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Biking Men and Walking Women: A Gender Perspective on Outdoor Recreation Participation in the Swedish Mountains

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BIKING MEN AND WALKING WOMEN: A GENDER PERSPECTIVE ON OUTDOOR RECREATION PARTICIPATION IN THE SWEDISH MOUNTAINS

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Presented to

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In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Tourism

By

Kristin Godtman Kling

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ABSTRACT

This Master’s thesis examines whether there are gender differences in the outdoor recreation activities women and men participate in when visiting the Swedish mountain region. The thesis explores how gender is portrayed on the websites of five major destinations in the mountain region, and if there is a connection between a possible gender divide in participation and gender depiction. The study is a mixed-methods study, using quantitative and qualitative research methods to explore the topic of gender differences in outdoor recreation participation within the theoretical framework of gender, power and gender representation. The results of this study show that gender differences in outdoor recreation participation exist, and that website pictures portray gender in a stereotyped way.

KEYWORDS: activity participation, gender depiction, gender role socialization, gender role stereotypes, outdoor recreation, the Swedish mountain region
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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Study Background

The Swedish mountain region, stretching for over 1000 kilometres along the Norwegian border, is a popular tourist destination. The area has a long history of outdoor recreation, dating back to the turn of the last century when mountain visits became popular (Sandell & Sörlin, 2008). Even though the area is remote and sparsely populated, it is still an attractive destination for Swedes who come to participate in various recreation activities. About half of the Swedish population has visited the mountain region at least once during the last five years (Fredman et al., 2014), and 85% of the visits are directed towards leisure and recreation activities (Heberlein et al., 2002).

According to a study on Swedes’ participation in outdoor recreation, edited by Fredman et al. (2008), almost half of the respondents state that they are out in nature quite often, or very often, on weekdays. For longer periods of leave, this number increased to 89% (Fredman et al., 2008). Based on this data, the conclusion that Swedes enjoy recreating in nature can be drawn. When the data was analysed in depth regarding the ten most common activities people participated in, women turned out to be generally more active than men. However, differences in the types of activities that women and men participated in were discovered. Jogging/trail running, fishing and hunting were more common among the male respondents and sun bathing, picnic and Nordic walking were more common among the females (Fredman et al., 2008). Even so, little attention has been given to gender differences in outdoor recreation activities in the setting of the Swedish mountain region. A current issue is, that even though women are increasingly participating in adventure and outdoor recreation, this domain is still seen as typically male (Boniface, 2006). According to Boniface (2006), men and women have in general different understandings of outdoor adventure. McNiel et al. (2012) argue that recreation activities in the “wild” may have different meanings for men and women, and that the significance of “wild” for some women can make them question their personal safety or competence in this setting. McNiel et al. (2012, p. 41) state “gender socialization regarding wilderness recreation is also shaped by structural constraints, such as cultural beliefs about women’s “places” that can lead to overt or subtle gender bias that constrains some women’s participation in these activities”.

Portrayals of women have been studied by advertising research for a long time (e.g. Chafetz et al., 1993; Goffman, 1979; Klassen et al., 1993; Sirakaya & Sonmez, 2000). Despite this, few studies have examined how women are depicted in wilderness recreation advertisements and their inclusion in such settings (McNeil et al., 2012). Media representations of outdoor recreation activities may act as a contributor in the gender socialisation process and reinforce gender stereotypes on what activities and behaviours are “appropriate” for women and men while recreating in the outdoors (McNiel et al., 2012). Zink and Kane (2015) argue that outdoor recreation media functions in the same way as other types of media, in terms of shaping and reflecting reality. According to Zink and Kane (2015), the “reality” that is being constructed through media of who participates in outdoor activities and how they participate is an
important area of study. In Sweden, many of those who plan a visit to the mountain region seek information on websites (Fredman et al., 2014). Websites may therefore be a first contact with the outdoor recreation activities available in the mountain region, and the images displayed can contribute to how different activities are perceived.

Understanding theories of power, gender and gender representation is, in my view, necessary when discussing societal phenomena from a feminist perspective. Therefore, these theories together with the concept of critical realism constitute the theoretical framework of this study.

1.2 Relevance of the Study

By examining potential messages about “appropriate” gender appearances and behaviours for women and men depicted in media, research can highlight a possible gender divide in outdoor recreation participation and if media images reinforce this possible divide. Thus, research can help develop new ways of introducing outdoor recreation activities to a diversity of visitors in the Swedish mountain region. Exploring if there is a gender difference in outdoor recreation participation among visitors to the Swedish mountain region can contribute to an increased understanding of what prompts engaging in such activities. Such knowledge can be useful when developing, marketing and planning for future tourism in the mountain region. Examining if there is a connection between possible gender differences in outdoor recreation participation and web media representations of gender can be important when attempting to counteract stereotyped perceptions of women’s and men’s “places” in the outdoors, and when targeting new market segments in the mountain region. This study bridges the gap in existing research by exploring if gender differences in outdoor recreation participation among visitors to the Swedish mountain region do exist, and if a gender difference can be found in pictures of outdoor recreation activities on the websites of Sweden’s five largest mountain destinations.

1.3 Objectives and Research Questions

The objective of this study is to contribute to a better understanding of gender dimensions of outdoor recreation participation and its media representations in the case of the Swedish mountain region. The central research questions are:

- *Are there gender differences in participation in outdoor recreation activities and if yes, what are they?*
- *Are there gender differences in how women and men are portrayed in images on the websites of Sweden’s five largest mountain destinations and if yes, what are they?*
• Is there a connection between potential gender differences in the outdoor recreation activities visitors to the Swedish mountain region participate in, and how outdoor recreation activities are portrayed from a gender perspective on mountain destinations’ websites? If yes, how can theories of gender, power and media representation within a feminist framework help explain these differences?
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Critical Theory/Feminism

With the Women’s Liberation movement in the 1960s, feminism gained ground as a political movement for social change, mainly with supporters in the young, intellectual women of the radical social movements of the time (Hannam, 2012). As the later half of the 20th century was characterised by great change in the world, it seemed as if even massive power structures were vulnerable and that a change indeed was possible. Students and teachers who had become radicalised by the events in the world, such as the Vietnam War provided a base for feminist mobilisation and theory (Hannam, 2012).

If earlier gender theory had been characterised by a deconstructive approach, this movement emphasised the solidarity of women as an oppressed group. The term “patriarchy” was used to name the system of male power, and the Women’s Liberation position was based on theory of power. The concept of sex role was seen as an account of the social structures that inhibit women, and the cultural norms that previously had applied to women – taking care of the home, the husband and the children – were now looked upon negatively (Connell, 2002). In the late 1970s, feminism established itself as an influential power, both within the institutional and political field as well as within academia. The state came to be examined as a complex, gendered institution with possibilities of internal change rather than a direct expression of male power. Feminist or feminist-inspired research was subject to huge growth in the disciplines of humanities and social sciences, and by the 1980s “women’s studies” had become an independent academic field (Connell, 2002).

At the same time as this progress was a great success for feminism, many activists of the Women’s Liberation movement was sceptical of this development. Some feared that academic feminism would lose its connection to the grassroots movement and its political agenda. Connell (2002) argues that everything that the activists feared happened, where academic feminism conformed into the bureaucratic and cultural processes of universities and where part of academic feminism is now only remotely connected with gender reform. With this came a division in academic feminism, where a network of feminist researchers “generated an abstract literature of high theory” (Connell, 2002, p. 129). Its main influence stems from philosophers, literary and social theorists whose work has little to do with gender. Important influences in this field have been thinkers of contemporary critical theory, such as Michel Foucault and Judith Butler (Connell, 2002).

An important part of the structure of gender is the concept of power, where power operates through institutions and where one group oppresses another (Connell, 2002). Foucault’s model of power has been prominent in feminist academia, as well as within other activist movements (Gauntlett, 2008). Prior to Foucault, power was largely seen as a force “held” by certain dominant groups. For Marxists, power was held by the dominant class and the workers in this system was powerless, because they had to surrender to the exploitation of the dominant class in order to earn money to survive. For feminists, it was men in patriarchal society who had the power and women were the powerless (Gauntlett, 2008). Foucault (1978) has a different understanding of power. In Foucault’s sense, power is not an advantage that a person
or a group can have, but rather something exercised within interactions and something that flows through relationships. Foucault (1978, p. 93) states “power is everywhere; not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere . . . Power is not an institution, and not a structure; neither is it a certain strength we are endowed with; it is the name that one attributes to a complex strategical situation in a particular society”. Power is everywhere and cannot exist outside relationships, because it is within these relationships it plays a role (Gauntlett, 2008). In order to understand Foucault’s model of power Gauntlett (2008) uses the example that whilst women can point to ways in which men holds the power in a patriarchal society, it can always be easy to find individual relationships where women seem have more power than men. In particular, the idea that women are united in their global powerlessness and that all men hold the world’s power is problematic when an academic feminist middle-class woman would have more in common with her male colleagues than with a woman living in poverty in the Third World (Gauntlett, 2008).

Connell (2002) argues that there is both organised, institutional power and diffuse, discursive power, and both of the approaches contribute to our understanding of gender relations. Foucault (1978) also suggests that the exercise of power always produces resistance, so in a way power is productive because it causes things to happen. For example, the most famous of all feminist movements is the suffragette struggle for the right to vote, which were a resistance and a call for reform against oppressive laws. Diffuse power can also be transformed, for example in the classroom where educators can help children and young people understand and take control of gender discourses (Connell, 2002).

In the 1970s, many theorists proposed a distinction between “sex” and “gender”. Sex was the biological fact, whereas gender was the social fact, the difference between masculine and feminine roles. This distinction was a conceptual breakthrough because it took away the possibility of justifying women’s subordination with biology. Gender became to be viewed as constructed, and individuals or societies existed in a realm of freedom where they were able to choose the gender patterns they wanted (Connell, 2002).

In the 1990s, Judith Butler’s book *Gender Trouble*, published in 1990, became one of the most influential texts in academic feminism. In this book, Butler argues that there is no fixed foundation of identity or gender, and therefore there is no fixed foundation of feminist strategy. She takes the discussion of gender and sex one step further and questions the concepts of both sex and gender. Butler (1999) suggests that reality is created through the ways we talk about, construct and perceive the social world. Therefore, both the biological sex and gender is culturally constructed and a performance, and there is no need to separate them because the biological sex is already gender and exists within a prevailing gender system. If gender is not tied to the biological sex, gender becomes a kind of action that can spread over the limitations that are applied to the sex’ apparent binary character (Butler, 1999). Butler (1999, p. 10) argues that “when the constructed status of gender is theorized as radically independent of sex, gender itself becomes a free-floating artifice, with the consequence that man and masculine might just as easily signify a female body as a male one, and woman and feminine a male body as easily as a female one.”
We tend to view gender as an attribute, which through culture becomes fixed, and a permanent part of the inner self, thereby constraining us by this existing discourse. According to Butler (1999), gender should be seen as something changeable and fluid that can shift in different contexts. Gender is not who you are, but rather what you do. Therefore, there can be no “real” female or male performance, and what we perceive to be male or female are just identity patterns that we have grown accustomed to through repetition. There is really nothing fixed or predetermined about them (Butler, 1999).

