

NATURE NARRATIVES:

Norwegian Youth Negotiating Local Traditions, National Myths
and Global Trends

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Introduction

Among politicians and educators there is a fear that traditional outdoor life and recreation – what Norwegians call *friluftsliv* – will no longer be passed on to the younger generations. One such view emphasises that young people are turning their backs on nature; another is that in order to attract youth, the activities offered have to be 'vertical' and adventurous. In 2001 about 150 Norwegian young people wrote essays on what significance nature had to them. The question was an open one – however, it stimulated a life history approach in the young people's responses, as they wrote about how their relationship with nature and outdoor life has changed during their lifespan. While unstructured play 'out-of-doors' was important during their childhood, their relationship as adolescents is characterised by an alienated attitude. All the same, when they look into the future, they often dream of living close to nature, which is not seen as oppositional to urban lifestyles. One overall impression is that Nature is of great importance, although not necessarily utilised very much. Young people experience and appreciate a mix of outdoor life and adventurous activities which, from a historical and socio-cultural perspective, may be identified as expressions of local traditions, national myths and global integration – concepts that they themselves do not see as relevant. More surprisingly, perhaps, is the fact that only a minority of youth identify with the very risky, 'vertical' and extreme approach.

The topic of this conference, *Old Traditions and New Trends*, is very much due to an initiative I took at a board meeting of the *European Institute of Outdoor Adventure and Experiential Learning* in May, 2001. I went to Marburg, bringing along a copy of a Norwegian magazine called *Free Flow* that had just come out. The magazine was relatively new, and was directed towards youth with specific interests in 'vertical activities, especially skiing and snowboarding, with the Norwegian outdoors as their arena' (Fri Flyt 2001: 8). According to the magazine's editor, this specific edition represented something quite new and unique in Norwegian cover design. As the editor had had difficulties choosing among the many marvellous pictures he had available, he had thought, 'Why not print them all on one cover?' (Fri Flyt 2001: 13) By doing this the editor could profile *Free Flow* as a magazine that was also for kayakers, surfers, climbers, mountain-bikers etcetera, and give the readers 'Everything needed to go on expeditions'.

The multi-focused cover has a complexity of connotations. One central message is that 'The world is our playground' all year round in all kinds of 'vertical', risky, fun and adventurous activities. There is also an explicit linkage to the Norwegian forefathers of adventurous explorations, to national legends like the scientist and explorer Helge Ingstad and the philosopher and mountaineer Arne Næss, and to the old bourgeois idea of the Grand Tour. Most writers, photographers and pictured performers are male; however, the author grants a certain amount of space to a handful of young girls with specific qualities and skills. The implicit message is that the magazine is made by and for young men who praise extreme skills, perfectionism and individuality in a never ending hunt for new versions of *The Last Great Challenge* (Fri Flyt 2001: 52). High value and appreciation are awarded to those who are able to make their mark on the 'untouched' landscape – and thereafter on the World (Fri Flyt 2001: 61). When there are no higher peaks to climb, limits may only be transcended by climbing, skiing and kayaking ever more difficult routes. The magazine is professionally made with good pictures on glossy paper, and well designed articles written in a creative style. New metaphors and concepts flourish.



Illustration 1: Fri flyt ('Free Flow') Vol. 3, No. 12, May 2001, Featureforlaget AS.

I enjoyed reading it; however, I was amazed by the contrast to the fresh impressions I had in mind from reading through more than three hundred typewritten pages authored by about one hundred and fifty young Norwegians writing essays on what significance nature had to them. These young authors were in the same age group - 16 to 25 - as are most performers in and readers of *Free Flow*. In contrast to the style and the content of the magazine, the young authors were generally locally oriented, and the 'vertical perspective' and 'extreme experiences and dreams' were not present as in the mediated outdoor youth culture (Pedersen, 2003a, b).

These empirical examples illustrate an official discourse that has been present over recent decades. Norwegian politicians and educators have a fear that traditional *friluftsliv* is no longer being passed on to the younger generation. This might either be because young people are turning their backs on nature and traditional outdoor values while heading towards a globalised urban youth culture. Or it might be because young people are attracted to the new commercialised outdoor activities based on high technology, which challenge the national myth of a 'simple, happy and environmentally friendly outdoor life in close contact with nature', employing low - or preferably no - technology. In either of the two cases, Norwegian national identity is felt to be threatened, as 'simple outdoor life' and Sunday walks are seen to be central to Norwegian daily life and to what it means to be Norwegian. In addition, *friluftsliv* has frequently been interpreted as an expression of an egalitarian Norwegian culture.

