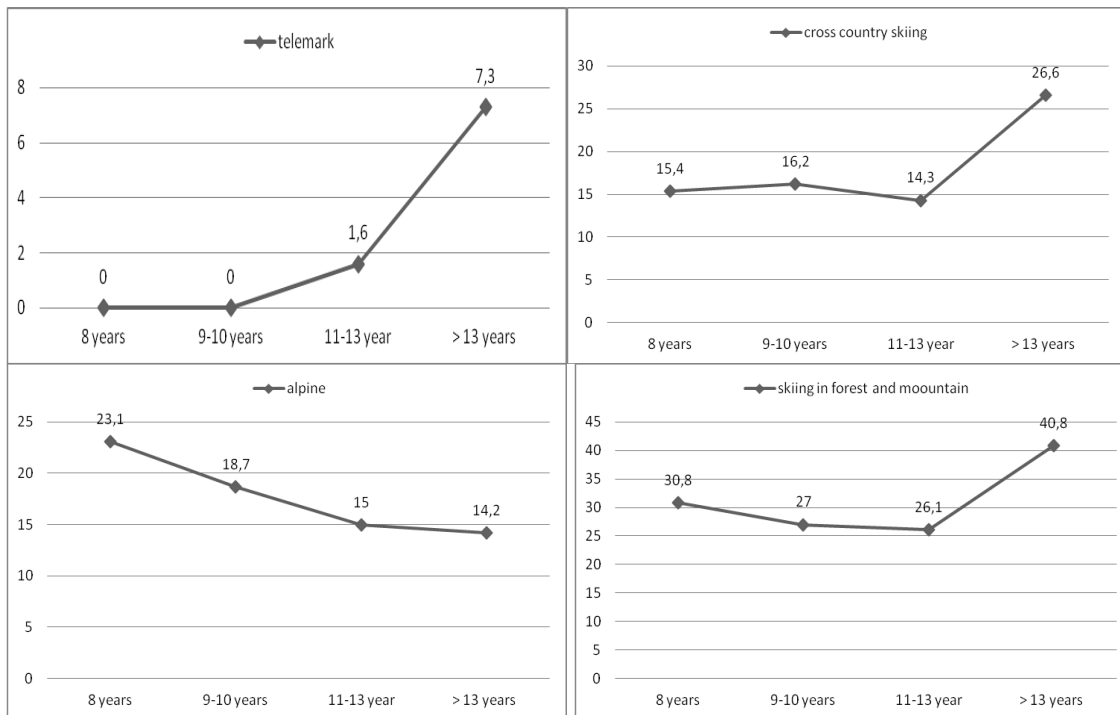


Figure 4a (upper left): Percentage telemark skiers in the Norwegian population, split on educational level groups (Norsk Monitor sample, n = 2503).

Figure 4b (upper right): Percentage cross country skiers in the Norwegian population, split on groups of educational level (Norsk Monitor sample, n = 2504).

Figure 4c (lower left): Percentage alpine skiers in the Norwegian population, split on groups of educational level (Norsk Monitor sample, n = 2505).

Figure 4d (lower right): Percentage of the Norwegian population skiing in the mountain or the forest, split on groups of educational level (Norsk Monitor sample, n = 2504).

Table 1: Personal income: telemark skiers and the Norwegian population. Percentage in each income group (Norsk Monitor sample, n = 18.743)

Income (NOK)	Telemark	Population
< 100,000	22.9	15.7
100-199,000	9.7	18.2
200-299,000	17.4	25.5
300-399,000	23.9	21.5
400-499,000	12.4	9.8
500-599,000	5.0	4.4
600-799,000	4.3	3.1
800-999,000	2.2	0.9
> 1,000,000	2.3	0.8

Table 2: Place of origin and place of residence (city, town/village, countryside) (Galdhøpiggen sample, n = 200).

	Place of origin (%)	Place of living (%)
City	20.7	45.2
Town/village	20.7	16.1
Countryside	55.1	36.2
Other	3.5	3.5
Total	100	100

Table 3: County of origin a county of residence (top 6 of 19 counties) (Galdhøpiggen sample, n = 200).

	County of origin (%)	County of residence (%)
Oslo	5.0	18.5
Oppland	22.0	20.0
Akershus	14.5	11.5
Buskerud	13.5	11.0
Hedmark	8.5	12.0
Møre og Romsdal	7.0	9.5
Others	29.5	17.5
Total	100	100