Butler (1999) argues that we should challenge traditional views of gender and sexuality and reinvent them, by causing gender trouble. In other words, we should challenge our daily performances of identity, and by doing so we can work to change gender norms and the divided understanding of masculinity and femininity (Gauntlett, 2003).

I find it the idea of gender and power as being constructed and not fixed interesting and intriguing. Therefore I chose to use these theories as the theoretical foundation in this study. In my view, it is a somewhat liberating thought that gender and power can transform and is something one can affect, and that it is within everyone’s reach to change the prevailing conditions of society.

2.2 Critical Realism

Critical realism has become an influential movement within the social sciences. Since the 1930s, the positivistic approach has dominated many of the social sciences and as a critique to that approach; critical realism has gained ground as a new standpoint in the philosophy of science in recent years (Danermark et al., 2002). Danermark et al. (2002) argues that methodologies within social sciences are often subject to an intense debate, where positivism is set against hermeneutics, quantitative method against qualitative etc. This dualistic perspective is sometimes called the “either-or” approach, but researchers today often abandon this approach in favour of one characterized by “both-and” in many social science issues (Danermark et al., 2002).

Danermark et al. (2002) argues that the prevalence of the either-or perspective has been particularly obvious in methodology disputes where proponents of quantitative and qualitative methodology have been in conflict. Such a division can be problematic when linking empirical research with theorizing. Danermark et al. (2002) suggests that as research involves a wide range of methodological tools and it is necessary to use many of these tools in research projects, it is therefore often a need to mix methods and that the division between quantitative and qualitative methods is unfortunate. However, taking the ontological and epistemological dimensions into account is crucial when mixing methods. That is, questions about the nature of reality and how we gain knowledge about it.

According to Danermark et al. (2002), a clear connection between the ontological and epistemological starting points and the practical research work should always be present. It is stated that the core of critical realism is that “within philosophy, critical realism involves a switch from epistemology to ontology, and within ontology a switch from events to mechanisms” (Danermark et al., 2002, p. 5). To switch from events to mechanisms means that instead of focusing on the events themselves, the attention is
being brought to what actually produces the events and their inherent properties. In contrast to empirical research, where reality consists of events that can be observed critical realism goes one step further and sees a dimension that comprises the mechanisms that produce the events in the world. As critical realism claims that reality consists of many different objects, many different mechanisms operate at the same time, resulting in the events we can observe. This is a complex combination of the influences from different mechanisms; therefore, in order to understand society it is important to combine several different research methods (Danermark et al., 2002). Danermark et al. (2002) argues that the choice and use of methods in research should be based on ontological considerations, the tools of theory needed in concrete research work, and how different empirical procedures meet different demands in this work.

As this thesis is a mixed-methods study, I chose the ontological stance of critical realism to give emphasis to how research can benefit from using both quantitative and qualitative methodological tools. I believe combining methods and examining the mechanisms of what lays within the events I am exploring give a more comprehensive and holistic picture of the topic addressed in this study.

2.3 Goffman’s Framework of Gender Display

Within the theory of media representation, the work of Erving Goffman is essential. Erving Goffman’s “Gender Advertisements” was published in 1976 and is still to date considered as one of the most important works on investigating nonverbal gender displays in advertising to date (Sirakaya & Sonmez, 2000). The original conceptualizations in the book are more exploratory than definitive, and have since then been used in several studies of gender roles in analyses of advertising (Sirakaya & Sonmez, 2000). Klassen et al. (1993) identify two strengths of Goffman’s approach to advertising analysis: (1) it allows researchers to study images of the relationship between men and women, thus offering insights into how both sexes are displayed, and (2) it permits researchers to explore less obvious, more subtle elements of an advertisement. In this thesis, media display refers to the ways in which media portrays specific groups, experiences, ideas or topics from an ideological perspective and hence constructs “reality”. Ragan (cited in Sirakaya & Sonmez, 2000, p. 355) describes displays as “emotionally motivated behaviours that have become stereotypic by simplification or exaggeration so that a brief expression suffices in lieu of playing out the entire act”. Sirakaya and Sonmez (2000) argue that such gender displays affirm what social arrangements should be, thereby maintaining the status quo in which men are dominant over women. Gornick (cited in Goffman, 1979, p. vi) explained the significance of how women and men are portrayed together in advertisements: “Advertising depicts for us not necessarily how we actually behave as men and women but how we think men and women behave. This depiction serves the social purpose of convincing us that this is how men and women are, or want to be, or should be, not only in relation to themselves but also in relation to other.”

Goffman’s (1979) categorizations of gender display will be discussed briefly in order to establish the conceptual framework of gender analysis in this thesis. Goffman (1979) elaborated six categories in which relationships between the sexes and the meanings of subtle messages are discussed:
• Relative size
• Feminine touch
• Rank order of gender
• Gender depiction in the family
• Ritualization of subordination
• Gender detachment.

Relative size. This refers to the physical size (e.g. height) of people. On average, biology makes it so that men are taller than women. However, this biological fact is often deliberately exaggerated in advertisements through camera angles and positioning techniques. Men’s size in relation to women’s is increased, and men stand more often than women to imply social superiority and leadership. Accordingly, taller people have come to symbolize superiority in the social class, whereas shorter people symbolize subordination (Goffman, 1979).

Feminine touch. Goffman (1979) refers to the cradling of a person or an object as the feminine touch. According to Goffman (1979), women are more often than men displayed when ritualistically touching an object or a person with their hands, fingertips or face. Self-touching is also used to show how delicate and precious one’s body is (Goffman, 1979).

Rank order of gender. Goffman (1979) also refers to rank order of gender as “function ranking”, and it is used to help analysing advertisements at a glance. Relationships between women and men are explained through looking at their societal and occupational roles and functions in society. The executive role implies that a person (usually the man) is active and does the instructions, while the other (usually the woman) is watching or just “being there”. According to Goffman (1979), women are often portrayed as passive participants in a given social situation.

Gender depiction in the family. The nuclear family, consisting of daughter, son and heterosexual parents is often depicted in advertisements to reflect societal norms. Advertisements often focus on a special bond between father and son and mother and daughter by using positioning techniques and camera angles. Moreover, the father is often placed at a small distance from the other family members, to show male protective power and authority in the household (Goffman, 1979).

Ritualization of subordination. Goffman (1979) identified nine forms of ritualization of subordination. This is used to stratify the way pictures are viewed in a frame, and is usually done by for example showing a person’s bent knee, canted hip or prone posture, or by positioning one person sitting while the other stands or one person being positioned behind the other. Images displaying the lowering of oneself, bending the head, smiling, being serious, mocking the other person, holding the hand of the opposite sex are examples of the ritualization of subordination. Goffman (1979, p. 57) states: “a classic type of deference is that of lowering oneself physically in some form or other of prostration. Correspondingly, holding the body erect and the head high is stereotypically a mark of un-ashamedness, superiority and disdain.”. According to Goffman (1979), advertisements portray women and children on beds and floors more often than men, thus sending the message of men’s superiority over others.
**Gender detachment.** This is illustrated by physical reactions such as hiding the mouth with the hands or nuzzling. Goffman (1979) refers to gender detachment by sex as “licensed withdrawal”, and explains it as a situation when a person is psychologically withdrawn from a social setting and disoriented, and therefore depends on the protection from others.

Goffman’s framework of gender display can be subject to discussion. For example, the argument that taller people symbolize superiority and shorter people symbolize subordination can be seen as problematic as it is difficult to draw that conclusion based on advertisement pictures. This assertion can be perceived as rather one-sided, and it can be problematic to make generalisations based on this claim. However, I still decided to use this framework as it provides an appropriate structure for analysing website pictures from a gender perspective.

### 2.4 Conceptual framework

Feminist theory (including Butler’s understanding of gender and Foucault’s model of power), Goffman’s framework of gender display and the theory of critical realism constitute the theoretical foundation of this thesis.

In order to meet the proposed research objective and answer the research questions formulated in chapter 1.3, these theories were chosen because they cover ideas of gender and power within a feminist framework as well as methodological concerns. The concepts of power and gender and how traditional perceptions of these can be challenged and possibly changed are, in my view, crucial to understanding society within a feminist realm.

Bryson (2003) suggests that the critical standpoint Foucault takes on the way words are used and how knowledge, meaning and culture are produced is politically important. These forms patterns or discourses, which are connected to the exercise of power and define our understanding of society. However, these are not available to all. According to Bryson (2003), Foucault argues that dominant groups in society will attempt to impose their worldview on the rest and that their discourses will be privileged, although marginal groups can challenge these discourses. Power is, according to Foucault, increasingly spread in society and exercised at micro-level within non-political institutions such as families or schools (Bryson, 2003). Butler (1999) also suggests that oppressive structures can be challenged and uses the example of how transvestism, which crosses gender lines, can challenge the traditional perceptions of gender and sexuality.

Gauntlett (2008) discusses whether mass media has power over its audience, or if it is the audience of viewing and reading consumers that hold the power. According to Gauntlett (2008) the answer is, rather unsurprisingly, that the power relationship between media and the audience includes a little bit of both. Mass media spreads messages about acceptable forms of identity, gender, sexuality and lifestyle. At the same time, the audience have their own opinions and diverse feelings about these matters. Gauntlett (2008, p. 287) speaks of a “plodding war of attrition against the forces of tradition and conservatism”. On the one hand, new ideas have power, which some parts of media convey, but on the other hand, other parts of media still foster the old ways of looking at things. However, Gauntlett (2008) argues that views of gender
and sexuality, masculinity and femininity are in a slow but steady process of change. Thirty years ago, researchers of popular media often found that mainstream culture was a retrogressive force that tried to push people back into traditional categories. Gauntlett (2008) argues that this has changed. He claims that today it is more appropriate to emphasise that within limits, media can be a force for change. “To discuss gender and media is to aim arguments at moving targets” (Gauntlett, 2008, p. 288).

The conceptual framework of this thesis is presented in Figure 1.

![Figure 1: Conceptual framework](image-url)
3 LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review presents theories of gender, recreation and media representations as key drivers for explaining possible differences in women and men’s participation in outdoor recreation activities in the Swedish mountain region. Within this framework, leisure, media representations of gender in outdoor recreation and gender role socialisation will be covered.