Questioning Old Traditions and New Trends - A Norwegian Discourse?

Questioning Old Traditions and New Trends in the ideological, emotional and nationalistic ways as I have outlined might be a unique Norwegian, or Nordic, discourse. However, there might be elements in this that have a more universal relevance, e.g. the question as to what kind of changes are taking place and how these changes should be interpreted and explained: Is everything that 'used to be solid melting into the air' and being replaced by new activities, ideas and values? To whom are the identified traditions and trends interpreted as old versus new? Does the increase in urbanised lifestyles and youth culture mean less interest and less close relations with nature? Do the local traditions of harvesting nature, for example, fishing, picking wild berries and mushrooms, make any sense at all? What about the Sunday walk and 'simple life in close contact with nature' - are these regarded as being simply old-fashioned and boring? Are young people looking for trendy activities agents for cultural change, while the more traditionally oriented youth should be regarded as looking nostalgically backwards? Do the presumed possibilities of choice related to activities in the outdoors mean the same to girls and boys? Does globalisation mean an increase of a world-wide cultural homogenisation of the outdoors - and thus a loss of cultural diversity, local knowledge and traditions, and national ideas?

An autobiographical approach

In order to develop an understanding about these kinds of processes, students taking general courses in physical education and music, dance and drama in upper secondary school, and students taking their first year of post-secondary education in physical education and nature conservation studies during the academic year 2000-2001 were invited to write essays on the significance nature held for them. The question was an open one, but stimulated a life history type of response: young people write about what nature means to them in their everyday lives, and how they evaluate the significance of nature for the choices they are facing regarding both their future education and settling down.

While most of the young authors have grown up in a sparsely populated town far north of the Arctic Circle, the rest have lived their entire lives in a suburb on the capital's east end, located in the south. The northern landscape is characterised by its closeness to the fjord, a river, mountains and woods, while the suburb is located on the border of one of the wooded areas surrounding the city of Oslo. These contexts might historically correspond with the two main traditions in Norwegian *friluftsliv* which Gunnar Brevik spoke about in his presentation at this conference; respectively the rural and the urban ways of relating to nature (Breivik, 1978). However, it is now possible to live an urban life not only in the cities but also in the sparsely populated sub-Arctic communities (Pedersen, 2003a, b). Both areas have a multicultural population; there are indigenous Sami but also immigrants from Germany, Russia and Pakistan among the informants.

The autobiographical style gives insight into the young people's own viewpoints, experiences, adventures, dreams and modes of expression. A common narrative structure begins with childhood experiences and continues with process writing about nature's importance for how young people have become the individuals who they - at the time of writing - see themselves to be. While the approach gives the author room to create their own identity, researchers who have analysed written autobiographies, claim that the method promotes honest points of view (Gullestad, 1996; Frønes et al, 1997; Midrè & Paulgaard, 1999), even though the biographies always express traces of social structure. While most outdoor adventure studies using qualitative methods like ethnographic fieldwork (Pedersen 1998; Christensen 2001; Mæland, 2002) and interviews with young people recruited through outdoor organisations (Strandbu, 2000) reproduce the male dominance of the field, the open essay method has given space to many female voices. About fifty percent of the informants are girls and young women. Therefore the method is suited to studying how gender comprehension and identity are developed (Dausien, 1996).