3.1 Gender and leisure

The emergence of leisure time and its form and content has to a high extent been created based on male circumstances of life and preferences. The concept of leisure time relies on the dividing of working hours and leisure, where women’s patterns of life seldom fit (SOU 1996:3). For employed women, this phenomenon is often referred to as women’s double day. When women return home from paid work, they often continue to do the majority of the work in the household (Firestone & Shelton, 1994). Aitchison (2003) argues “defining leisure in relation to full-time paid work has traditionally meant defining leisure in relation to men’s work and therefore only offers a useful definition to a minority of women as the majority is not engaged in full-time paid employment” (Aitchison, 2003 p. 42). However, in a time when women’s paid employment has increased dramatically in western societies, such a critique is problematic (Aitchison, 2003). To provide a more nuanced and detailed image, an increasing number of leisure studies therefore focus on how gender, employment status, household work and socio-demographic variables affect the amount of time spent on leisure activities (Thrane, 2000). Research concerning gender and recreation has in the past had a male focus, as men were more visible in recreation than women. Hence, recreation was studied from a male perspective with the assumption that women and girls were like them, or should be like them. Women and girls were in reality involved in many aspects of recreation, but their efforts were often not noticed in the same way as those of boys and men (Henderson, 2000). Henderson (2000) suggests that the approach to understanding the interplay of gender and recreation in the 21st century takes the great diversity of society into account, not only related to gender but to other aspects such as race, class, disability, age and sexual orientation. The preferred way to examine gender is therefore from an inclusion perspective (Henderson, 2000). According to Henderson (2000), this perspective recognises both females and males and broadens the understanding of how gender expectations relate to recreation choices and opportunities.

3.1.1 Gender and Outdoor Recreation. Participation in wilderness-situated recreational activities has often been discussed in an essence of freedom and independence (McNiel et al., 2012). Studies on participants in such activities have shown that the benefits of engaging in wilderness recreation include mental and spiritual health (Maller et al., 2005) as well as physical health (Bedimo-Rung et al., 2005; Cohen et al., 2007). Despite the general assumption being that wilderness spaces, e.g. national parks, belong to all citizens there is a great variation in who takes part in wilderness recreation activities, especially in aspects of race, gender and socioeconomic status. Consequently, inequalities in usage between demographic groups exist and a large segment of the population are not benefiting from participation in wilderness recreation (McNiel et al. 2012). Boniface (2006) argues, that even if women’s participation in the outdoor adventure environment is
increasing, they are still a minority as this field is mainly seen as a male domain. Other factors that contribute to explaining why many women feel hesitant to engaging in outdoor recreation and wilderness activities are the matters of time and income (Aitchison, 2003; Wearing & Wearing, 1998). McNiel et al. (2012) suggest that wilderness recreation often requires substantial financial resources. Therefore leisure, considered as free time, can be problematic for women whose free time depends on the financial support of a male partner (Aitchison, 2003). According to Deem (1982), women have less leisure time than men because they are more likely to engage in caretaking activities. Another issue that has been addressed in research of gender differences in outdoor activity participation is the matter of concerns about physical safety. A study conducted by Wesley and Gaarder (2004) shows that women’s fear of crime and violence while recreating in the outdoors limit their participation in such activities, both in terms of geographical mobility as well as a reason for not engaging in outdoor recreation activities.

3.1.2 Gender Role Socialisation and Outdoor Recreation. A gender stereotype is “an oversimplified set of characteristics used to generalize about behaviours, attitudes and values” (Larsen, 1997, p. 390). Heilman (2001) suggests that gender-based stereotypes are caused by gender role socialisation, and expectations of what women are like and how they should behave can result in devaluation of their performance and penalization for being competent. According to Warren and Loeffler (2006), gender role socialisation influences women’s technical skill development in outdoor adventure by creating the perception that certain outdoor adventure activities are not considered as seriously for women as they are for men.

This socialisation into activity appropriateness occurs early in childhood and is often reinforced through a person’s whole life. Brinkman et al. (2014) argues that conforming to gender role expectations as a child can give advantages such as being accepted by both adults and peers. Not conforming to gender-appropriate behaviour can, on the other hand, result in social penalties or other negative consequences.

Gender-based stereotypes also influence how women and men are perceived and evaluated. Gender stereotypes include both “shoulds” and “should not”. For women, the “should not’s” are behaviours typically associated with men, behaviours that are deemed incompatible with the female essence. Therefore, characteristics such as being tough, achievement-oriented and self-assertive that is positively valued for men are prohibited for women. When women are successful in areas usually reserved for men and hence violates these gender prescriptions, they often face social penalties, they are disliked and their peers view their accomplishments negatively (Heilman et al., 2004). Gender stereotypes can also lead to the perception that women are less competent than men (Wood & Karten, 1986). Mulqueen (1995, quoted in Warren & Loeffler, 2006, p. 109) states, “that women are socialized not to outperform men and thus inhibit themselves, rather than emasculating a man”.

Gender role socialisation leads to a situation where males have a better opportunity to try outdoor recreation activities and become more comfortable with outdoor recreation experiences. An example of this is even when both male and female participants in a wilderness trip are described as “beginners”, the male participants may have the advantage of being more comfortable or experienced in the outdoors. Women have fewer role models in outdoor recreation, and less access to those role
models. Those women who do succeed as outdoor professionals are often perceived as “super women”, thus implying that being a woman in the outdoors is something out of the ordinary (Haluza-DeLay & Dyment, 2003).

3.2 Gender and Media

Gender expectations in society can help form roles or norms that affect and influence behaviours of each gender. Such stereotypes can restrict women and men in their everyday life, and represent a form of prejudice based solely on gender (Larsen, 1997). Many factors can contribute to the gender role process, but according to Larsen (1997) different types of media can be ever so influential because of their ability to generate and conserve gender role stereotypes. In today’s image conscious world, images can affect and shape the way reality is perceived and understood (Zink & Kane, 2015). In Collins’ (2011) review of content analysis studies addressing the broad topic of gender roles in media, the conclusion that most of the studies had in common was that women are under-represented in media, and when women are present they are portrayed in stereotypical roles and sexualised. A similar result was found in Ganahl et al. (2003) study of prime time commercials, in which the conclusion is that gender stereotypes still dominate the advertising industry. According to the authors, television commercials today may be more irrelevant to female consumers than they were 20 years ago, because the characters are so outdated.

Several studies have shown that sport media is dominated by stories and images of men (e.g. French, 2013; Trolan, 2013; Koivula, 1999; Fink, 1998). In a Swedish context, a study examining media presentations of women and men in sports showed distinct contrasts between how female and male athletes were covered in televised Swedish sports news. The study sampled sports news in 1995/96 and 1998, and in both samples women received significantly less coverage than men. Less than 10 per cent of the airtime dedicated to sports and athletes focused on women (Koivula, 1999). In a study from 2012 analysing how Swedish media covered the Olympic Games in London, it was found that Swedish female athletes received more attention during the games than day-to-day sports coverage, and that they received more coverage than in previous games. Even so, Swedish sportswomen were still under-represented in media considering that female athletes in the 2012 Olympic troop constituted 59 per cent of the competing athletes (Hedenborg, 2013).

3.2.1 Media Representations of Gender Roles in Outdoor Recreation. In terms of reflecting and shaping reality, outdoor recreation media functions in the same way as other types of media (Zink & Kane, 2015). Zink and Kane (2015) argues that the lack of scrutiny and review of outdoor recreation media in research is surprising, as for example sports media is often subject to studies from a gendered perspective. The “reality” that is being constructed through media of who participates in outdoor activities and how they participate is, according to Zink and Kane (2015) an important area of study.

Portrayals of women have been studied by advertising research for a long time (e.g. Sirakaya & Sonmez, 2000; Chafetz et al., 1993; Goffman, 1979). Despite this, few studies have examined how women are depicted in wilderness recreation advertisements and their inclusion in such settings (McNiel et al. 2012). Research on
wilderness recreation advertising finds that advertisements often focus on individualism and is primarily grounded in an ideology of white male dominance. Being in the “wild” means overcoming weaknesses such as fear, hunger, cold and pain, becoming completely self-sufficient, testing oneself against nature’s challenges and the solo performance is seen as ideal (Hirschman, 2003). As women’s role and status in both family and society have evolved dramatically in Western societies in the last hundred years, they are now a substantial part of the labour force. Thus, working women represent a considerable and lucrative target market for advertisers (Sirakaya & Sonmez, 2000). Sirakaya and Sonmez (2000) suggests that as women represent a target audience for various promotional messages, it could be expected that tourism advertisements targeting a generation of well-educated and independent working women would portray them more realistically in their positions in postmodern society. To the contrary, according to a recent study by McNiel et al. (2012), advertisements of women’s place in outdoor environments are complicated. In their analysis of advertisements in the outdoor magazines Backpacker and Outside, they found that women’s participation in outdoor activities is shown as short in duration and lacking in physical demands, unlike men whose participation in this form of recreation is portrayed as a source of challenge and place to overcome demanding physical conditions. Women were shown in limited roles and men were represented as necessary companions or teachers to help educate or protect women while in the outdoors. McNiel et al. (2012) conclude that the overall theme in these magazines is that women are outsiders in this environment.

In Zink and Kane’s (2015) analysis of pictures in 11 New Zealand outdoor recreation publications, the authors found that women are underrepresented in all of the magazines. However, it is noted that between 2001 and 2011 a considerable change in the type and style of images in the magazines can be seen. The number of images portraying women had increased in a majority of the magazines, and women were also more often shown as active participants in the magazines from 2011 than in the ones from 2001. In 2011, there had also been a decrease in the number of pictures that portray women in stereotypically sexualized poses in the majority of the publications (Zink & Kane, 2015).
4 THE CONTEXT OF SWEDEN

In this chapter, the study area of the Swedish mountain region is presented and outdoor recreation and leisure is discussed in a Scandinavian context.

4.1 Scandinavian Context

Sandell and Sörlin (2008) addressed the topic of the emergence of outdoor recreation in Sweden, which took place in the transformative time of the later part of the 19th century. The incipient era of industrialisation and urbanisation constituted a clear divergence to the old rural society, and interests in the exploration of the native outdoor landscape, rooted in the ideology of national romanticism, began to form. Smaller groups of members from the higher social classes began to engage in outdoor life and alpinism. The trend was similar in both Europe and North America; organisations with the aim of promoting outdoor recreation and nature protection were formed (Sandell & Sörlin, 2008).

Sandell (2000) points out that in the 1930s especially; a democratisation of outdoor recreation took place in the sense that it came to include a broader part of the population. Upper class men had dominated the early outdoor recreation life at the turn of the century, but when the holiday laws were established in Sweden in 1938 in combination with higher material welfare, it was possible for the larger population to spend time in nature. Bicycle holidays, hostels and camping became typical elements in the broadening of outdoor recreation, and it was possible for women to participate in activities that previously had been reserved for men (Sandell, 2000; Fabri, 2010).

According to the Global Gender Gap Report 2014, Sweden is the world’s fourth most gender-equal country (World Economic Forum, 2014). The report measures relative gaps between women and men in the aspects of health, education, politics and economy. The Scandinavian countries are all in the top five. It could therefore be assumed that the gender differences in Scandinavians’ leisure time would be small (Thrane, 2000). Thrane’s (2000) study of weekday leisure time experienced by Danish, Norwegian and Swedish people show that gender differences were roughly the same in the three countries - women have about 20 minutes less leisure time a day than men. When looking specifically at the results, it was found that full-time employment reduces leisure time more for men than for women, and being married and having small children reduced leisure time more for women than for men (Thrane, 2000). The fact that women have less leisure time when having small children could be interpreted as support for women’s double day (Firestone & Shelton, 1994) or the traditional gender role when childcare is assigned to the woman (Thrane, 2000).

4.2 Study Area

The Swedish mountain region is a vast area that constitutes one third of the country, but less than two per cent of the population actually live there (Heberlein et al. 2002). The Swedish part of the Scandinavian mountains stretches for over 1000 kilometres along the Norwegian border and it is in terms of geology, one of the oldest in the world. Millions of years of erosion have given the mountains their rounded shape, and the altitudes of the highest peaks are lower than for example those of the Alps. The highest peaks are just over 2000 metres, and this rather gentle topography makes the
area suitable for hiking and cross-country skiing (Heberlein et al 2002). There are also about 40 major downhill ski areas in the region (Wall-Reinius, 2006). The area is quite remote – the distance from the population centres in the south is between 400 and 1500 kilometres, but it is an attractive and popular destination for Swedish tourists. Heberlein et al. (2002) found in their study that nearly 1 in 4 adult Swedes visit the mountain region in a single year, and about 85 per cent of these visits are for recreation and leisure. The mountain region also has the highest proportion of protected areas, in terms of for example national parks and nature reserves (Naturvårdsverket, 2014).

Tourism in the Swedish mountain region is dominated by the winter season and is highly directed towards downhill skiing, and it is geographically uneven (Heberlein et al. 2002). The winter tourism is mostly centred on the downhill ski resorts in the south (Jämtland and Dalarna). In the summer, visits are lower and more dominant in the north. The activities are also more diverse compared to the rest of Sweden, and the number of international visitors is low. Heberlein et al. (2002) suggest that the variation in tourism patterns can be explained by the remoteness and the stretched-out location of the mountain region, infrastructure and also by the variations in natural characteristics. A map of the Swedish mountain region is presented in Figure 2.

Figure 2: The Swedish mountain region
5 METHODS

The objective of this study is to explore potential gender differences in outdoor recreation participation among visitors to the Swedish mountain region, and if this possible gender difference in participation can be found in images of activities on the websites of Sweden’s five largest mountain destinations. This chapter presents the process involved in conducting this study. The research design and the chosen research method are discussed. Steps taken in the data collection procedure, selection of website pictures as objects of study and data analysis procedure are also discussed. Finally, limitations of the study are considered.

5.1 Research Design

To conduct this study, I have chosen a mixed-methods research procedure. As I had the opportunity and advantage to use quantitative survey data previously collected by researchers in the ETOUR-project “The new mountain experience”, I imagined that combining it with a qualitative content analysis of how mountain destinations portray gender in their websites might give interesting findings. By analysing quantitative survey data on outdoor recreation participation from a gendered perspective, my aim was to contribute to a more comprehensive account on gender and outdoor recreation participation among visitors to the Swedish mountain region. Moreover, my expectation was that combining quantitative survey data and a qualitative content analysis of pictures in mountain destinations websites would contribute to uncovering potentially unexpected relationships between participating in outdoor recreation activities and gender portrayals in promotion pictures.

According to Creswell (2009) the sequential explanatory strategy is a popular strategy for mixed methods design, and often appeals to researchers with strong quantitative leanings. It occurs in two distinct interactive phases, starting with the collection and analyses of quantitative data in the first phase. Typically, the quantitative data has the priority for addressing the study’s questions. In the second phase, qualitative data is collected and analysed. The second phase is designed so that it follows from the results of the first phase. Thus, my assumption was that if I in fact found gender differences in outdoor recreation participation in the quantitative data, I would then be able to continue in the second phase to explore whether these gender differences are present in the website images. So, the two types of data are separate but connected. Creswell (2009) points out that a sequential explanatory design is often used to explain and interpret quantitative results by collecting and analysing follow-up qualitative data, as in the case of this study. A sequential explanatory study has the benefits of being easy to implement, it is straightforward and it is easy to describe and to report (Creswell, 2009). The main weakness of the strategy is the amount of time required for data collection with the two phases, which can be quite substantial. As I mentioned, I had in my study the advantage of being able to take part of previously collected quantitative data, which saved me time and effort. Therefore, I considered the sequential explanatory strategy as suitable for the type of study I conducted. A model of the sequential explanatory design is proposed in Figure 3.
5.2 Data Collection

5.2.1 Quantitative Data Collection. The quantitative study was conducted as a national web survey to the Swedish population in the ages of 15-70 years. The study is based on questions partly about visits to the mountain region, and partly on different recreation activities possible to participate in in the region. In addition, questions about relations to the location, relations to the landscape, the mountain region in social media, wind power experiences and attitudes towards protected areas were addressed (Fredman et al., 2014). The study is designed as a cross-sectional study regarding the year 2013. The year was split in three periods in order to increase the precision in the measuring and to intercept differences in participation in recreational activities during seasons. Therefore, a survey regarding visits to the mountain region was conducted at three occasions (May, September and January), targeting visits during the periods January – April, May – August and September – December. At every occasion 1000 random people participated, which gives a total of 3000 participants. Of those 3000 participants, a total of 305 respondents had visited the mountains and participated in various outdoor recreation activities. The survey company Norstat, on behalf of Mid Sweden University, conducted the interviews for the survey and the sample was made from the Internet panel of about 100 000 people from the Swedish population that Norstat works with. The sample is divided so that it corresponds to the national age structure and sex distribution. The research group developed the content of the study, while Norstat was responsible for the production of the web survey and its implementation (Fredman et al., 2014).

When looking at the overall characteristics of the respondents of the survey, it can be noted that circa 50% are men and 50% are women; the age spread is relatively even, the rural areas are represented by about 10% of the answers and bigger cities are represented by about 25%. About half of the respondents have a university- or higher education. Compared to the Swedish average this means that the survey population along general lines reflects the population in regards to sex and age (Fredman et al., 2014).

5.2.2 Qualitative Data Collection. In order to collect the qualitative data, I visited the websites of the five largest mountain destinations in Sweden: Funäsfjällen, Idre Fjäll, Sälen, Vemdalen and Åre (Visit Fjällen, 2015). I chose to sample and analyse pictures from these destinations because they are well-known and popular mountain
destinations and have a high number of visitors in both summer and winter (Visit Fjällen, 2015). In the study conducted by Fredman et al. (2014), 26% of the respondents state that they use websites specialised on mountain experiences when planning for a mountain visit. When combining all the answers concerning how to plan for a mountain visit linked to the use of Internet this part represented 49% of the answers. Therefore, I assessed analysing pictures on websites as suitable for this study because this is where many visitors to the Swedish mountain region encounter the way images represent and market a destination in the region. All of the websites had suggestions of various activities people can participate in when visiting the destination, and they all had pictures and/or videos of suggested activities. I searched the websites for images of outdoor recreation activities that the destination marketed as suitable for visitors to engage in when visiting, which resulted in an original sample of 316 pictures. From that sample, I then excluded pictures where a person was not featured, pictures of only children and pictures where it was difficult to see whether the persons were female or male, for example when a helmet covered the faces or when the picture was taken from great distance. Pictures that were very small were excluded, because it was difficult to see details for analysis. I also eliminated pictures of very large groups from the analysis because it was difficult to identify the relationship between women and men. I primarily looked at pictures portraying activities included in the quantitative survey data, but a few pictures portraying other activities were sampled because they were interesting to the explored topic of gender depiction. The distribution of the picture sample from the destinations is presented in table 1.

Table 1: Picture Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Destination</th>
<th>Number of pictures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Funäsfjällen</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idre Fjäll</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sälen</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vemdalen</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Åre</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>128</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.3 Data Analysis

5.3.1 Quantitative Data Analysis. In this thesis, I am interested in predicting categorical outcome variables from the survey data, i.e. I want to test if women and men have participated in a certain outdoor activity. The question from the survey data I chose to test was therefore “how many days have you participated in the following outdoor recreation activities in the Swedish mountain region?” I assessed this question to provide the most relevant answers of the topic I was interested in exploring. The respondents in the survey were given a list of 40 different activities and were asked to answer if they had participated in the activities:

1. Not at all
2. Up to 1 day
3. 1-2 days
4. 3-7 days
5. More than 7 days

The respondents’ answers can only fall into one of these categories. Using the mean or similar statistics is pointless when having categorical variables because the numeric values attached to different categories are random, and therefore the mean of those numeric values will depend on how many members each category has. The preferred way of measuring categorical variables is therefore to analyse the frequencies of what falls into each combination of categories (Field, 2013).

As I am interested in exploring whether there is gender differences as to what activities visitors participate in, I do a Pearson’s chi-square test to see the relationship between the categorical variables (gender and number of days participating in an activity). The Pearson’s chi-square test is based on the idea of comparing the frequencies observed in a certain category to the frequencies one might expect to get in those categories by chance (Field, 2013).