Narrations of Nature and Self

One overall impression is that Nature is of great importance to young people. This is the case both for those relating to the sub-Arctic environment as well as those living in the suburban context. Generally, there are many similarities in their writings and descriptions of the significance of their childhoods being spent outdoors; it is connected to playing freely in the neighbourhood and taking family hikes from early childhood onwards. Through a precise language, validated through personal actions and experiences, many young people express a longing and love for their native districts. The phrase which gets repeated among young people living in the sub-Arctic area goes something like this: 'the outdoors at home has in a way scenery that is not like that found anywhere else.'³ 'I couldn't imagine living anywhere that wasn't surrounded by nature..., I've always enjoyed being outdoors.'⁴ Suburban youth express it more as follows: 'Despite the fact that I'm a city boy, I like being in the woods better than walking along the main street of downtown Oslo.'⁵ 'Although I am a typical Norwegian city-girl, I have always had a special kind of love for the origins, the authentic – for nature.'⁶

While young people living in the sub-Arctic areas take their closeness to nature as something natural, nearly all the suburbanites make the comment that their close relationship to nature is acquired despite the fact that they have grown up in the city. In addition, the city-dwellers emphasise the significance of experiencing nature by making regular visits to a family cabin, either located somewhere in 'the mountains' or along the coast.

Another common trait is that young people describe a relationship with nature that changes over the course of their lifespan'. While their childhood experience of the outdoors is treasured and meaningful, their relationship as adolescents is characterised by an alienated attitude. Therefore, their love of nature does not necessarily mean that they - at the time of writing - go outdoors on daily basis. Frequently, they write passages like the following one: 'Even though nature is very important to me, I don't frequently make active use of it myself. Instead, I often find myself observing

nature'. Or like this: 'Nature plays an important role in my life, but I don't utilise it actively. I often catch myself looking at nature.'⁸ The suburban youth express it this way: 'When I was younger I was much more out in nature.' However, there are exceptions related to special situations or during certain periods of time, for example, Easter and summer holidays. For the boys living in the sub-Arctic, this includes the hunting and fishing seasons as well. A difference in the writings is that the suburban young people frequently undertake regular work-outs outdoors; jogging, biking, walking and skiing, as part of their outdoor life. The difference might be explained by the long, dark northern winter with its harsh and cold climate.

Several of the young people emphasise how lucky they are to have grown up in an active outdoor family, and young people not having such a background have less experience and a lack of knowledge about the outdoors. More girls than boys express themselves negatively concerning certain outdoor experiences, often connected to ski trips with their families and school outings. The significance of family, friends and local culture may be summarised by the writings of a Norwegian boy at the age of eighteen who grew up in the city of Bergen but moved north when he started school. He describes his family life as '...many different kinds of hikes, everything from mushroom and berry picking to mile long outings in the mountains.' However, 'The best hikes were those with the other boys, which gave me... a completely different feeling than the hikes with my family (though I liked them as well).' He continues: 'On my big confirmation day, I was given seven knives, an outdoor cooking kit, a solid lunchbox, a teflon frying pan, a handcarved wooden cup, a 4-person tent and a mini sleeping bag. I was Mr. Outdoors himself(!), something which was no coincidence by any means.'⁹

Later, 'Mr. Outdoors Himself(!)' reflects over changes in his life while he has been studying sports in upper secondary school, and asks: 'Have I lost my relationship to nature?', then answers:

I'm probably not the nature boy I used to be, but I still go outdoors... The way in which I encounter nature has changed. It is now through working out and taking Interrail trips that I become a part of the great circle of life (Loch Ness, Stonehenge, the Highlands...). Soon it will begin to snow,... and I will become the nature boy once more. Incredibly, the winter boy is the same now as he was three years ago. I've just replaced skis with a snowboard. Half of the week includes hikes in the mountains and the runs down the ski hill... I always bring my backpack. This is what I dream about, the escape from being the normal and boring feeling of always having to be someone. Just float past among the trees and plains. Greet the animals in a way. This is what I call two months in heaven!¹⁰

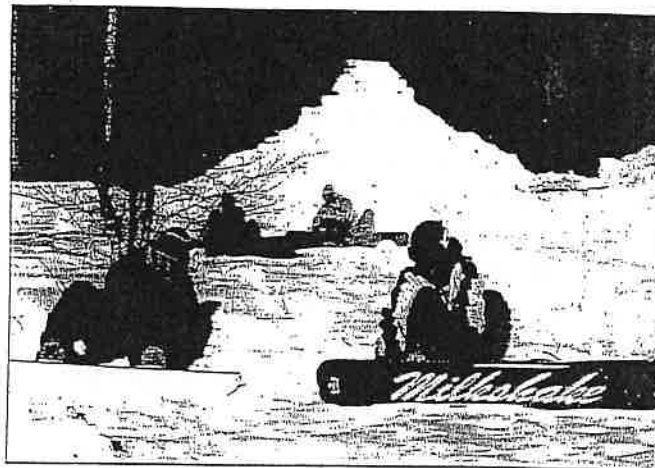
Quite surprisingly, several of the young people reflect on their relationship with regard to traditions and newer trends in outdoor recreation and adventure. Although they love to be outdoors and describe themselves as e.g. nature-boys, they do not see themselves as '*friluftsliv* freaks', which to them has negative connotations. A boy who has lived half his life in a German city but now lives in the sub-Arctic sees the relationship this way:

Nature has always had a type of magical influence... not an existential pleasure... I would neither describe myself as one of these 'trendy' outdoorsy types of people... nor as one of those... who wear outdoor clothes all year round, whether or not they are out hiking in the mountains or working in a bank... I think I lie somewhere between all that. Because I like to go outside on Sunday mornings and hunt, fish or just enjoy the quiet... just sit down somewhere and philosophise... where I can... imagine that I'm living under the same conditions which people did thousands of years before me.¹¹

Another example is how this northern born young girl discusses the idea that being traditionally oriented should be equated with being backward. She says:

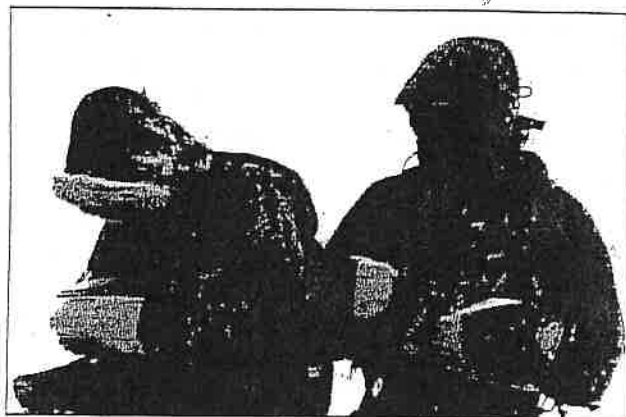
When we live as we do, with the mountains right in our yard and the ocean just beyond our kitchen window, I think it is important that we utilise nature as much as possible... I don't, however, consider myself to be a 'hiking freak', but as a person with a love of nature, someone who is fine on my own and who doesn't depend on others. I... feel myself to be more part of our times than those who think they are creative by doing something trendy because others say they should... Is it sort of 'uncool' to like nature?¹²

'Mr. Outdoors Himself(!)' and his friends. Notice the English advertising on the bottom of the snowboard.



Traditional Sami ways of living in the lavvo – a tent traditionally made of homemade blankets and birch-trees.

The classic style of ski touring which is often seen as a core symbol of a national Norwegian culture and identity.



A contested image of the relationship between people and places.



Sub-Arctic youth negotiating local traditions, national myths and global trends.

(All photos: Kirsti Pedersen Gurholt)

In general young people do not conceptualise their relationship with nature and outdoor adventure in the dichotomised and oppositional ways that may often be seen in political and educational discourses. Instead, they more likely see themselves somewhere between local traditions and new trends, and they may relate to different outdoor cultures without this causing any identity problems. At the same time, they may perform and appreciate a mix of outdoor living and adventurous activities, which from a historical and socio-cultural perspective may be identified as expressions of local traditions, national myths and global integration. While local outdoor traditions are important for the experience of belonging to one's place of living, new activities, trendy clothing and equipment may give the feeling of being globally integrated. This occurs especially among young people in the north, where I have observed a playful treatment of symbols, and seen how specific activities may be given different meanings depending on the situation and the people involved.

In an earlier article I have described the Norwegian sub-Arctic as a showcase for the interplay between local traditions and global integration (Pedersen and Viken, 1996). Several of the essays' authors are concerned with the fact that they are not necessarily required to choose between either the 'new' or the 'old', something defined as local or global, traditional or modern, Sami or Norwegian (Pedersen, 2003a). If we are to believe their writings, young Norwegian adults pay little or no attention to the discourse on the relationship between outdoor walks or hikes and the preservation of a Norwegian national identity.