The chi-square test has two important assumptions relating to independence and expected frequencies (Field, 2013). Regarding independence, it is necessary that each person, item or entity contribute to only one cell in the contingency table for the chi-square test to be meaningful. In the matter of expected frequencies, the rule is that when tables are larger, as in this case, all expected counts should be greater than 1 and no more than 20% of expected counts should be less than 5 (Field, 2013). Here is where I ran into a problem. As the survey included activities that are not very common, such as geocaching, caving or snow kiting, the samples of the categories were very small and therefore violated the assumptions of expected frequencies. Out of the 40 activities, only 5 did not violate the assumptions of expected frequencies. Therefore, I decided to dichotomize the variables as follows: The variable “not at all” was converted to the category “no”, meaning the respondents had not participated in this activity. The variables “up to 1 day”, “1-2 days”, “3-7 days” and “more than 7 days” was computed and converted into the category “yes”, meaning the respondents had participated in this activity. So, a 5-point scale was converted into a dichotomous scale, with the categories:

1. No
2. Yes

After the dichotomization, none of the activities violated the assumption of expected frequencies. I was, therefore, able to test all 40 activities for statistically significant results, using a p-value of .05. As I am interested in exploring whether there are gender differences in the activities visitors participate in, and not how often they participated in a specific activity, I assessed this course of action to be suitable for this study because it allowed me to test if there is an association between gender and activity participation. 40 activities were tested, but I chose to present the ones where significant differences were found in a table. It should be noted that dichotomization of variables can have negative effects, such as loss of information and confounding. Even so, I still decided to use this procedure in order to be able to test all of the 40 activities.
5.3.2 Qualitative Data Analysis. To analyse the website pictures, I began by deciding how to categorise the pictures. The categories I used were based on an elaborated from Goffman’s (1979) study of gender role portrayals in advertisements. I coded each picture according to: (1) the activity being engaged in, and the gender of the person engaging in it; (2) if a woman was present in the picture, her size and placement; (3) the setting of the picture; (4) if a woman was present in the picture, was she portrayed as active or passive; and (5) gender depiction in the family. This coding helped to provide an understanding of the large pattern of how gender was portrayed in the website pictures. When analysing the pictures based on the coding-system, I aimed at discovering and identifying themes present in the pictures, in order to better understand and interpret subtexts on the different destination websites. The five categories were used as a starting point to identify recurrent patterns and themes on the websites. As various themes were identified, I noted multiple examples from the websites in order to establish that the themes in fact represented recurrent patterns and were not random images. As many pictures portrayed both men and women engaging in an activity in the same picture, I chose to count the number of men and women present in the pictures rather than categorising only the pictures. I assessed counting the number of people in the website images would provide a more accurate overall picture of how activity participation in portrayed from a gender perspective, because it allowed me to compare frequencies of women and men are present in pictures and what they do in the pictures.

5.3.3 Content Analysis. Content analysis is “a systematic technique for coding symbolic content (text, images, etc.) found in communication” (Herring, 2010, p. 234). The primary use of content analysis is, according to Herring (2010), to describe and identify patterns in content. When applying content analysis to the web, a traditional approach can be adopted (McMillan, 2000). This approach includes a five-step procedure:

1) The researcher formulates a research question and/or hypothesis
2) The researcher selects a sample
3) Categories are defined for coding
4) Coders are trained, code the content, and the reliability of their coding is checked.
5) The data collected during the coding process are analysed and interpreted. (McMillan, 2000).

However, Herring (2010) argues that today, when the web is one of the largest providers of information in the history of the world, such a traditional approach on content analysis may not be adequate to analyse web content, because it is too narrow. A challenge to this traditional view is that a growing number of web studies now examine types of content that previously did not exist, such as hyperlinks or textual conversations. Thus, Herring (2010) argues that a broader methodological perspective is needed.

As this study aims to analyse pictures on websites, I have chosen to use a traditional approach on content analysis. My view is that even though the pictures are displayed on a relatively “new” forum, a traditional approach on content analysis can be applied because promotion images represent a traditional way of communicating information and potential messages.
5.4 Research Quality and Limitations

5.4.1 Research Validity and Reliability. Mixed methods research design often use numerical data (closed ended questionnaires) and text data (interviews or observations) to collect information (Zohrabi, 2013). Researchers need to consider the validity and reliability of their data before and after collecting it. According to Zohrabi (2013), gathering information through different methods can be of supplement to each other, and hence boost the dependability and validity of the data.

Generally speaking, research validity concerns whether our findings are believable and true, and if it evaluates what it sets out to evaluate. In qualitative research, validity strategies are procedures researchers use to show the accuracy of their results and to convince the reader of this accuracy (Creswell, 2009). Creswell (2009) suggests qualitative reliability to indicate that a particular approach is consistent across different researchers and different projects. Zohrabi (2013) argues that obtaining the same results in qualitative data can be difficult and challenging, because of the data’s subjective form. Therefore, it may be of advantage to consider, based on the data collection process, the consistency and dependability of the data, rather than focusing on getting the same results. Creswell and Plano Clark (2007, p. 133) states that “in quantitative research, validity means that the researcher can draw meaningful inferences from the results of a population; reliability means that scores received from participants are consistent and stable over time”. Creswell and Plano Clark (2007) suggest that in a quantitative study, researchers need to check for the reliability of scores, for example through statistical procedures of internal consistency and test-retest comparisons. To establish validity in a quantitative study, researchers can do this through content validity and through construct validity. Construct validity occurs when adequate definitions and measures of variables are used (Creswell, 2009). According to Creswell and Plano Clark, (2007) there is more focus on validity in qualitative research as reliability plays a minor role, and is primary related to the reliability of a team of coders to reach agreement on how to code passages in text.

According to Patel and Davidsson (2003), the validity of data collection in a qualitative study is dependent of how well the researcher manages to provide a good basis to describe the study objects’ existence and perception of the surrounding environment (Patel & Davidsson, 2003). The validity is also connected to the interpretations the researcher makes, and how well these are presented in the research report. It is, according to Patel and Davidsson (2003) important that the interpretations are well founded so that the readers can form their own opinion about its reliability. It can be difficult in qualitative studies to find rules or criteria that are universal for how the study should be conducted, with the purpose of maintaining the highest possible standard. Because every qualitative study is unique, it is important that the researcher thoroughly describes the whole research process, in order for the readers to understand the choices the researcher made so they can make sense of the report (Patel & Davidsson, 2003).

I have in this thesis attempted to report the writing process and the data collection as detailed as possible, with the purpose of giving the reader a thoroughly comprehensive picture. Moreover, I have used the qualitative validity approach of data triangulation, which is a common data analysis practice (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). This means building evidence for a code or theme from several sources, i.e. in
this case several destinations’ websites and pictures. Concerning quantitative validity and reliability, this is discussed in chapter 5.4.2, research limitations.

5.4.2 Research Limitations. Some limitations to the methodological procedure in this thesis should be acknowledged and mentioned. Researchers at ETOUR collected the quantitative survey data used in this thesis, and I was given the opportunity to take part of that data in retrospect. Therefore, I have not been a part of the data collection process or the design of the survey and I have not been able to control these factors. This is a limitation in my research in regard to validity and reliability.

Concerning the qualitative data collection, as I do not have co-authors for this thesis, the coding-system or the emergent themes identified have not been subject to discussion nor have they been independently audited in order to increase research objectivity. This could be considered as a deficiency in my research and it is a fact I have been mindful to pay attention to. Also, it is important to note that I am not able to examine exactly how these pictures affect website visitors in their choice of activity participation in the Swedish mountain region, nor can I be certain of the motives the website designers have for selecting some pictures. However, my analysis does allow me to discover and identify themes in the promoting pictures on the destinations websites and to discuss what these recurring patterns mean in relation to the quantitative data on participation in outdoor recreation activities.

5.4.3 Positionality Statement. I included this statement in my thesis in order for the reader to understand how my background has influenced my perceptions of both feminism and outdoor recreation, and how these perceptions has influenced my research interests and choice of methodology. I have worked at two different mountain stations in the Swedish mountain for a total of six seasons, both winter and summer, and I have a great passion for the outdoors. Growing up in an academic, society conscious environment with feminist parents, my background have no doubt made me aware of how gender differences are constantly present in society, and this have created a certain outlook of the world around me.

Therefore, after I started working in the outdoors business myself, I have often reflected over gender differences in activity participation in the outdoors. I have experienced how guests have first spoken to me about their stay in the region, and then turned to my male colleagues for tips and advice on hikes or ski tours to take. I have heard my female colleagues who work as guides tell stories of how guests have cancelled their booked guided tours when they found out the guide is a woman. Obviously, these experiences have helped shape my perception of gender differences in outdoor recreation, and it has been the topic of discussion for my friends and me many times. Being a feminist, I have noticed myself that I often tend to view society and events through these “glasses”, thus giving a feminist perspective a prominent role in my research. I am aware that this personal standpoint creates bias in my research, and might have affected the interpretation of the data, in particular the website pictures.
6 RESULTS AND FINDINGS

In this chapter, the results from the quantitative and qualitative phases are presented. The findings are presented separately. The results of the qualitative phase introduces the emergent themes found in the website pictures.

6.1 Quantitative Phase

As table 2 shows, in 12 of the 40 activities in the survey there was a significant association between gender and type of activity visitors participated in. In all but one activity, more men participated in the activity. The exception was picnic/barbecuing in nature, where more women had participated in the activity.

The other activities included in the survey that were not found to have a significant association between gender and type of activity were downhill skiing, cross-country skiing, sledding, hiking, snowmobiling, hiking outside of trails, swimming outside in pool/aqua land, picking berries or mushrooms, ice-skating, dog sledding, swimming outside in lake/sea, camping, studying plants/animals/birds, inlines/roller skiing, Nordic walking, skateboarding, caving, canoeing/kayaking, meditating/yoga, motor boating, sport flying motor- or sailplane, kiting/parachuting, waterskiing/wakeboarding, geocaching, jet-skiing, golfing and horseback riding.

Table 2: Gender differences in outdoor recreation participation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Male (%)</th>
<th>Female (%)</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>χ²</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trail running</td>
<td>83,2</td>
<td>16,8</td>
<td>91,3</td>
<td>8,7</td>
<td>305</td>
<td>4,10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mountain bike</td>
<td>89,9</td>
<td>10,1</td>
<td>96,8</td>
<td>3,2</td>
<td>305</td>
<td>5,23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diving/Snorkelling</td>
<td>96,1</td>
<td>3,9</td>
<td>100,0</td>
<td>0,0</td>
<td>305</td>
<td>5,04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sailing, wind/wave surfing</td>
<td>95,5</td>
<td>4,5</td>
<td>100,0</td>
<td>0,0</td>
<td>305</td>
<td>5,78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fishing</td>
<td>72,1</td>
<td>27,9</td>
<td>86,5</td>
<td>13,5</td>
<td>305</td>
<td>8,0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snowshoeing</td>
<td>90,5</td>
<td>9,5</td>
<td>98,4</td>
<td>1,6</td>
<td>305</td>
<td>7,92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snowboarding</td>
<td>85,5</td>
<td>14,5</td>
<td>93,7</td>
<td>6,5</td>
<td>305</td>
<td>4,99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paintball/live</td>
<td>93,3</td>
<td>6,7</td>
<td>99,2</td>
<td>0,8</td>
<td>305</td>
<td>6,33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunting</td>
<td>92,2</td>
<td>7,8</td>
<td>100,0</td>
<td>0,0</td>
<td>305</td>
<td>10,33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orienteering</td>
<td>94,4</td>
<td>5,6</td>
<td>99,2</td>
<td>0,8</td>
<td>305</td>
<td>4,89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rock climbing</td>
<td>83,8</td>
<td>16,2</td>
<td>92,9</td>
<td>7,1</td>
<td>305</td>
<td>5,56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Picnic/barbecue</td>
<td>64,2</td>
<td>35,8</td>
<td>49,2</td>
<td>50,8</td>
<td>305</td>
<td>6,87</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.2 Qualitative Phase

6.2.1 Category 1: Gender and activity. The 128 selected pictures portrayed 108 women and 136 men, giving a total of 244 persons represented on the websites. Hence, more men than women were shown participating in an activity, as men were present in 55,7% of the website photos and women in 44,3% of the photos. In many of the activities portrayed, gender differences in terms of frequency could be noticed. In the category MTB/Cycling, more than twice as many men as women were pictured participating in the activity and this was often portrayed as a typically masculine activity, as seen in Figure 6. In the often-stereotyped feminine category spa/shopping,
men were not present at all in pictures displaying this activity. Cross-country skiing was portrayed as a typically female activity, showing 7 women and only 1 man. Figure 5 is an example of how this activity is displayed. In the more action-filled and adventurous activity of rafting, there were almost twice as many male participants as there were females. Fishing was shown as a male activity; only 4 women were pictured when engaging in this activity. Only 8 people were displayed when engaging in the rather physically demanding activity of trail running, but of those 8, 6 were men and only 2 were women. Figure 4 is an example of how this activity is displayed. The activities that were portrayed as most gender equal were the categories of classic mountain activities: hiking and downhill skiing.

The first theme that emerged from the five destinations’ website pictures was therefore *Women and men participate in gender stereotyped activities*. Table 3 presents the results of the first category.

**Table 3: Gender and activity**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hiking</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Golfing</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fishing</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MTB/Cycling</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canoeing/Kayaking</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunting</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horseback riding</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spa/Shopping</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downhill skiing</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross-country skiing</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snowmobiling</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dog sledging</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ice-skating</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rock-climbing/Ice-climbing</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trail running</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yoga/Fitness classes</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swimming outside</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roller skiing</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rafting</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sledding</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aqua land</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snowshoeing</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zip line</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Picture taken outside</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>without a specific activity being engaged in</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>108</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.2.2 Category 2: Women's size and placement. In general, there were not that many pictures portraying a woman as smaller than a man and placed behind him. However, it was clear that more images pictured women as smaller and placed behind a man than the other way around, as seen in Figure 7. Figure 8 is an example of an image where the man is placed behind the woman in order to instruct or guide her, a type of picture I decided to include in this category because it corresponds to the second theme found. Figure 9 shows one of the few pictures where a woman in front of men. Figure 10 shows a group of women rafting, but it appears to be the male guide who does all the work in steering the boat. This picture also corresponds to the second theme identified. The second theme that emerged from these pictures was *Women need protection or guidance while in the outdoors*. Table 4 presents the findings in the second category.
Table 4: Women's size and placement

| Women are smaller and placed behind a man | 15 | Women are bigger and placed in front of a man | 5 |

Figure 7: Hiking in Idre Fjäll

Figure 8: Fishing in Vemdalen

Figure 9: Trail running in Åre
6.2.3 Category 3: The setting of the picture. It was more common for women to be shown in calm environments than it was for men. 61.1% of the women was shown in calm environments, in relation to men who were portrayed in calm environments in 34.6% of the pictures. Out of the pictures presenting men in a calm environment, 45% of those pictures portrayed men engaging in fishing, as seen in Figure 11, or spending time with the family. The calm environments women were presented in were most commonly related to activities such as hiking with male partner/family, spa/shopping, cross-country skiing, canoeing or horseback riding.

In the pictures portraying people in an action-filled/challenging environment, men (65.4%) were more present in this category of pictures than women (38.9%). Most action pictures of men portrayed them when mountain biking or rafting, such as Figure 12 where a group of men are battling a fierce river. The mountain bike pictures were an interesting example of how the activity was displayed from a gender perspective. There were 17 photos of people engaging in mountain biking all together, but only 3 of those photos depicted women participating in the activity without a male partner, as seen in Figure 15. 6 of the photos portrayed a couple or a family, and 8 pictures portrayed only men, by themselves or in a group.

Out of the photos taken in an action/challenging environment, women were most commonly pictured when skiing downhill. There were 19 pictures in total portraying downhill skiing, and 8 of those pictured a woman skiing on her own, as seen in picture 16. 8 pictured a man skiing on his own and 3 pictured women and men skiing together.

Picture 13 and 14 show two examples of the same category of activity: canoeing/kayaking. In Figure 13, two women and a child are calmly paddling along the quiet river, seemingly enjoying the still waters. In Figure 14, three men have apparently just left roaring rapids with their kayaks, bringing an element of danger and adventure in to the picture. Of the 5 pictures portraying canoeing/kayaking, women were only depicted when canoeing, not the more action-filled water sport of kayaking.

The third theme that was found was Men prefer action and women enjoy stillness, but when involved in action activities, women prefer to be with a male partner. Table 5 shows the results of the third category.
Table 5: The setting of the picture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Calm environment</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action/Challenging</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>environment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 11: Fishing in Idre Fjäll

Figure 12: Rafting in Idre Fjäll

Figure 13: Canoeing in Funäsfjällen
6.2.4 Category 4: Are women portrayed as active or passive? Altogether, the persons in the website photos were clearly more often portrayed as actively participating in an activity than as a passive bystander. However, there was a distinct difference between how women and men were portrayed. Of the women in the website photos, 20.4% were depicted as passive, while only 3.7% of the men were portrayed as passive. Women were more often pictured when gazing, admiring the scenic view, as in Figure 17 or when they were receiving a spa-treatment, as in Figure 18. Figure 19 shows a good example of when women are portrayed as not actively engaged in the activity. Two women sitting in a dog sledge while a man is driving. In the few pictures where a man was portrayed as passive, he was often pictured together with a woman, as in Figure 20. The difference between the man and the woman in
this picture is while she is looking out on the surrounding, he is looking straight into the camera, thus taking a more active part in the picture.

The fourth theme that was detected was Women come to the mountain region to relax and are less engaged in outdoor recreation. Table 6 presents the findings of this category.

Table 6: If the persons in the picture are portrayed as active or passive

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Active</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passive</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 17: Admiring the view in Funäsfjällen

Figure 18: Spa-treatment in Åre

Figure 19: Dog sledging in Åre
6.2.5 Category 5: Gender depiction in the family. Of the 128 pictures, only 16 portrayed families. Therefore, it is difficult to draw conclusions on how relationships within the family are depicted in the websites. In this category however, it was difficult to find an emerging theme between the pictures. Half of the pictures portrayed whole families, but it was hard to detect certain features that were common for the pictures. The parents and children were in all photos actively engaged in an activity, so women and men were equally participating with their families. Also, the type of activities engaged in were fairly equally distributed between women and men. For example, Figures 22 and 23 show a father and a mother both mountain biking with their son. Fathers were not pictured when engaging in typical masculine activities with their sons, and mothers were not portrayed when participating in typical feminine activities with their daughters. Half of the pictures portrayed a nuclear family, as Figures 24 and 25, but the other half of the pictures portrayed a single parent, as in Figure 21, so it does not appear to be necessary for the destinations to portray the nuclear family as the ideal. Table 7 shows the results of the fifth category.

Table 7: Gender depiction in the family

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family relation</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whole family</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother/daughter</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father/son</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father/daughter</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother/son</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 22: Mountain biking in Idre Fjäll

Figure 23: Mountain biking in Idre Fjäll

Figure 24: Canoeing in Funäsfjällen

Figure 25: Hiking in Vemdalen
The purpose of this study was to explore whether there are gender differences in outdoor recreation participation among visitors to the Swedish mountain region, and if these potential differences can be found in images on the websites of Sweden’s five largest mountain destinations. This discussion serves to connect the findings of the quantitative and qualitative phases with the literature and the theoretical framework, and to answer the research questions posed in chapter 1.3. This is an exploratory discussion where the findings are analysed from different angles, providing ideas and insights on the examined topic.

Women’s role and status in Western society has changed dramatically over the last hundred years, and women have entered the labour market in increasing numbers. This change became even more dramatic after the feminist movement in the 1960s, which paved the way for the working women who today represent a considerable part of the labour force. Media has reflected the transformation of women’s role in society, and the ways women are portrayed today are often far from how depiction was presented fifty years ago. Even so, stereotypical images of gender continue to exist in media. Even in Sweden and the rest of Scandinavia, which are often referred to as the most gender-equal countries in the world, differences in leisure time between women and men are present. As this study shows, gender is often portrayed in stereotypical ways in websites of destinations in the mountain region. These subtle messages to potential visitors to the region may perpetuate gender stereotypes in what outdoor recreation activities are appropriate for women and men to participate in.

7.1 Quantitative phase: Research question 1

The first research question presented in chapter 1.3 was: *Are there gender differences in participation in outdoor recreation activities and if yes, what are they?*

The quantitative survey data was analysed by conducting a Pearson’s chi-square test, and the results show that there are in fact gender differences as to what activities women and men engage in when visiting the Swedish mountain region. A statistical significant association between gender and type of activity participated in were found in 12 of the 40 activities included in the survey.

A number of the activities that were found to have gender differences are perceived as traditionally male, such as fishing, hunting, rock climbing or mountain biking. The only activity that more women participated in is traditionally female, which was picnic or barbecue in nature. This can be interpreted in the light of gender role stereotypes, where women choose traditionally female activities and men choose traditionally male activities. It can also be discussed in relation to Foucault’s theory of power, where dominant groups will have the privilege to decide what worldview is “correct” and try to impose that worldview on the rest. In a patriarchal society, men have the privilege of determining what discourses should be prevailing, and it could in this case mean that they have the ability to decide what activities are appropriate for women and men. Foucault also suggests that power is exercised at micro-levels and through non-political institutions such as schools or within the family. In this context, it is my interpretation that learnt behaviours therefore could be a way to perpetuate gender stereotypes. This means that if these stereotypes (or other
privileged discourses) are introduced at an early stage in a person’s life and then reinforced through repetition, for example in the family, the education system and the media, it will be difficult and complicated to challenge and change these stereotypes.

Although gender differences were found in 12 of the 40 activities in the survey, it is important to note that in a majority of the activities, 28 of 40, gender differences were not found. For some classical outdoor recreation activities, such as downhill skiing, hiking or camping this result was somewhat expected. But it was interesting to find that activities that can be perceived as typically “male” or “female”, such as skateboarding, horseback riding or meditating/yoga, gender differences were not found. This could be the result of a small sample that does not accurately reflect the population’s preferences. It could also be that visitors engage in this activity together with a partner, for example going to a yoga-weekend because this is a special interest for both. The fact that many of the activities do not have gender differences could also, I think, be that these are activities that are often engaged in together with the whole family. For example, when visiting the mountain region the whole family might participate in a guided horseback riding-tour, or a guided caving-tour.