Just a few of the young people in this survey identify with the very risky, 'vertical' and extreme approach that is often shown in the media, e.g. in advertisements for everything from chocolate and gasoline to outdoor equipment. The media, therefore, often create the impression that outdoor life for young people is a hunt for 'the white high' on snow-covered mountainsides, an 'adrenaline kick' in wild rapids or 'peak experiences' on vertical mountain faces, especially for boys. This 'skewed view of outdoor life' is accentuated by the values of speed and excitement, breaking boundaries and taking risks. However, in the young people's narration a more complete picture is drawn as to what gives 'flow' and optimal experiences, excitement and pleasure. It does not need to include risk. A Sami boy writes:

I am a nature person... When I am outdoors, I get an indescribable feeling of being free...What makes ice fishing so fun is that you can look down the hole while you are fishing. Seeing the fish swim by gives me a little kick. When this happens my legs move and my body starts shaking. That's how everybody else can see that I have a fish getting closer.¹³

Both girls and boys, in the sub-Arctic as well as in the suburban areas, stress with few exceptions their fathers' significance and the male dominance found in the outdoors. The young adults living in the north are well aware of this gender structure, which is rooted in the complementary gender order connected to the subsistence economy that characterised their parents' and grandparents' generations, but they do not expend energy fighting it. In the essays I find some evidence of experience which gives girls the knowledge, skills and self-confidence needed to trust in their own competence in a variety of challenging outdoor situations, especially after they have completed a year at a folk high school that includes many outdoor adventure excursions. Otherwise, the tendency in the writings is that the gender question is seen as a matter of the girls' individual choice, e.g. expressed as in the words of this Sami boy:

I think that boys in general enjoy themselves outdoors better than girls...I think that's too bad, because I would like to bring girls along on trips, but they have to want to be there of their own accord...enough about that...¹⁴

Several of the girls at upper secondary school can imagine having an occupation which will put them in close contact with nature. They want to become veterinarians 'because they like animals' or work in the travel business. Girls who have grown up in Sami families owning reindeer would prefer to remain in the business, but know that this might be difficult (Pedersen, 2003a). These female students have chosen courses of study which lead to the occupations of conservationists

and outdoor teachers/guides. They are determined to develop independence and expertise in what to do and how to survive when outdoors, and to show they 'can do it'. One common feature of their narratives is that they, in addition to having grown up in an active outdoor family, have got the inspiration and experience through the folk high schools' courses of study in nature and outdoor life.

The male students do not emphasise school's importance for their interest and accomplishments in outdoor life in the same manner. Could this be an expression of a more general pattern, an increasingly formalised and goal-oriented instruction and upbringing in outdoor life through educational institutions and volunteer organisations (Miljøverndepartementet, 2000) which is contributing to increasing equality with regard to outdoor life? So far we have only limited research-based knowledge on this subject. In the meantime other research shows that gender-related processes in outdoor adventure are slow and can go in different directions (Pedersen, 1999; Christensen, 2001).

When looking towards their future, young people often dream of living close to nature, which is not seen as being antagonistic to urban lifestyles, nor in the sub-Arctic. More surprisingly, most girls and boys assume that if they have children, they will want them to grow up with the same freedom to play outside as they themselves have enjoyed. In the north they say, 'I would never let my kids (if have any) grow up in a city without being in close touch with nature!'¹⁵ In the south they say: 'My dream is to settle somewhere around Oslo, at a place where the wood is close and there is not too much noise.'¹⁶ However, it is a romanticised, harmonic and nostalgic idea of their childhoods spent outdoors and a culture of hiking without hard work they dream about. The young adults also reflect on nature's life-giving significance, often expressed abstractly as something like 'we must of course take care of it' because 'nature is, in spite of everything, the biggest reason why we humans are able to live on this planet.'¹⁷ 'If we destroy nature and kill the animals, we will also die in the end.'¹⁸

The Complexity of Continuity and Change on the Local, National and Global Level

In order to interpret the narratives on nature which I have outlined, I have utilised a comparative cultural analytical perspective. First, I have compared the narratives written by boys with those written by girls. Secondly, I have contrasted those written from a sub-Arctic point of view with those composed from a suburban perspective. Finally, I have compared the narratives written by Norwegian young people with those composed by young Sami, as well as young people from a dissimilar cultural background¹⁹. This approach allows for the opportunity to study cultural variations, as well as similarities between the various young people's groups.²⁰ The narratives written by the sub-Arctic teenagers have also been analysed in light of their parents' and grandparents' generations of outdoor stories (Pedersen, 1999; 2003). Thus the approach opens up for an analysis of the complexity between cultural continuity and cultural change.

Changing views on the utilisation of nature may be signs of deeper cultural and social change, and many researchers have emphasised that youth culture represents a 'seismograph' for ongoing social and cultural changes. Young people therefore perform activities and appropriate values that will influence the future. If we are to believe in the mass media and 'globalised' outdoor magazines, the 'next generations' will go for 'adrenaline-kicks', the 'flow', the 'optimal' or 'peak' experiences in wild white water rafting and on snowy slopes. These are activities where the speed and excitement of exceeding limits and taking risks are given the highest value. These are values quite contrary to those emphasised through the activities performed by the older generation, which are connected to harvesting from nature; like picking wild berries, fishing etc., but also from the values expressed through the idea of *friluftsliv* as a way of living with richness in goals, but simplicity in means (Næss, 1976).

However, if we are to believe young people's narratives on nature and *friluftsliv*, we have to take into account the existence of cultural variations in how Norwegian teenagers relate to nature. The

youth groups who identify with the very extreme, vertical, risky and adventurous approach and with the attitude that the world is their playground - are rather marginal. These findings correspond with other quantitative and qualitative studies (Skogen, 1999; Strandbu, 2000; Vorkinn *et al.*, 2000). This means that most Norwegian young people, coming from different socio-cultural backgrounds and contexts, do not see the very extreme and vertical outdoor values as being either a part of their own outdoor reality or outdoor dreams. Rather, they remain to a large degree locally oriented. An alternative interpretation of the groups of young people performing activities like snowboarding and B.A.S.E. (Building, Antenna, Span and Earth) may be found in ethnographic studies that theorise these groups as sub-cultural expressions (Christensen, 2001; Mæland, 2003). The ethnographer Olav Christensen (2001, not numbered cover page) describes the young snowboarders he studied as balancing 'various boundaries in today's society, between sport and play, between elitism and anti-competition, between professionalism and amateurism, between male-dominance and gender neutrality, between childishness and dead seriousness.'

The suggested gap between the media-generated, globally-oriented and therefore very visible reality of groups of young people's relationship with nature and the more locally oriented pictures of - let us call it - more mainstream or mass outdoor culture, leave us with a dichotomised and polarised understanding of reality. This distorted picture leaves educators and politicians with little choice. In order to first attract young people, then meet and fulfil their interests and needs, the activities taught in school and organisations must have a global touch; being vertical, risky and tough. This interpretation is nurtured by theories on young people and identity in Western culture that emphasise processes of cultural 'liberation' and individualisation, and which comprehend traditions as being something which belong to earlier societies. Furthermore, the interpretation emphasises that the individual of our day has almost unlimited opportunities to make choices and create his or her own life, identity and *friluftsliv* as he or she wants. This is the theory about cultural emancipation and individualisation. The theory is visionary and has (or at least has had) a great rhetorical rating among many *friluftsliv* teachers and politicians.

When conducting research on young people, one also happens to meet another position stating that our time is also based on values and practices which can be relatively stable. This means that there are societal forces which influence the choices an individual might make, and is able to make. This supposed freedom of choice is relative; it has been experienced and practised in specific socio-cultural contexts. One revelation coming out of the narratives is that while young people describe the experience of existing new opportunities for them, there are at the same time strong forces relating to how and to what extent they utilise and understand nature. And these forces are not necessarily seen as negative. On the contrary, most young people represented in this sample appreciate having grown up in an active outdoor family. The processes they enter into are marked by cultural reconstruction; however, this does not mean a passive transfer of traditions from one generation to the next. Through decisive action, cooperation and interpretation, young people may be in the process of creating a new culture; in other words, giving well-known activities new meaning may mean that some aspects of the activities may be changing, while others remain more or less the same.

is this theory of cultural reconstruction which has an empirical basis not only in nature narratives, but also in research which is based on national survey (Skogen, 1999; Vorkinn *et al.*, 2000). This does not prevent groups of young people all over our country from using nature as a reference point for performing new activities or creating new forms of togetherness and an identity which may represent a break with the traditional culture of walking and hikes (Christensen, 2001). However, at the same time a traditional, gendered organisation of the outdoors may very well be expressed, constructed and strengthened in these new male dominated outdoor sub-cultures.