I also find it interesting that the motor sports did not have gender differences. For example, snowmobiling is a typically “masculine” activity, but was not found to have gender differences. My own theory about this result is that men often drive the snowmobiles, but women sit in the back of the snowmobile. My personal experience of the gender distribution in this activity is that more men than women actually drive. If the survey question was “have you driven a snowmobile” rather than “have you participated in this activity”, I believe the outcome of the test would be different. This reasoning could also be applied to activities such as motor boating and sport flying motor- or sailplane.

7.2 Qualitative phase: Research question 2

The second research question presented in chapter 1.3 was: Are there gender differences in how women and men are portrayed in images on the websites of Sweden’s five largest mountain destinations and if yes, what are they?

In the qualitative phase of this study, five emergent themes were detected when analysing the website images. These themes will be discussed within the context of the literature review and theoretical framework.

Theme 1: Women and men participate in gender-stereotyped activities.

Of the quantitative survey data, it became clear that there are gender differences in the outdoor recreation activities women and men participate in when visiting the mountain region. The results of the analyses of the website pictures was that these gender differences also were present in the images, and that some activities was portrayed as more appropriate for one sex than the other. If these gender differences are consequences of gender role socialisation is a topic of discussion. Goffman (1979, p. 7) state that: “we are socialized to confirm our own hypothesis about our natures”, thus implying that the way we behave and act is socially learned, a perception that is also suggested by Heilman (2001). For example, in the activity of mountain biking, more men than women were found to participate in this activity. In the website pictures, 68,6 % of the people depicted participating in this activity were men. The
activity was presented on the websites as challenging and action-filled, features that are often associated with masculinity. In outdoor recreation participation, these perceptions are problematic because they create a divide in what activities are “allowed” for women and men to participate in without being subject to social penalties and therefore they act as a contributor in the gender socialisation process. The findings of this study suggest that the portrayals of activities on the websites fuel these norms. The example of how a majority of the mountain bikers are men, both in participants but also in the website pictures support Haluza-DeLay and Dyment’s (2003) suggestion that gender role socialisation gives men a better opportunity to participate in outdoor recreation activities and to feel more comfortable in that environment. Women often have fewer role models in outdoor recreation than men. Therefore women may feel that they have no “place” in that setting, thus avoiding taking part in an activity. Figure 6 displays how a group of men takes a break from downhill cycling, casually hanging out on a mountaintop after a hard run down the mountain. This is, in my interpretation, a very masculine picture directed towards men, and it does not appear to invite women to participate in this activity.

An interesting finding when analysing the website pictures was that some activities where no statistically significant gender difference was found were presented as an activity suitable for a specific sex. Cross-country skiing is an example of this, as seen in Figure 5. Even though cross-country skiing is a common activity for both women and men, 7 women were portrayed when cross-country skiing, but only 1 man. Cross-country skiing can be an utterly physically challenging activity, but in all pictures it was portrayed as a calm nature experience where one can smilingly glide while admiring the view, implicitly suggesting that this less demanding physical activity is appropriate for women.

Another interesting finding was that the activity spa/shopping pictured 9 women, which was the same number as for hiking (9) and more than cross-country skiing (7), two classical mountain activities. Men were not present at all in this category. The activity spa/shopping is not an outdoor recreation activity, but was chosen because all of the destination websites had one or more pictures of women engaging in this activity and its portrayal is a textbook example of how gender-stereotyped feminine activity is displayed. By giving spa/shopping a relatively large space among the many activities on the websites, the destinations market this activity as perhaps more suitable for women than a physically challenging one. The subtle message sent by emphasising that this activity is appropriate for women is also that even though women are engaging in outdoor recreation activities, they must not forget to take care of their appearance and their body. Surprisingly, men are not given this opportunity of indulgence even though they, judging from the website pictures, ought to be in more need of a massage than a woman because they have been so physically active all day long.

Both of these findings lead back to the discussion of gender expectations and gender role socialisation in society, and how media can reinforce these expectations. As Larsen (1997) argues, these gender role stereotypes can limit women and men in their choice of activity and generate prejudices, in this case that women are physically weaker and men don’t like massages.
Theme 2: Women need protection or guidance while in the outdoors.
The second theme that emerged when analysing the website pictures was that women are more often placed behind a man in a photo, as if she needs protection when being in the outdoors. Picture 10 portrays a group of women in a rafting boat, laughing and screaming, all with the appropriate gear but none of the women actually have their paddle in the water. Instead, a male guide steers the boat through the swirling, cascading stream with firm hand. Although the man in Figure 8 is placed behind the woman, he holds his hand protectively on her shoulder and it looks like he is instructing her how to hold the fishing rod. The need to protect, or to be protected, is a typical example of the perceptions of femininity and masculinity, and the relationship between them. This relationship can be interpreted within the concept of power. Foucault’s model of power suggests that power is a force in all relations. Goffman’s categorisations of gender display include ritualization of subordination where men are portrayed as superior to women and children. The second theme corresponds to Foucault’s perception of power in the sense that the people depicted in the website images are a part of an on-going power play where the power is relational and constantly changing in strength and distribution. However, from a feminist perspective patriarchal society today still exercise power over women and media maintains traditional gender roles where women need protection from the potential dangers in the world. This diffuse discursive power, as suggested by Connell (2002), displayed in this website picture theme can help us grasp the complex elements of gender relations. Displaying the need for men to protect women in the outdoors, as found the analysed website pictures, is really a display of men’s superiority over women.

But as Foucault suggests, where there is power there is resistance. A lot has happened since the suffragettes fought for the right to vote and since the Women’s Liberation movement called for social change. Media representations of gender are not as stereotyped as when Goffman expressed the framework of gender display in 1976. But as found in this study, stereotyping is still present. Even though power relations, according to Foucault, are subject to constant change and flows through relationships, the conclusion is that the overarching condition that women are inferior to men still prevails in postmodern society media.

Theme 3: Men prefer action and women enjoy stillness, but when involved in action activities, women prefer to be with a male partner.
In the category of the setting of the picture, women and men were portrayed differently in their activity preferences. According to the analyses of the website pictures, a majority of male visitors prefer activities that provide action and challenge, whilst a majority of the female visitors come to enjoy the calm and stillness of the mountains. The suggested male preferences in activities are supported by Hirschman’s (2003) identified ideals of how to act in the “wild”, where individualism is the main goal and it is necessary to overcome weaknesses in order to tackle nature’s challenges. This individualism can be found in the pictures of male visitors taken in a challenging environment, but also in the pictures of men engaging in an activity in a calm setting. A large share of the activities men were portrayed doing in a calm setting was fishing and hunting (25,5%). These activities correspond to Hirschman’s (2003) idea of the importance of becoming self-sufficient in order to survive in the wild.
A large share of the pictures taken of men in calm settings was picturing men engaging in the family. This is, in my view, quite logical, as it could be difficult to bring children to a too “wild” of a setting. It could also be analysed in the light of the Swedish male role, where Swedish men might be perceived to be more gender equal than men in other countries, and for example take out a relatively large share of the parental leave (Carlsson, 2014, February 9). That men in the website pictures are portrayed when actively engaging in family life could therefore be seen as an expression for the Swedish way of relating to the family. But it could also be interpreted in the context of men’s hardness and rugged individualism. It is okay for men to engage in “soft” activities when taking care of his woman and his children, but then he needs to do some “really manly stuff” in truly wild settings, and that is no place for women and children.

Women however, do not seem to have the same urge for this rugged individualism. According to the website pictures, women prefer a relaxed, calm atmosphere and when engaging in a challenging activity they like to exercise it with a male partner. This correlates to the second theme found, that women need protection or guidance in the outdoors. As Wesley and Gaarder (2004) found, women are in fact concerned about their safety when recreating in the outdoors, and the presence of a male partner can therefore contribute to the feeling of being safe. It is somewhat puzzling however, why this need to be expressed in the website pictures. The feeling of increased safety while in the outdoors can no doubt be reinforced when engaging in the activity together with another person, but that feeling should be equally present when having another woman as companion, which was not found to be displayed in the pictures. Another way of interpreting the pictures is that when women themselves are allowed to choose activities to participate in, they choose calmer activities. When they are together with a man, on the other hand, the activities become more challenging. It is my opinion that in our society, characteristics that are often described as typically “feminine” such as being emotional, expressing feelings, being soft etc. are not considered as desirable as typically “masculine” characteristics. The norm is the “masculine” properties, and women have to constantly measure up to this ideal. Therefore, women have to assert themselves in order to be perceived as equally competent as men.

It is my personal view that challenging and action-filled activities have a higher status among participants than calmer ones. Many people that I have met in the mountains often tell stories of particularly tough or dangerous situations they have been exposed to, not so often as a warning example of how not to do things, but rather to tell how they were put in a challenging situation and managed to master it, as an evidence of their competence. Thus, when the website pictures portray women in calm settings and men in challenging ones, they reinforce the perception that male characteristics, such as being tough and mastering the elements of nature, is the ideal and that women have to “toughen up” to reach this ideal. In order to do so they need the company of a male partner who can show them how it is done. If women do not have a male partner, it is okay to engage in calm activities because it is what women prefer anyway (according to the pictures), but when they are together with a male partner, women have to adjust themselves to the male ideal and participate in activities on their terms. Again, this leads back to the discussion of gender role socialisation and what attributes are perceived as being appropriate and desirable for women and men.
It can also be discussed in the context of how patriarchal society norms disfavours us all, which I will come to in the concluding remarks.

**Theme 4: Women come to the mountain region to relax and are less engaged in outdoor recreation.**

Even though most of the people in the website pictures was portrayed as actively engaged in an activity, more women than men were depicted as passive while in the outdoors. Goffman (1979) refers to this as “function ranking”, where a hierarchy in the picture can be noticed between who is active and giving instructions (usually the man) and the other (usually the woman) is watching or just “being there”. In these sampled pictures, this type of hierarchical function ranking was not common, as a majority of the women depicted as passive was alone in the picture. Even so, this function ranking can be used when analysing the images because it highlights the perception that women are not as actively engaged in outdoor recreation as men are. This finding is supported by McNiel et al. (2012), who found in their analysis of outdoor magazine advertisements that women are often portrayed as voyeurs or followers while in the outdoors. Also Sirakaya and Sonmez (2000) found that men more often than women are portrayed in an executive role, and women were more often than men portrayed as in need of assistance. In the pictures of women categorised as passive, they were often relaxing, for example when they were receiving a spa-treatment or when resting in the outdoors. Figure 17 shows a woman admiring the scenic view, thus suggesting that she has a lot of time to rest and take breaks from her activity, which indicates low levels of engagement in the activity. Men on the other hand, were not portrayed when relaxing or gazing, but were in almost all pictures actively committed to an activity. Although a majority of the pictures portrayed active participants, these findings support Goffman’s theory of function ranking, where women are more often than men portrayed as passive in a given social situation and reinforces the perception that women are not as actively engaged in outdoor recreation as men are.