Similarly, the Norwegian public discourse is about to change. While the preservation of the traditional Sunday walk was linked to the preservation of Norwegian daily life and national identity when the

National Year of Friluftsliv was arranged for the first time in 1993, legitimacy has now been found in the need to motivate children and youth to be more physically active, slimmer and healthier, e.g. expressed in Ministerial White Papers on outdoor recreation and adventure (Det Kongelige Miljøverndepartementet, 2003) and on health (Det Kongelige Helsedepartementet 2004). These arguments were recently repeated by the Minister of Environmental Issues when the new *National Year of Friluftsliv 2005* was launched during the first weekend of September. While the first Friluftsliv Year was linked to the 125th anniversary of The Norwegian Tourist Association, the coming Friluftsliv Year is linked to the 100th anniversary of Norway's emergence as an independent nation.

While the official legitimacy for *friluftsliv* is about to turn from focusing on the preservation of a national identity and the development of environmental awareness, to fitness and health, the concept *friluftsliv* is broadened (Det Kongelige Miljøverndepartementet, 2000). Official authorities are now willing to expand the core concept of *friluftsliv* as hiking on foot and on skis, to include so-called new activities.

'A broadened concept of friluftsliv – emerging traditions'. (Miljøverndepartementet, 2000). The picture shows a young boy in old-fashioned skiing equipment and an older man in a more modern activity with its associated clothing.



Concluding remarks

Besides building up a European network of social workers and educators related to 'outdoor education and experiential learning', the intention of the 'European Institute' is both to stimulate comparative analyses and establish a body of knowledge on European outdoor educational traditions and trends. In this brief presentation I have attempted to contribute to this knowledge by questioning the gap between the media-generated understanding of outdoor youth culture and the interpretations of nature and self that the nature narrative approach has revealed.

I have argued that we need an alternative to the dominant dichotomized either-or way of thinking. We have to take into account the cultural complexity of the concepts that are in use; of what we see as new versus old, as local versus national and global, as risk and adventure etc. These concepts are culturally bound and relative, and thus given assigned meanings in different situations. Therefore, our challenge is to contextualise and to clarify their meanings in the lives of concrete people. Otherwise the concepts will continue to serve more as keys or symbols rather than as descriptions and analyses of reality.

Notes

- ¹ *Fri Flyt* ('Free Flow') Vol.3, No.12, May 2001, Featureforlaget AS.
- ² The research is funded by the Research Council of Norway, by the programs *Cultural Studies* (2000-2003) and *Sustainable development* (2003-2006).
- ³ F74 19:3AF. The code refers to the different informants, and should be interpreted as follows: F=female, 74=number, 19=age, SP=sport studies. Other codes in use: M=male, AF=general studies, D=dance. OE=Oslo East End.
- ⁴ F22 16:1AF.
- ⁵ M6 17SP, OEE.
- ⁶ M4 17SP, OEE.
- ⁷ Pedersen (1999) shows that in the sub-Arctic areas the informants' parents' and grandparents' relations with nature have changed dramatically, especially since the 1960s, due to rapid modernization.
- ⁸ F72 18:3AF.
- ⁹ M88 18:3SP. It is necessary to clarify an important detail that gets lost in the translation. The boy describes himself in English by using the concept 'Mr. Outdoors Himself(!)'. One interpretation of this might be that he by this expresses a feeling of being globally integrated; another that this gives him a feeling of just being an important person.
- ¹⁰ M88 18:3SP.
- ¹¹ M35 16:1AF.
- ¹² F84 18:3ID.
- ¹³ M90 3SP.
- ¹⁴ M90 3SP.
- ¹⁵ F75 19:3AF.
- ¹⁶ F14 17: OEE.
- ¹⁷ F43 16:1AF.
- ¹⁸ F42 16:1AF.
- ¹⁹ For further information about cultural differentiation, please see Pedersen 2003a.
- ²⁰ To study how different groups of people construct different understandings of nature, the reader might benefit from reading the contributions made available through the book *Nature and Identity. Essays on the culture of nature*, edited by Pedersen and Viken (2003).

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