**Theme 5: Gender depiction in the family**

The category of family depiction was found to be a bit different from the others. First of all, there were not that many photos that pictured families, and it was therefore difficult to detect patterns of how relations between the family members were portrayed. However, when the pictures of this category was analysed, it was found to be the least gender-stereotyped category of the five. In Goffman’s theory, he suggests that the nuclear family is depicted in advertisements to reflect societal norms. I found it interesting that half of the family pictures portrayed a single parent and a child. It is obviously impossible to know if the parent is in fact single or if her or his partner is just not in the picture, but it is nevertheless an interesting finding. As divorces in Sweden are relatively common (SCB, 2014), it could be reflected upon if this is the reason for the high share of single parents displayed. If pictures, as Goffman suggests, reflect societal norms then portraying single parents on holiday is well in line with society’s development in terms of family situations.

**7.2 Interpretation and connection of the two phases: Research question 3**

The third and final research question presented in chapter 1.3 was: *Is there a connection between potential gender differences in the outdoor recreation activities visitors to the Swedish mountain region participate in, and how outdoor recreation...*
activities are portrayed from a gender perspective on mountain destinations’ websites? If yes, how can theories of gender, power and media representation within a feminist framework help explain these differences?

After discussing the findings of the two phases, the answer to the final research question was found to be yes, there is a connection between gender differences in participation and the way gender is portrayed on the mountain destinations’ websites. For example, men participated more than women in mountain biking, and men were also portrayed engaging in this activity more than women on the website pictures. The same was for fishing. On the other hand, in the activity of snowshoeing a significant association between gender and participation was found, but in the pictures, women and men were equally engaged in this activity. However, only 3 pictures portrayed snowshoeing, which makes it difficult to draw conclusions.

Many of the activities in the survey were not pictured at all in the websites, which was in some cases a bit unexpected. For example, the activity of snowboarding which, in my experience, is a rather common activity was not portrayed in any websites. In this activity, a significant association between gender and participation was found in the quantitative part of the study, so it would have been interesting to explore how the websites displayed it. An association between gender and participation was also found in rock climbing in the quantitative part of the study, where more men than women participated but the only two photos of this activity in the websites displayed women. Rock climbing is not one of the most common activities to participate in when visiting the mountain region, but nevertheless, it is promoted as an accessible activity by two of the destinations and it is interesting to see how the display of this activity goes against the quantitative findings. Again, I would have wished for more pictures of rock climbing to be able to explore the display of this activity further.

Outdoor recreation has a long history in Sweden and is often described as an important part of many Swedes leisure life. Even though Sweden is considered one of the most gender equal countries in the world (World Economic Forum, 2014), gender stereotyping in outdoor recreation participation exists. The overall theme that was found in this study is that men participate more than women in a number of outdoor recreation activities in the Swedish mountain region, and the websites of the five major destinations in the region reinforce this gender difference with gender stereotyped images of activities appropriate for women and men. Hence, it can be concluded that even though gender equality in Sweden has come a long way in many areas, gender prejudices need to continue to be challenged in order to reach a truly equal society.

As this study has shown, discussing the issue of gender differences in outdoor recreation from a feminist perspective and using theories of gender, power and media representation can contribute to an increased understanding on gender dimensions of outdoor recreation participation and its media representations in the case of the Swedish mountain region.
8 CONCLUSIONS

The results of the quantitative phase of this study show that there is a significant association between gender and the types of activities visitors to the Swedish mountain region participate in. 12 of the 40 activities included in the study showed significant association between gender and activity participation, and more men than women participated in all but one of the 12 activities where an association was found. The qualitative phase shows that the way gender is portrayed on the websites of five major mountain destinations is stereotyped, and that women are often depicted when participating in calmer, typically female activities and men are often portrayed when participating in more action-filled, physically challenging activities. The emergent themes that were found when analysing the pictures was (1) women and men participate in gender-stereotypes activities, (2) women need protection or guidance while in the outdoors, (3) men prefer action and women enjoy stillness, but when involved in action activities, women prefer to be with a male partner, and (4) women come to the mountain region to relax and are less engaged in outdoor recreation. The fifth category, gender depiction in the family, was found to be the least gender-stereotyped category.

The findings of this study correlates to the conceptual framework of feminist theory, (including theories of gender and power) and gender display, as presented in chapter 2. An interesting argument that Butler (1999) makes is that there is really nothing fixed or predetermined about gender, and what we see as feminine or masculine is just a social construction that we have become used to. Feminine and masculine attributes are imposed upon us every day through societal norms and beliefs, hence creating and shaping our perception of reality. In my view, the theory of gender as culturally constructed and as a performance is appealing. This means, in this context, that the features and preferences assigned to women and men in outdoor recreation are not necessarily true, and can hence be challenged and changed. The way I see it, society would benefit from turning away somewhat from the perception that “woman” and “man” is binary oppositions (to use Butler’s terminology), because this perception inhibits and oppresses us from living the lives we want to the fullest.

When typically male attributes are seen as ideal and desirable for all, a great deal of the diversity and complexity of society is oppressed, or even lost. Stereotypes cause a lack of freedom, which in this case can be applied to what types of activities an individual chooses to participate in. Maybe many men would love to go to the spa after a long day in the outdoors, and I am sure many women would love to run their mountain bikes through a puddle of mud. But if a person is to step out of a forced gender role, regardless of sex, that person may have to expect mockery or experience the need to assert oneself in order to be accepted. It is however, in my belief, easier for women to be accepted when moving towards male domains than the other way around. As male characteristics and behaviours are seen as positive, women who approach these characteristics are more likely to gain approval. If a man embraces female attributes, this is often frowned upon and viewed negatively. The prevailing discourse of patriarchy is, in my view, harmful to all because it only allows a certain group of members of society to achieve the sense of belonging. Naturally, different groups of society seek belonging in different spaces, but if the public space is reserved for a certain, privileged group the opinions and experiences of this group will set the standard of that public space, and thus affecting all aspects of society.
Therefore, we need to constantly challenge these perceptions and existing norms by causing gender trouble, as suggested by Butler, in order for society to be inclusive of all imaginable characters and preferences. I do believe that both women and men would benefit from a gender equal society where choices are made from free will, not gender role socialisation.

In my opinion, media have the ability and opportunity to play a central role and to spread images and perceptions that challenge these existing norms of sex and to cause gender trouble. But the question at issue here is also what is dependent on what? Is it media that is merely reflecting the state of things, accurately portraying women and men as interested in different activities or is it because of media’s exposure of gender roles that differences in outdoor recreation participation exists? It is really a classic matter of the chicken or the egg. We do know that gender role stereotypes exist, both in the media and in the society around us. Perhaps it is not of interest how the situation arose, but the interesting discussion is how we can step aside from this path. As Gauntlett (2008) suggests, the power relationship between media and its audience is dependent on both parties, and media can send messages about acceptable forms of gender, sexuality and identity. Hence, media can be a force of change but it can also hold back new ideas and approaches. The role of media in society is contradictory as media itself is utterly diverse, constantly conveying a plethora of messages to the public eye. Even so, this contradictory nature can be important because it allows all these messages to exist within a realm of possible events and evolutions, thus affecting society around us.

Within the theory of critical realism, an essential element is to step away from focusing on the events that occur in the world, and instead explore what mechanisms produces the events in society. In this context, instead of just observing that there are gender differences in outdoor recreation participation, we need to go one step further and analyse the mechanisms that create these differences. Critical realism claims that reality consists of multiple objects and events, and therefore multiple mechanisms operate at the same time. As the findings of this study suggests, the reasons for gender differences are many and complex, and we need to further explore the dimensions of the space where these differences exist in order to gain knowledge on how to change and challenge the mechanisms that produce gender stereotypes and bias.

It is my opinion, that in order to make a real change and counteract perceptions that there are activities more suitable for women or men, as in this case, the providers of information need to take affirmative action. Those responsible for the destinations’ websites need to consider, and consider again, the messages that the images convey. Maybe it is not such a bad idea to consciously display women engaging in typically male activities, and men engaging in typically female activities. I think the pictures are often selected out of routine, or based on beliefs of what the visitors wants. Maybe if the destinations portrayed men going to the spa, a new market can be targeted, thus increasing the revenues. Or, for example creating events where only women are allowed to participate, such as an afternoon a week when the downhill cycling tracks are reserved for women. Taking small steps to counteract and prevent gender role stereotypes is really not that difficult, but conscious choices among both producers and consumers is essential.
So, action can be taken on a more abstract plan, where research can examine why the differences exist and how they function in society. Producers and consumers can also take a practical course of action to change the prevailing conditions in outdoor recreation, and both of these approaches can cooperate to create a more open and diverse environment in outdoor recreation participation. Further research should continue to explore the gender divide in outdoor recreation participation, and continue to monitor and examine gender role depiction in media. By doing so, research can continue to raise awareness of the overt and subtle prejudices about gender and outdoor recreation, that may constrain women and men in their choice of activity. Future research should also include studies on the supply side, for example focus interviews with destination planners, destination managers and marketers and website developers. By this approach, research can highlight the mechanisms behind the decisions made on how the destination is marketed and the activities that are presented as “appropriate” for women and men, and perhaps raise awareness in the supply side on gender stereotyping. With increased knowledge and effective marketing from the destinations, new markets can be targeted. For example, running or jogging is a popular activity among many Swedes, and the mountain region is an excellent place for trail running. By marketing this activity to the right audience, visitors are able to discover a new dimension or setting of their preferred activity, and visits to the mountain destinations can increase. Another interesting area of research is to focus on the demand side, and for example explore and analyse from a gender perspective what pictures visitors upload on photo-sharing platforms and social media, such as Flickr or Instagram. Such knowledge can also be important from a marketing perspective, because it provides information on visitors’ preferences in activities and recreation. It can also help target the activities that women and men engage in, in order to take actions against gender stereotyping. Destination managers can based on this information for example organise events within a certain activity only for women, or only for men.

This study has raised awareness of the gender differences in outdoor recreation participation in the Swedish mountain region. It has also highlighted the messages about appropriate activities and behaviours for women and men sent out by the website pictures of the five major destinations in the region. This awareness should not be neglected, as the highlighting of these issues can help counteract gender role stereotypes and open up the mountain region for new markets. It can also help develop ways of introducing activities to a diversity of visitors, thus integrating a larger share of the population to outdoor recreation.
9 REFERENCES


Internet sources:


