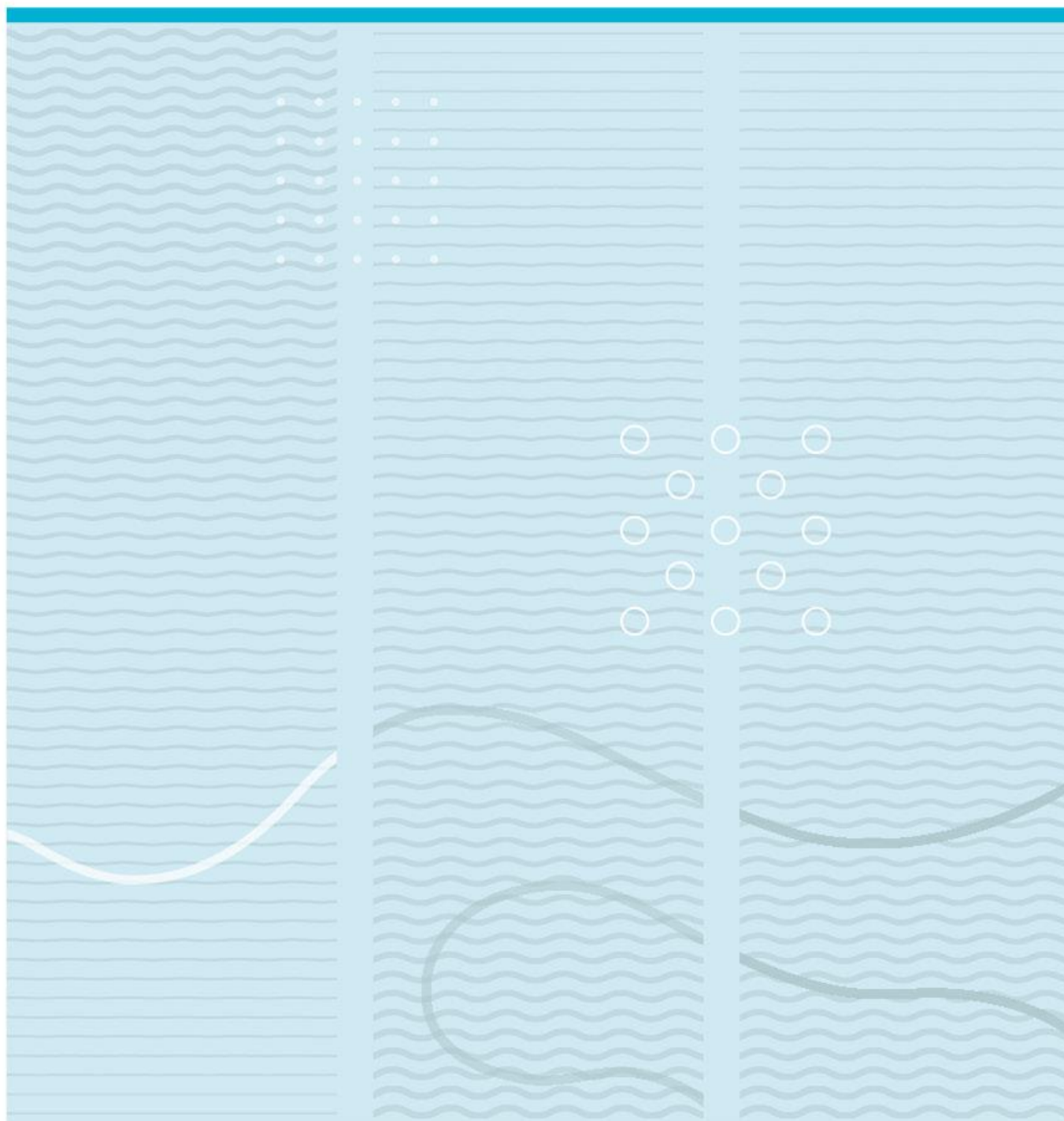


Niels Emile Tony Rasmussen

“Legitimised by risk”

A qualitative study of mountaineering-parents justification of risk



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This thesis is worth 30 study points

Abstract

This master's thesis sought to explore the personal justifications of parents in high-risk mountain-based jobs, the factors that influence this justification, and whether risk willingness changes when becoming a parent. Five qualitative semi structured interviews of professional guides certified through IFMGA - three males and two females, - were analysed using the method of emerging themes. Through a theoretical framework encompassing Bourdieu's theory and concepts of social practice, parts of the social foundation behind the informants' justifications were uncovered. The findings enlighten the effect of being socialised into the mountain guide community, beginning during the education process, and involving the incorporation of the social norms and thought patterns, along with the internalisation of a specific risk perception and significant acceptance. Key factors that influence the actors' personal risk justification were highlighted. Traditional social norms, biological factors, identity, education and experience, cred leading to multiple forms of capital, experience of close calls, and partners - both in life and in mountaineering, all influenced the way they justified having an inherently risky job. Justifying this risk was not difficult because the informants simply found that it was not that risky. They argued that risk is in large part subjective and to them, highly educated and experienced guides, the inherent risk of mountain guiding in Norway was acceptable. A decrease in risk willingness was concomitant, though somewhat delayed, to having kids, but was not dissociable from aging, and primarily effected the informants' private practices, as the work-associated risk was considered limited.

Foreword

The idea for this thesis sprang from a personal desire to gain insight into this area of knowledge. It has been both frustrating, and rewarding, interesting and tiring. But overall writing this thesis has been a huge pleasure. I hope that the information gathered and presented here can help people going into, or considering, a career in the mountains, in making an informed choice in regard to the inherent risk of the area and the desire of having kids.

I would like to thank my supervisor Tommy Langseth, first for introducing me to the field of sociology and risk, second for contributing by his own work to a good portion of the research this thesis builds on, and lastly for good supervision and patience.

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1 Introduction

Risk in many ways legitimise the mountain guide profession, if there was no danger involved with going into the mountains you wouldn't need a mountain guide. – Jakob

If you make the decision to be active in that profession, then you must have accepted the risk that is inherently there. – Liv

The quotes from Jakob and Liv clearly illustrate that there is an inherent, non-negotiable, and legitimising risk attached to the profession of mountain guides. How do you then, as a parent, justify to yourself having a career that is unquestionably risky? As a young adult, seeing my friends and colleagues having kids and still engaging in high-risk activities, I want to understand the reasoning behind this and find out how people working professionally in a high-risk environment justify continuing taking risk when they have a child at home.

1.1 Background

Alison Hargreaves is a highly accomplished alpinist, and probably the most famous recent example of the struggle of balancing an inherently risky job with having a family and kids. She wrote in her diary before she died *"It eats away at me—wanting the children and wanting K2. I feel like I'm being pulled in two"*? (Frohlick, 2006). What factors push these professionals towards the risk? Is it pressure from sponsors, teams, employers and/or society? Do they consider this risky job as an integral part of themselves that they cannot simply ignore, even if it includes a significant risk? Is taking risk an addiction on par with abusive substance such as alcohol or drugs, but with the drug being produced naturally inside the body? What do risk-takers tell themselves to justify going on an expedition to a mountain they might not survive when they have kids at home?

There is a lot of research aiming at answering why we, as humans, take risk. Be it Bourdieu and his theory on capital and our hunt for it (1999) or Zuckerman and his theory on high sensation seekers (1994) and how taking risk, on par with alcohol and drugs, is linked to addiction (1979). Zuckerman's high sensation seeker theory has further been used to show that there is no difference in high-sensation seeking behaviour between men and women, who self-select into a career in a high-risk environment (Frick, 2021).

As a white, cisgendered, heterosexual, middleclass male, I am very aware of my privileged position in society. It is an androcentric position, men engaged in mountaineering, be it professionally or recreationally, have benefited from. Indeed, fathers who leave for the

mountains, some to never come back, have historically not been criticised to the same degree as mothers who do the same. For example, Frohlick in the three articles based on ethnographic research *"You Brought Your Baby to Base Camp?" Families and Field Sites* (2002), *'That playfulness of white masculinity': Mediating masculinities and adventure at mountain film festivals* (2005), and *'Wanting the Children and Wanting K2': The incommensurability of motherhood and mountaineering in Britain and North America in the late twentieth century* (2006), describes the masculine dominance of the field of mountaineering, as well as the difference in the treatment of men and women within the field. Another example is to be found in Gilchrist's article *'Motherhood, ambition and risk': mediating the sporting hero/ine in Conservative Britain* (2007). Gilchrist explores the changing tendencies in the way we treat our sporting heroines and heroes in our time, and how the notions of what is acceptable for our male and female role models is slowly changing. There is, however, not much research exploring what exactly parents, who are responsible for the upbringing and nurturing of their children, tell themselves to justify going away, potentially for months at a time, and potentially not returning, when the kids they have put into the world depend on and wait for them.

I myself grew up with a parent whose journalist job was from time to time a high risk one, being smuggled into Iraq right at the start of the invasion and reporting from there. I remember not so much being worried, but more finding it cool that my dad had a cool job I could brag about. However, I very much remember my mom being worried, although she never showed it to us kids much and didn't voice it to us but didn't hide it either. It marks us children when our parents, whom we perceive as untouchable, strong and all knowing, the solution to all our problems, are scared. Now at the age where I could become a dad within a not-so-distant future, and entering a career that is not risk free, what will I do? Will I choose a job that my potential kid will find inspiring and "cool", or rather a safer potentially less exiting job? I don't know yet. Therefore, I aim to explore through this thesis what people who have gone through this dilemma told themselves, so I, if the time comes, can make an informed decision. I also hope the research will potentially make people think about, what is at least to some degree, a selfish endeavour, and how it can affect the children they potentially leave behind.

As mentioned above probably the most famous case, and one of my main inspirations for the topic and research questions of this thesis, is the case of Alison Hargreaves. She was a

prominent figure on the mountaineering scene in the mid 90's. First woman, and second person ever after the legendary Reinhold Messner, to climb Everest un-aided¹, she climbed when she was six months pregnant all the big north faces of the Alps in a single season, including the notorious Eiger north face. She is in many respects a controversial figure. On the one hand, she achieved some undeniably exceptional and impressive feats in the field of mountaineering. On the other hand, she accomplished her feats both while pregnant and while having small kids at home. She herself commented on the matter on at least two occasions. First in the early 90's at the Banff Mountain Film Festival, Hargreaves said during a panel on women and adventure:

I suppose I have to answer that, really. You've put me on the spot. I find it fairly easy to switch off. Obviously, I'm a terrible mother and have no guilt complex in the slightest. Seriously though, when I started, I never envisioned having children, but eventually decided I would have kids ... I always knew I would be climbing again. I do find it easy to turn off from the kids ... I can be two people, Alison the climber and Alison the mom. Climbing is my career. That's what I do every day. Just like the normal working mom, she just gets on with the job, you concentrate on what you do (Frohlick, 2006)

Hargreaves again commented on her motherhood and the risk her job involved in a BBC interview in 1995, shortly before her departure for what would be her fatal last climb.

When we go climbing, we obviously minimise the risks, and if we thought it was that risky, we wouldn't go climbing. I mean anybody who went of thinking, you know, that there was a very high chance they wouldn't come back, I think is a very unfair thing to do, especially with a young family(BBC, 2021)

From these two quotes, I gather that Hargreaves did not see herself as an unordinary mother, she just happened to have an unordinary job. However, in my opinion, she must also have had a very unordinary perception of risk if she does not believe there is a great risk of her not coming back from an unaided attempt on K2. To her credit, she did reach the summit. But, as any person who knows a bit about physical achievements in the mountains will recognise, reaching the summit does not mean you are done and 80% of the accidents happen on the way down. This is especially relevant when considering that the mountain in question is K2, the world second deadliest 8000m peak, with a deathrate of around 30% (8000ers.com, n.d.; Woodward, 2019). In other words, an almost 1 in 3 risk of not making it back. Alison died on her way down from the summit, swept off the mountain by a storm, her body was never recovered.

¹ An unaided climb means that the climber is apart from not using bottled oxygen also not receiving help from a sherpa team in her summit attempt.

1.2 Research questions

The case of Alison Hargreaves, the research reported above, along with my own thoughts regarding my future, has led me to this topic of personal risk justification of parents and what factors influence said justification. This topic has been operationalised through the following two research questions.

- 1. Which factors influence the risk justification of professional mountain guides?**
- 2. How do parents justify having a job that has a non-negotiable and inherent risk?**

1.3 Sociological perspective of risk

In the introductory chapter I have presented the theme of this master's thesis along with its background and relevant research and the cases that have led me to the research questions formulated above. Additionally, it is important to outline and explain why a sociological perspective has been chosen.

As defined above, the thesis aims to uncover the personal justifications of parents working professionally in the mountains. To understand these justifications, it is important to comprehend which factors they emerge from, by learning about concepts and theories hailing from the domain of sociology. It is indeed believed that our internal reasoning and values are a product of our habitus and the events and socialisation that has formed it (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1995; Langseth & Salvesen, 2018; Wilken, 2008). In order to understand the informants' justification of risk, we must first understand how they perceive risk in this context. Risk, and what is defined as risky, becomes a dynamic social process that is based on which values and norms are perceived as legitimate in the concrete social context the informants act in. Of course the risk perception the informants have is based on a real physical and objective risk, that potentially can result in their death (Langseth, 2012). The risk willingness of the informants and how they justify it to themselves are closely linked to what they can obtain by taking it. According to Bourdieu, all the decisions an actor takes and the moves he makes within his/her field are based on our hunt for recognition, be it a conscious or unconscious hunt (Bourdieu, 1999).

This thesis explores the personal justifications of a high-risk job by parents, and the factors and external influences that affect these justifications. The internal, personal value system is highly influenced by outside factors such as the external value systems and the doxa of to the fields the informants move in and is therefore sociologically and socially bound.

Consequently, the theory used to understand this socially influenced personal value system must also be related to sociology, the science concerned with the patterns of social relationships and social interaction and the social causes and consequences of human behaviour.

2 Theory

Several sociologists, including Bourdieu concerned with social relations and dynamics of power in society in general as well as others focussing specifically on social relations in risk-sports arena, have developed theories, concepts and models that are particularly useful to my research to analyse, contextualise and understand my interviewees' answers and the way they integrate parenthood and risk taking. Because the informant's internal value systems are socially influenced the theory used to understand them must also be sociologically based. I will outline the chosen theory in this chapter and explain how they relate to my research. I will begin with key concepts developed by Bourdieu. Then I will present the cred-zone model developed by Langseth and Salvesen, which is useful in helping to understand why people take risk in general as well as how risk is talked about, communicated and perceived within a community. Thirdly, I will explain what role identity plays, using theories by Langseth as well as Zuckerman.

2.1 Bourdieu

The work of the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1930-2002) was particularly concerned with the dynamic of power in society and how power is transferred or preserved within and among generations. It was dominated by social hierarchy reproduction. Bourdieu developed a series of concepts to help illustrate his theories on the society's social structures and power struggles, that are relevant to understand, the socially founded aspects of my interviewees' answers. I will present below four of Bourdieu's influential concepts that appeared essential to me in my research and explain how they relate to it: habitus, capital, field, and doxa.

2.1.1 Habitus

Habitus is one of Bourdieu's most important concepts and can be described as the internal system an individual uses to act. It refers to the collection of knowledge, skill and experiences gathered throughout a lifetime. It is the framework individuals build, in part, through socializing and being socialised within the cultures and subcultures they frequent. It is the cognitive and bodily systems and structures that our opinions, actions and our choices are built upon (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1995; Wilken, 2008). *In my research I expect the participants' habitus to be of great importance to the way they justify their risk taking.* If they,

for example, have grown up in a climbing/mountaineering family, they might perceive taking the associated risk as something very normal, as Alison Hargreaves's son Tom Ballard did, becoming a mountaineer himself, sadly dying only 100 miles from where his mother did (BBC, 2021; Horton, 2019).

Bourdieu put special emphasis on the primary and early socialisation to explain how individuals habitus are shaped throughout their life (Wilken, 2008). At the same time, habitus is also a collective phenomenon, as it is also shaped by the cultures, subcultures, fields (see under point 2.1.3) and the doxa (see under point 2.1.4) of these environments that the individual frequents. This leads to a collective habitus emerging for each culture and field, that result in an unspoken set of rules used to interact within the field. The individual and the collective habitus are thus in a dynamic relationship reciprocally affecting each other (Tøstesen, 2019). ***Therefore, I expect the participants' habitus to be in part shaped by the mountaineering community, potentially resulting in an increased risk willingness.***

2.1.2 Capital

Capital is described by Bourdieu as a form of value or valuta an agent can be in possession of. The value of capital is relative to and dependent on the field (see under point 2.1.3) in which it is used (Bourdieu, 1996). Capital exists in three main categories: economic, cultural, and social. All the three forms of capital can be assigned a symbolic value/capital by the agents in a given field (Wilken, 2008). Symbolic capital is unique to the field in which it is utilised (Bourdieu, 1999). An example could be that a practitioner has better newer equipment (economic capital), this can act as a status symbol (symbolic capital) giving the practitioner a better position within the field (social capital). Capital is therefore a form of valuta in different shapes that can be interchanged for each other and are valid within a certain field. Bourdieu's theories on recognition as symbolic capital are especially important to my research. In *Meditasjoner*(1999), Bourdieu writes that an agent's motivation for his investments and actions within a field, is fuelled by the agent's hunt for recognition. Bourdieu further writes that recognition is the foundation all capitals build upon, so capital only has value because it leads to recognition. ***This is relevant in my research as my participants might be willing to take the risk of mountaineering even though they have kids because it is their***

way of attaining symbolic capital that could lead to sponsors and thus economic capital to provide for their families.

Symbolic capital becomes dynamic and ever changing because the acts that result in recognition change as the boundaries of what has been achieved in the field are pushed further and further. This means that agents must push the boundaries, taking more and more risk, in order to achieve recognition for their actions and attain the capital they hunt. For example, climbing Everest on a commercial guided trip using supplementary oxygen and leaving all logistics to Sherpas no longer results in a very large increase in recognition as a mountaineer.

2.1.3 Field

Field is the concept Bourdieu uses to describe the social arenas within which individuals perform their activities (Wilken, 2008). Bourdieu defines field as a constellation of objective relations between different positions (Bourdieu, 1999; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1996; Wilken, 2008). These objective relations exist, according to Bourdieu, independently of the awareness or will. Field can be viewed as the game board that all actors interact on. The actor's place in the field depends on the amount of capital that the actor possesses, the better the position in the field, the more power and influence the actor has over the field (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1995). Actors can improve their position in the field either by increasing their capital, or changing the relative value of the capital they already possess (Bourdieu, 1999).

The actors will continually try to position themselves in relation to others by producing and re-producing the currently valid norms of the field. A main point of Bourdieu's theory is that the rules of the game are not rigid and static, rather the current rules and norms, and the associated capital, are ever changing, and will always be shaped by the constantly occurring power struggles of the field. The edges of the field are therefore dynamic, and end where the discursive power of the actor's end (Wilken, 2008).

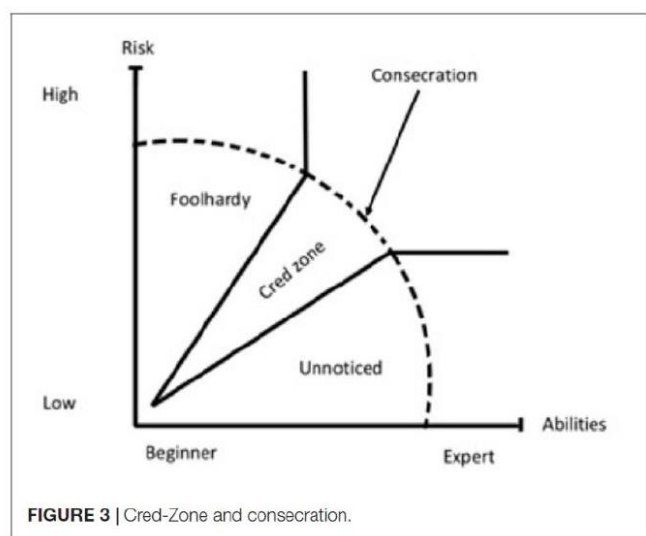
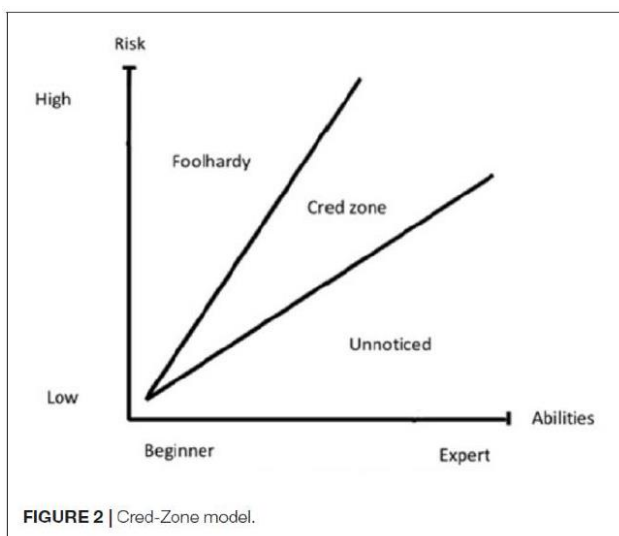
2.1.4 Doxa

Doxa refers to commonly accepted truth that acts as a foundation for the social rules of engagement within a field (Wilken, 2008). This accepted truth can be understood as the rules of the field. The awareness of the "game" is minimal. Bourdieu (1998) describes it as a social illusion where the rules of the field are internalised in the actors habitus so that they are seen

as natural, The doxa of a field is usually unspoken and not up for debate but can be changed over time by powerful actors advocating and supporting a change. Thus, there must be a shift within the accepted truth of a field for the doxa to change. For example, the fact that the earth was the centre of the solar system was a commonly accepted truth of natural science. However, after Galileo in 1632 put forward his theory of a heliocentric solar system, a slow shift happened as his theory was accepted through his and other scientists using their capital and position in the field to advocate in favour of the theory, leading to a change of the doxa of natural science.

2.2 The cred-zone model

The Cred-Zone model is a concept developed by Langseth and Salvesen (2018) in *Rock Climbing, Risk, and Recognition*, based on the ideas of Bourdieu. The model explains the relationship between an actor's risk taking, endeavours and subsequent gain of recognition or "cred". This will help me to understand and contextualise my informants' answers in regard to how they balance their risk, how risk is talked about in the community, and how the value systems and doxa of a community is often internalised by the actors that enter them.



The model, and the article it was published in, illustrates, and explains how cred is not something an individual can obtain simply by taking a higher risk; there must be a connection between the practitioner's skill level and the estimated risk the practitioner is exposing her or himself to, as illustrated in Figure 2 above. Langseth and Salvesen developed the model through qualitative research in the Norwegian climbing community. The research demonstrated a clear connection between how much risk a practitioner is willing to take, the skill level of the practitioner and

whether or not recognition is gained from the activity. The research further showed, as illustrates by Figure 3 above, how, as a practitioner gains more skill and experience, the cred-zone widens allowing for and accepting more calculated risk from the practitioner. In other words, as actors become consecrated² within the community, they thereby gain more leeway to take greater risk without being subject to the same scrutiny and scepticism from the community as a non-consecrated practitioner would (Langseth & Salvesen, 2018).

The model has since been used by Tøstesen (2019) in his master thesis *Socialised to risk – A Sociological study about skiers’ understanding of risk* and in the subsequent article *Freeride Skiing—Risk-Taking, Recognition, and Moral Boundaries* (Tøstesen & Langseth, 2021). The research focussed on understanding risk and risk willingness as a mean of gaining recognition in the ski community in Sogndal. It demonstrated that the model, that is developed from research on the Norwegian climbing community, can be transferred, and used on other communities such as the skiing community. The barriers and limits, that are put up within the climbing community based on experience and skill, also exist within the skiing community. In both communities there are practitioners who get consecrated and obtain ikon-status and thus are no longer judged and limited through the same framework and boundaries as the rest of the community (Tøstesen, 2019). However, both Langseth and Salvesen (2018) and Tøstesen (2019) and equally argue that there is no set or predefined limit for which action will result in a gain in social capital for a consecrated practitioner. As an example Langseth and Salvesen (2018) mention the Canadian skier Jamie Pierre and his 82m drop from a cliff at Targhee outside Jackson Hole, Wyoming, in 2006. Although establishing a new world record, to this day only beaten by Fred Syversen’s accidental 107m drop in 2008, Pierre was criticised for his jump as he landed on his head, as well as only actually “skiing” 5 meters before dropping and thereby breaking some style/moral boundaries within the skiing community. The jump was met both with awe of the feat he had accomplished but also with disapproval as Pierre had a wife and a two-month-old child at home (Hals, 2006). This example illustrates well that even professional consecrated practitioners can perform feats that will not result in increased social capital from all members of a community, habitus and field (Langseth & Salvesen, 2018; Tøstesen, 2019).

On the other side, there is the example of Hilaree Nelson & Jim Morrisons first descent of the Lhotse couloir and Lhotse face in 2018 (Simpson & Kalisz, 2019). Nelson also had kids at home at

² Consecration means that the actor obtains such a position within the field that they become idolised, achieve an almost sanctified status within their field. (Bourdieu, 2010; T. Langseth & Salvesen, 2018)

the time, although much older than Pierre's, but the pair has, as far as I can see, only received positive feedback for their accomplishment (CBS-News, 2019; Ellis, 2019). These two examples illustrate that there is a difference in the size and complexity of the feat the consecrated actor must perform to attain the symbolic capital at stake in the field. It shows that there is difference even between consecrated actors, and that some factors, such as young kids, can negatively affect even consecrated actors.

Another factor that must be taken into account when researching risk and recognition, is the difference between success and failure. By this I mean that social capital in the form of recognition can only be attained if the actor is successful in her or his endeavour. It is very rare that actors receive much social capital just for an attempt at something. In tandem with the cred zone-model, the findings of Langseth presented in *B.A.S.E jumping – beyond the thrills* (2012), show a clear connection between accepted risk and the actors' level of experience and skill. Both shows that experienced and skilled actors who hesitate or don't take risk appropriate to their level will lose symbolic capital and position in their field. Similarly, inexperienced actors don't receive capital for taking too large risks. This is well illustrated by the cred-zone model (Langseth & Salvesen, 2018). An Actor who pushes the limits of their field and accomplish an important feat obtain large amounts of social capital and recognition. On the other hand, if they fail, or in the worse-case scenario die, it will be seen as the actors' own fault and not as a result of the activity itself (Langseth, 2012a). An interesting question regarding this is, what kind of critique would a highly positioned and consecrated actor such as Alex Honnold have received if he had fallen during his free solo ascent of the free order route on El Capitan in 2017?

2.3 Identity

Personality or identity can be a big contributor to why we engage in high-risk activities. This can be explained in different ways. One way of seeing it is that an activity can become such a big part of the individual's identity in his/her interaction within a field. Langseth's article *Liquid ice surfers – the construction of surfer identities in Norway* (Langseth, 2012b) provides an example of this. Langseth writes,

As the 'rules of the game' become adapted, surfing takes a stronghold on these actors' lives. Surfing goes from being a hobby towards being an all-embracing lifestyle. Individual identity is developed as actors undergo identification with these values.

I believe that the same can happen with climbers of any sort, be it bouldering or alpinism. When an activity becomes an integral part of your identity, a defining feature of who you see yourself as, it

will be incredibly hard to give it up because you have a kid, especially if you are economically reliant on the activity. *I expect to encounter answers from my informants that fall in line with this.*

Another aspect of identity that I will take into account when analysing the interviews is the type of personalities that is interviewed. *The most relevant personality trait I expect to encounter is what Zuckerman calls the High Sensation Seeker* (Zuckerman, 1979). A high sensation or a thrill and adventure seeker reaches his/her optimal level of arousal when engaging in high-speed, high-risk activities such for example as base jumping or scaling a very high or very difficult peak (Kelland, 2019). This trait is also associated with addiction. Based on this, *I could expect that interviewees could see their need to go to the highest peaks as a sort of addiction.* Therefore, much like an alcoholic, a smoker or a drug addict who will have a very hard time quitting, especially if the addiction has lasted over many years, a seasoned mountaineer who get a child might find it incredibly hard to quit his/her “drug” (Zuckerman, 1979). Mountaineering is, of course, not a literal drug such as alcohol or nicotine, still it is an activity that results in the body producing a variety of addictive substances in the form of dopamine, adrenaline and other naturally occurring “drugs”.

3 Methods

In this master thesis I have made use of qualitative methods, in the form of five semi structured interviews, in order to uncover the personal risk justifications of my informants. The interviews have then been transcribed and analysed using the method of emerging themes, an aspect of grounded theory. In this chapter I will outline why these methods were chosen, how the informants were found, review the interview process, explain the analysis and interpretation method used, and finally outline challenges and limitations of this project as well as ethical considerations.

3.1 Research design

Grønmo (2016) describes how a qualitative research approach deals with the gathering of empirical data that cannot naturally be represented by numbers or measurements., to uncover data of a complex and personal nature which are gathered by digging deeper with fewer objects of research, as a vertical sampling, thus preventing a statistical analysis. The questions I attempt to answer through this project addresses the informant's personal justifications for performing high-risk jobs. It seems, therefore appropriate to choose a qualitative approach and make use of qualitative interviews. Through in depth questions and follow-up questions tailored to the individual informant, qualitative interviews make it possible to uncover social practices that take place in the informants' subconscious, that the informants may not have realised or actively put into words (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). I have chosen to use semi structured interviews to gather the empirical data, because of the method's natural openness to unforeseen perspectives that can occur, while it still keep the conversation on the relevant topic (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). During the process of the interview, the informant has ample opportunity for, and is encouraged to, adding their own input and ideas to the conversation. This allows for topics, themes and justifications pertaining to the topic to emerge and be uncovered, even though I might not have anticipated them initially. This way of interviewing creates a dynamic between the informant and me as researcher, and it is within this dynamic that knowledge relevant to answering my questions is generated (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

Ahead of the interviews, I created an interview guide to help me conduct the interviews and keep a red thread throughout them (see appendix 2), loosely following Smith and Sparks

(2016) rhythm suggestions for interviews. The interview guide is divided in four parts: warm-up/background questions, personal questions, community questions, and finally example-based questions. The personal questions pertain to the informants' own perception of risk and how they mitigate this perception with regard to having kids. The community questions address a) how risk is perceived within the community, b) whether and eventually how, the informants have felt that their perception of the community have changed after they had become parents, c) whether - and eventually how, the community's perception of the informants have changed after they had become parents. Under the example-based questions section, I asked the informants to react to three video clips I showed them: what they thought about the clips, and how did the clips make them feel.

The first clip is Alison Hargreaves talking about risk mountain climbing and having kids.

When we go climbing, we obviously minimise the risks, and if we thought it was that risky, we wouldn't go climbing. I mean anybody who went of thinking, you know, that there was a very high chance they wouldn't come back, I think is a very unfair thing to do, especially with a young family (BBC, 2021).

The second clip is of Zahan Billimoria talking about his relationship to risk mitigation and the trap experience can lead you to.

In my mind I was very, very thoughtful about what I was doing. I was studious and engaged. And I think I came to a point where I started feeling like if you are studious and engaged enough, you'll be fine. (Patagonia, 2020)

The third clip shows Zahan two days after being taken in an avalanche looking back on what went wrong.

As a veteran, you feel like I've really narrowed that gap and I can perceive what nature is telling me, I can read the signs around me. you know, the rime. The wind, the direction, the texture of the snow, all these... environmental factors that are just like speaking to you and they allow you to, like, close that gap and... have this better sense of like what's actually going on below the surface here.

But you never eliminate that gap. And, um, when you have an accident, it reveals that gap. But looking back on yesterday or day before yesterday, I'm like... I'm left feeling like, oh that was a large gap. (Patagonia, 2020)

As the last thing in each interview, I asked the informants directly how they to themselves justify having the job they have.

3.2 Sample and Data gathering method

The informants for this project where chosen using strategic selection, by creating a set of criteria to ensure that the people chosen would be relevant for the topic and contribute to

increased validity by creating a standard for who to interview (Dalland, 2012; Grønmo, 2016). The criteria I used were that the interviewees had to A: be parents, B: have worked in the mountains³ while being a parent, C: be from or have worked/lived a long time in a Nordic country. These criteria lead me to make use of the websites for the Mountain guide associations in Norway⁴ and Sweden⁵ respectively. Both websites give a list of fully qualified guides and their contact information. I also made use of both private and university contacts to get in touch with relevant people. In addition a variant of the snowball method was used as I in my emails, apart from asking if the individual would be interested in participating, I also asked if they knew other people who might be relevant and interested in participating (Grønmo, 2016). This resulted in two additional potential informants, of whom one agreed to participate.

To respect confidentiality, the informants were anonymised and assigned a cover name. This ensures anonymity without making the results and analysis hard to understand.

My sample finally consisted of two women and three men. In the section below, I present the informants and give background information pertaining to nationality, gender, age, number and age of kids, and other information essential to understand the informant's answers.

Esther: Female in her mid-forties, has two young kids. She recently lost her partner in a mountain accident.

Charlie: Male in his early fifties, has three kids in their teens.

Liv: Female in her late thirties, has 1 very young child, and is pregnant with second child now. She has a background in the army.

³ The informants that I ended up with all happen to be certified through IFMGA (*About IFMGA*, 2018) <https://ifmga.info/%3Cnolink%3E/about-ifmga>

⁴ (*Godkjente Tindevegledere - Nortind*, n.d.)

⁵ (*Medlemmar - Fullvärdiga Guider*, n.d.)

Henrik: Male in his mid-forties, has, *almost*, two young kids⁶, runs his own guide company in Norway.

Jakob: Norwegian Male 35 years old, has two very young kids. Has now gone from full time guide to working in academia.

3.3 Interviews

All interviews were conducted via video-call, using the application Zoom as provided and recommended by the University of South-Eastern Norway. This has several advantages. The informants are spread all over Norway, travel to all of them was not a possibility. Performing all the interviews through zoom standardised the process, decrease the carbon footprint of the project and ease the recording of the interview.

Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) mention how the first few minutes of an interview are crucial for the quality of the interview. It was important that the informants get a good first impression of me as a person and researcher. I attempted to achieve this through smiling, introducing myself pleasantly, thanking them for agreeing to participate, as well as explaining that everything would be kept anonymous and that the informants could, if wanted, retract the information they chose to share. I thereafter explain my reason for wanting to conduct this research. This was both a way of introducing myself as well as the project and ensuring that the informants were aware that my questions were based on genuine curiosity and personal interest, and not meant to be accusing or uncomfortable, as indeed questions pertaining to this topic could potentially be perceived as such. The feeling of professionalism and comfort I attempted to create was further supported by me actively listening, not interrupting, giving the informants thinking time, showing interest, as well as smiling and staying positive and non-judgemental even though I might not agree with everything the informants said (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

In spite of the potential asymmetric power balance that can occur when interviewing (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009), I found that the interviews were overall pleasant and interesting as well as enjoyable for both parties. I perceived the interviews as equal and did not encounter any

⁶ Partner was due to give birth a couple days after the interview was held

noticeable instances of inequality in the power dynamic of the conversations. The informants were easy and pleasant to talk to, and, from my perspective, they seemed to give me honest and thoughtful answers and reactions to my questions and examples.

3.4 Analysis and interpretation

I have chosen to make use of Emergent themes to analyse and understand the data gathered through the interviews. The Emergent themes method is a commonly used inductive approach in qualitative social science research. However, mine is a more abductive approach as I do not believe we are able to forget/ignore all previous knowledge we have within a certain field of study.

The themes are found through the process of coding, the information that is drawn from the lifeworld's of the informants (Given, 2008). The process of coding constitutes in transcribing the interviews from speech into writing. It requires the researcher to methodically go through each interview and line by line convert it to a form that is usable in text. The coding process encompasses making notes about the informant's behaviour during the interview. During the transcription I therefore noted in the margin the corresponding reaction of the informant, whether he/she was laughing, hesitating, frowning, or reacting in other ways. The next step was to listen to the interviews again to become thoroughly familiar with them, I did this while walking to and from the university every day. Listening multiple times to the recording of the interviews helped me to think about and analyse the information in order to identify the themes that were arising from the data. During this process, I was looking for patterns, recurrences of argumentation, irregularities, and regularities (Given, 2008).

Emergent themes are one aspect of the grounded theory. Grounded theory is a system of flexible guidelines created to help researchers conduct inductive qualitative research aimed at theory construction (Given, 2008). This is useful for me because I am neither a parent/father nor an IMFGA certified guide. I therefore have an etic perspective with regard to those two main factors, and thus an abductive method is the most useful. However, I am not a complete outsider, I have worked as a guide, and I frequent similar communities as my informants. This, as pointed out by Langseth & Salvesen (2018), can be an asset to know the lingo of the culture being studied, because actors within said culture have been socialised to talk for example about risk in a certain way. Being aware of this makes it possible for me to better understand where my informants come from and why they answer as they do.

3.5 Methodological challenges and limitations

3.5.1 Rosenthal effect

The Rosenthal effect is the unconscious influence the interviewer has on the informant during the interview. This may affect the actual interview/study outcome and negatively influence the validity of the results. Therefore, it is important for the interviewer to keep a professional distance to the field of study and to maintain as much objectivity as possible (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

3.5.2 Finding informants

Finding informants for this project proved to be difficult for a couple of reasons. Firstly, to standardise the sample of informants, I chose to only interview people who are internationally certified guides through IFMGA. This narrows the pool of people that are available in the Nordic countries. Secondly, it is a male dominated field and furthermore the ratio of certified female guides who have kids is quite low. Thirdly, the time of the year during which this thesis was written is late winter/spring peak season for a lot of guides and they therefore did not have much spare time for interviews.

Combined, these factors meant that I was not able to obtain the initially planned six interviews, with the gender parity of three males and three females. Securing three interviews with males proved to be easier than with females, and I ended conducting interviews with only two females.

3.5.3 Age of informant's kids

The average age of the informant's combined 8 kids is quite low (7.5 years old), meaning that communication about risk to them has been minimal or non-existent in three of five cases. Only one informant has kids in their teens, i.e., of an age when it could be expected that the kids' understanding of risk associated with their parents' job has reached such a level that it sparks a conversation about it. The opportunity for a parents-kids discussion about risk has therefore been minimal or non-existent.

3.5.4 Translating interviews

Another challenge, and likely, limitation of this thesis is that four interviews were conducted in either Danish (my mother tongue) or Norwegian, often a mix of both, and one interview in a mix of Swedish and Norwegian. The language used is best described as Scandinavian. This meant that after transcribing the interviews, the quotes that were to be used had also to be translated into English to be useful in the context of a thesis written in English. Translating encompasses the risk that the meaning of a sentence or word be misinterpreted by the translator, me in this context. I would like to state that I have done my utmost to avoid this by asking native speakers for advice when translating certain words, phrases, and sentences I was uncertain about. One possibility would have been to consult the informants themselves to hear whether they considered my translations as faithful. Because of time restraints, both my, and I am assuming, their time, I have chosen not to bother the informants with this.

3.6 Ethics

To ensure that all informants felt comfortable and safe while sharing personal information, I made clear before asking for their agreement that participation was completely voluntary and that they could always retract their information from the study. I also made clear that their information would be anonymised by giving them a pseudonym in the study. I also made clear to them that, nonetheless, even in an anonymised form, sharing personal information, including stories of previous achievements and feats, involves the theoretical risk that someone could recognise them based on their answers. To ensure that this was well understood, an interview contract/information letter was sent to all participants before the interview (see appendix 1). The letter also included who to contact in case they wished to retract information or withdraw from the project.

Another step taken to make informant felt comfortable talking about a subject that can be quite personal and revealing, was to explain my background and reasons for doing this project, pointing out that even though the questions could potentially be interpreted as prying or accusing, they were not meant to be. I clearly explained that my questions and interest in the subject came from a personal interest in learning more about the topic.

Conducting interviews for research purposes in Norway requires working within the frames of the Norwegian personal data law (personopplysningsloven). Therefore, this project was sent to, evaluated, and approved by NSD (see appendix 3).

All data gathered will be processed anonymously and deleted after the end of the project.

3.7 Sources of error

It is important to reflect on the methodological choices that I have made that could potentially influence the outcome of the thesis, and on whether an answer to the research question is provided. Therefore, the purpose of this chapter is to outline said choices and which impact they have had on the final project. In this regard, two concepts are important, reliability and validity. Both are linked to the quality of the research project and indicate how well the method investigates what it is supposed to, reliability refers to consistency and validity to accuracy

Reliability refers to the verifiability or of the collection and processing of data, and whether or not other researcher would be able to get a similar result if they chose to conduct a similar project using the same methodology (Grønmo, 2016). The reliability will then be high if the data gathering gives results that can be replicated or correlate with the results of earlier studies. My choice of a qualitative method can give complications because my empiric data and my communication with my informants is relationally connected to my position relative to the field of study. By my position I mean that I am neither a parent nor an IFMGA certified guide, still I am a guide with other qualifications, and I frequent the same or similar communities as many internationally certified guides.

A researcher who is in a different position relative to the field, for example if he/she has never frequented climbing, steep-skiing, or guide communities, they will not have the same understanding of the field of research. Conversely, if researchers are parents or IFMGA certified guide themselves, it is very likely that the informants will talk to them differently, and the individual researcher's interpretation and understanding of the responses may be different. To increase the reliability, I have throughout the whole data collection and interpretation, attempted to remain as objective and neutral as possible.

Validity represents the data material's legitimacy in relation to the research question to be answered (Grønmo, 2016). The higher the researchers intended research correlates with the data collection, the higher will the degree of validity will be. To ensure a high degree of validity in this project, I have at every step looked back at the research questions and made sure there was a read thread throughout the project. This attitude has been kept all the way since the beginning of the project, when the main theme and research purpose were being formulated, and the research design created.

Lastly, I wish to point out that I have no prior experience in using interviews as a research method. I have evolved and progressed during the interview process and always asked for feedback from the informants in order to ensure that I improved my interviewing skills as fast as possible.

4 Findings and discussion

In this chapter, I will present the themes that emerged from my interviews and the related to each category. I will discuss my findings in relation to my theory and my research questions. Eleven themes arose, they will be presented in the following order: Social norms and expectations, Biological arguments, Identity, Education, experience and planning, Value of a close call, Low risk job, Value of Risk, Cred, Change in risk perception/willingness after having kids, Partners, Young vs. older kids. I will summarise and give a partial conclusion after each theme.

4.1 Gender norms and expectations

In our society there are certain social norms, pertaining to the relative roles of males and females in regard to children. In recent years these roles have evolved, the traditional gender roles are changing and the line between which areas of a child upbringing fall to each gender are being blurred. Even considering these changes the field of mountain guiding is still dominated by males. This is something the informants were aware of but at the same time understood why it is like it is. As Henrik puts it:

I have observed this yes, I believe that on an intellectual level it is probably wrong, but I also think, if I can use that word, natural. It is natural because the child is closer to its mother and the mother is more important than the father in the first few years. So, it is a bit discriminating but also understandable.

This is echoed by Liv who elaborates, highlighting that it is more common for men to go back to their previous jobs as mountain guides after having a child, because it fits within the traditional social norms of the society.

There are many men who have children, but for them it is a bit different I think, and that's because it is a bit more traditional for the man. The wife is at home, right? And the man is out. I think it is easier for the men to continue with traveling and working as ordinary, even though they probably think a bit more about the risk.

She goes on providing the example that, if her and her partner had still been working in the army and he had gone off on a mission, nobody would have thought twice about it. But if she did, there would likely be raised eyebrows and comments. An example of this is also presented by Charlie:

How many male climbers, alpinists have not gone on an expedition with a pregnant wife at home? I have done it myself. The thing is, it's a bit different, you don't directly endanger that new life. There are very few women who engage in that type of climbing (red. High altitude

climbing), and even fewer who do it when they have kids. I can't think of many others than Alison Hargreaves that have pushed at that level with kids at home.

This further highlights how male dominated the field is, and how much more fathers can get away with, compared to their female counterparts. This is due to the doxa of the field being in favour of fathers. A change to the doxa would require more mothers to succeed at the top levels of mountaineering. I would argue that there needs to be a more general change in our society for the doxa to change as well. When a new generation will be raised with a more egalitarian belief system with regard to gender roles, as part of their habitus through primary socialisation, then the process will speed up significantly as the old elite will gradually be replaced by a more progressive one. This, however, can be hard for women to do in this very masculine culture that dominates the field. Esther weighs in on this saying:

I have previously worked in very masculine groups because we are few women in this business. And through my experiences in these environments, I realise that you can only talk very little about the risk, you could never reveal that you actually were a bit unsure of what choices and decisions to make in those situations, because you would then in a way show your own professional uncertainty about these things.

Another aspect of the male favoured doxa in the field, not often brought to life, is that because the mother is regarded as more important for a child's upbringing, the value of the father in regard to the child is diminished. Jakob puts this in words *"In light of traditional gender roles, we always think that if a parent is going to die, then it is best if it is the father.* This is also brought up by Liv who says, *"It's a bit weird, but had it been a man then you wouldn't have, I mean you would have thought it's sad, but yeah... but when it's a woman it hits us deeper somehow."* I find this to be quite problematic as the unconscious idea that the father is not as important as the mother can lead to further distancing in the gender roles. On the one hand, it makes it easier for fathers to justify taking risk in their jobs, and on the other hand it further restrains the mother's position in the field.

The social norms that affect this field originate from our society in general and several informants pointed out that the media and the wider public tend to scrutinise the actors of the field based on their own habitus and belief systems.

It's a dilemma that I have been greedy in life by choosing both. I have wanted both a family and a life with risk and extreme sports in it [...] When you have decided to start a family, maybe you should cut out risk-activities, maybe that would be the right thing, the more sensible thing to do, and many do, the majority do [...] and I haven't done that, I do things that people think are extreme, but for me it's all relative as I have lowered risk level after I had kids. But from the outside, people maybe don't see that because I engage in activities than from most people's perspective are extreme to begin with. – Charlie

Charlie's quote reveals that what is considered risky, or extreme is relative to the eyes of the beholder. This is also true when speaking of gender roles, and Liv points to the media's role in this harsher scrutiny of women.

I think it's like that in media as well. Typically, if a man in his fifties or two men in their forties get lost in the mountains and die or are taken by an avalanche, they are often described as having hiking experience and being at home in the mountains. While if it is two women in their forties, they are rarely described in such a way. I think it's because we tend to give higher credibility and trust in a man's outdoor skills.

Esther also talks about incidents, when the more casual actors in the field i.e., not the guides but the clients, tend to have a hard time comprehending and accepting that a guide also can be a mother.

Of course, it came up 'yes my husband is at home on paternity leave with my youngest child' 'Ohh how old is she?' She was about nine months old at the time, and they were just like 'What!? And you are here guiding, and you have a nine-month-old at home'. Until then they had only seen me as a professional guide who was in control in the mountains and everything. And then suddenly it comes up that I have a toddler at home. So, for the guests it became very confusing to comprehend and relate to, that I was actually a young mother and at the same time their guide who took them out and handled risk.

4.1.1 Theme summary – Social norms.

The main findings in this section are that traditional gender roles are present and still strong in the field of mountain guiding, with both men and women being aware of this. The traditional gender roles of our society make it more likely and easier for men to go back to their job after having a child. And it will be harder for women to succeed in this field as long as the doxa heavily favours the masculine.

We also see that these traditional gender norms are partially based on the fact that mothers are traditionally seen as, biologically speaking, more important in the first few years.

However, this notion can lead to fathers being devalued compared to mothers, leading to an unintentional reverse discrimination, that in turn can lead to further distancing between the gender roles.

Lastly it is pointed out how the notion of risk and extreme activities are subjective and how outsiders and public media looking into the field have a tendency to judge based on their outside value systems pertaining to their own fields as well as enforcing traditional gender roles in regard to risk.

4.2 Biological arguments

This section deals with the theme of biological factors and the related arguments presented by the informants. Several biologically anchored points and arguments were made in relation to the biological differences existing between women and men, especially that related to giving birth. Further, the aging was presented as an influential factor in regard to risk taking, both in terms of the biological and physiological changes associated with aging, and of the natural change in priorities and responsibilities that come with age. Lastly a few points regarding addiction will be presented along with thoughts on the influence of its genetic components.

Liv in tone with the previous section talks of how the baby for the first while is more dependent on the mother *“I think it’s a bit different with women, at least early on with small kids, because they are often more dependant of you, the mother in a way”*. She goes on to talk about the challenges and limitations a female guide experiences when pregnant, and whether or not they should guide while pregnant, *“you are not at a hundred percent, you have to take from your reserves, because it takes quite a bit of energy to create a child. You become much more tired and have less to give from. My thought has been that if something were to happen, could I then give a hundred percent in that situation?”*.

The male body is not capable of bearing a child, but it is nonetheless subject to changes through the process of aging. The main factor presented by the male informants is the age-related decrease in testosterone.

One thing is that you have children and a family but you also age [...] less activity, exercise, and practice along with a declining testosterone level. Age, you feel that you are just not able to do the same things, climbing physically, technical at the same level with the same surplus and margin. - Charlie

Charlie here points to the fact that aging happens parallel to having kids and starting a family. Therefore, it can be hard to dissociate between the changes in risk willingness and perception due to having kids, and those due to the aging process.

Henrik echoes this statement, *“and then I have become older, I think of the testosterone and hormones in the body”*. Jakob talks about the effects of the increased testosterone level associated with youth and which effect this can have on your safety,

Maybe it’s safer to go on a trip with a mountain guide who has kids than one who is young and childless and early in their career, it could be [...] there is a higher risk of dying in a car crash if you are a young male than when you get older, I don’t doubt that the same mechanics are active here.

Henrik elaborates on that, “when you are younger, your risk perception is different, you register the risk, you know the concept, but it’s abstract to you, you don’t set a limit”. He illustrates his point with an example from his own past,

“Now I’m 45, and I remember when I was like twenty-twenty five, I thought I won’t live past thirty, and you know you just said that, but you didn’t do anything about it, you just pushed on with your projects.”.

The two last statements clearly illustrate the change in risk perception that occurs because of aging. Charlie brings up the point that as you age, the importance of recognition in the form of high hanging prices in mountaineering become less important because of the increased value of coming home to the family.

I won’t go to the Himalayas and try a mountain that twenty other top alpinists have turned around on in the last ten years because of the avalanches or other dangers, because it’s kind of a high hanging price. I could have done that twenty years ago, but I won’t do it now [...] risk-acceptance is often connected to age, so there is no doubt that those who are in their twenties have a more risk willingness than older climbers, no doubt. You find small subcultures, small communities of young climbers who are willing to take much greater risk.

This could be seen as a change in the informant’s habitus due to the new factors of family and age entering the picture. This causes a change in the need to gain symbolic capital through achievements through high-risk endeavours. This is further supported by Charlie,

What you feel most is that you just want to have something else in your life that is very important. Before I had kids and girlfriend, it was in a way just me, then I could do whatever I wanted, there was no real consequence for anyone else [...] but also that there is something I really want to participate in that doesn’t take place on a rockface but at home. – Charlie

The quote above also alludes to another reason actors experience a change in risk willingness and perception as they age. Indeed, in tandem with creating a family, their priorities and responsibilities change. You want to get home to your family as Henrik puts it, “of course kids as well, a kind of responsibility to be home, not responsibility but a desire to be home”, but also because there is a change in responsibilities and the general logistics of having a family. This is touched upon by Jakob “Then after a while when you have worked for several years, you realise you want a more sustainable workday, it changes so that you maybe try to work eight hours a day, so you can then go home or do something else”. Jakob then talks about the change in everyday logistic when you have a family,

It’s more about the practicality in relation to the job of mountain guiding as a parent, you get a different life situation, it becomes harder for you to travel on the job. When you think of a mountain guide parent, you think about the challenge of traveling for a longer time, you have to leave your family [...] before you have kids you think it’s no problem to work fulltime in the

mountains, then you kind of meet the reality of dropping kids of at kindergarden and that you want to be home to see your kids.

The last aspect of changing priorities mentioned by the informants resides in the changes in what is attracts them to being in the mountains, the risk and the danger become less alluring to them as they age. Liv expresses that just being in the mountains and the free air has gained more appeal to her, “*a completely intermediate day without any particular exposure, I think that’s just fine, whereas before I wanted to be more, to push more and feel it.*” Henrik mentioned that other aspect of climbing had become more important to him,

I am more concerned with doing things with style and flow. For example, if you have a 300m wall and there is a dangerous grade seven, and a grade six route that is safer, then before I would always want to climb the dangerous grade seven, but now I get more satisfaction in climbing the safer grade six and then do it with flow so it’s fast and effective with a good margin and so on.

Henrik has evolved in what he gives cred to. He has gone from giving himself cred for doing something because it’s dangerous to giving cred because he does something well. This I would again argue could signify a change in his habitus as he aged and after he had kids. Henrik then mention genetics as another biological factor he believes influences risk willingness. He talks about how the genetic of certain actors causes them not to have a decrease in risk willingness as they become older. We talked about Alex Honnold and Tommy Caldwell as examples of this.

I think it goes hand in hand with what I believe to be genetics [...] certain people don’t have this ability, they become older and older, but they never slowdown in their level of risk they take, they are pumping full of hormones and motivation is inexhaustible.

While talking about the case of Alisson Hargreaves, Henrik again brought up the fact that we don’t choose our genetics and must work with what we got.

It’s a bit like, I think she was unlucky to get a certain genetic composition that makes her feel like she needs this, and you can’t really blame her for that either, she did as well as she could, but it’s unlucky that she had that motivation to do it.

This brings us in to the realm of Zuckerman’s research on high sensation seekers (1979). Henrik mentions that Hargreaves’ genetics cause her to be missing something. I interpret this as being in accordance with Zuckerman’s theory and how he relates addiction to a genetic component. Charlie also brings up addiction as a contributing factor to what he does even when he has kids (Kelland, 2019),

They are unlucky to have ended up with a dad that has a problem and that is that I, I’m not an alcoholic and I don’t hit anyone, but I climb in the mountains, I take risk [...] it’s a disease, and they would rather have me climbing, they don’t want an unhappy dad.

More informants brought up the need they have to fulfil the urge to go on adventures and engage in the activities they love. They argued that if they were to sit still for too long and not engage in these activities, they would become unhappy and as a result not be the best parents they can be. *“I think the risk of having a sitting desk-job in an office, for me would be a sort of mental destruction, rather this. Yeah, I become a better mother by being outside.”* – Liv. This sentiment is also brought up by Jakob,

For me personally, I know I become a better, I make a better appearance at home if I can satisfy my need for thrill and obtain a feeling of mastery. If I can satisfy this need, I won't be frustrated and feel that I burn in with this energy. The logic one operates with is that it's hard to plan life anyway, it's sad if you take all the correct responsible choices and then you get terminal cancer and die the next week. Then it becomes meaningless to have restrained your needs and dropped your projects.

4.2.1 Theme summary – Biological arguments

In this section, I have touched upon several different biological factors that affect the informants, and how they use them as arguments to explain what they do. First, the female informants pointed to the loss of energy they experience while pregnant and the recuperation period after giving birth. The males mentioned how they have felt and experienced the decrease of testosterone that comes with aging. It was difficult to dissociate the impact of aging and having kids in regard to lowered risk willingness. Moreover, it was pointed out that the logistics of having a family with kids, and a change in motivational factors, such as an increased focus on flow, effectiveness, and aesthetics, also play a role in how the informants choose to spend their time, and how they manage their risk. Lastly Zuckerman's theory of high sensation seekers came in to play as a belief that there is a genetic component to high motivation and risk willingness, with a link to a form of addiction or disease, the cure being to experience high sensations through what some consider to be high-risk activities. The informants argued that they need to fulfil this urge or addiction in order to be happy and thus be better parents and spouses.

4.3 Identity

The present section explores the theme of identity, and how it relates to a continued risk willingness after becoming a parent. One aspect already presented in the previous section is the personality traits as high sensation seeker. The fact that the activities of mountaineering, steep-skiing and rock climbing have taken such a stronghold on the actors lives, that they have chosen to make it their livelihood, changing it from a recreational activity to being their job, indicates that they must have undergone an identification process making their chosen activities a major part of their personality and identity (Langseth, 2012b).

I can't put away that part of my identity, I can't stop doing it (red. Mountain guiding) because it's so much fun and so enjoyable, and it's part of the identity, networks, and communities. – Esther

Esther's quote nicely shows that the job of mountain and ski guiding is such a big part of her life that she cannot simply let it go. She offers an example of a period where she was not able to engage in it and consequently suffered a loss of identity.

There are some periods of life with kids where it can be hard to go into the mountains as much as before [...] we lived close to Jotunheimen for six years, and then decided to move to southern Norway where there are not that many mountains. I had our second child, and we lived there for two and a half years, it was not nice, I lost my identity.

Henrik also voices a belief that he would not be able to just let go of that part of his identity. He finds that being happy and fulfilled is worth the risk cost.

It's a part of my personality, and if I were to, first of all after having paid quite a lot of money for this education and certification, if I were to just cut it out, I would have done a bad affair, bad business [...] and I think I would be a very unhappy person if I were not outside [...] many of those who are professional skiers that ski steep slopes every day, they have less competences and it goes fine, then I think that the risk of it going badly for me is so small that it is justified in order to be a happy person, on a relatively small risk.

Having paid money and spend time taking an education, and then finding it counterproductive to not use it, is a sentiment, I believe, resonates with most people. In almost all cases the informants had begun their career path before meeting their significant other or met them while studying. This means that this path was part of their identity before the thought of a family germinated. Letting go of it is then, quite understandably, a lot harder. Esther explains this in relation to her unique case,

After my partner died, people probably thought 'okey, then she will put away the skis'. The fact is that I then didn't put them away, because I have been in this role and profession for much longer than I have known him. It's such a big part of my identity. And that I haven't put away the skis, I think, has surprised people, exactly because I'm a single mother with two kids.

Esther went on explaining that she now has much stricter rules for what she is willing to do. Her risk willingness has become much lower after losing her partner, although she regards her risk willingness as generally quite low, with much more emphasis on aesthetics rather than risk.

Later in the interview we got to the case of Alison Hargreaves and got on to the subject of how choosing to operate at the highest echelons of high-altitude mountaineering must imply a certain focus on oneself in order to succeed.

I think that when you operate at that level, where you are so skilled that you actually leave for K2, then it also has something to do with your personality. In order to become that skilled you must have had a very, maybe, egoistic lifestyle, where you concentrate a lot about yourself and your own competences, your focus is very attuned to your own needs. Whereas people who maybe choose another lifestyle do it because they are more sensitive for what others feel, mean, and think.

The point Esther made here is familiar to the mountaineering world, that high altitude mountaineering is a selfish endeavour is well recognised. When you enter the death zone above 8000m you have to realise and accept that you are primarily on your own, rescues are extremely difficult due to the lack of oxygen, and they are notoriously expensive. The skills and expertise of the sherpas has led many western climbers into a false sense of safety when climbing. However, high altitude mountaineering can also be part of a self-realization as an attempt to challenge yourself and achieve goals for yourself.

Another aspect of identity that was brought up by Esther was the effect the guide education has had on her identity in a communal sense.

Even if I am physically working alone, I am never working alone, I have my whole background with me, that supports me, I believe it has a lot to say for who I am both as a guide, as a human being and for how I work. So, I definitely believe that my education has a large impact.

4.3.1 Theme summary – Identity

The primary findings here are that actors who have taken that extra step and made their passion into their career, have engrained their activity and job into their identity in such a strong way that it is practically impossible for them to separate from it without severe risk of becoming unhappy and losing themselves. This internalisation of externally based values happens partially due to socialisation into the field of mountaineering/mountain guiding.

4.4 Education, experience, and planning.

Looking at, talking about and analysing the case of Zahan Bilimoria in the clip from Solving for Z (Patagonia, 2020), brought about discussions on the value of education and planning and which role experience plays in safety and risk awareness and handling. Liv summarised the value she puts on education quite simply, *“I think, the more you know, the more you are aware of what you don’t know, in a way. So, it brings a sort of humility to the profession”*. Henrik made the point that people who don’t have the international guide education can never understand just how much you learn,

One thing I will say about the guide education, at least the one I did, is that you learn so much more than what people who haven't done it can ever comprehend. The majority think, they see us maybe while we are guiding an easy summit on skis, and they think ‘yeah well then I can also be a guide’. But you learn so insanely much, when you should do what and when to be in the right place at the right time for example.

The informants all agreed that planning properly and the value of planning has been a core teaching they got from their education.

It’s completely at the core. I use unbelievable amounts of time on planning, and the times I haven’t, or when you suddenly change plans without having a good plan B, the risk goes up. it affects the safety, it results in stupid unnecessary consequences, planning is essential [...] through the planning process you get a visualization of the project, and you take the consequences into account, you have to use a lot of time planning. There was a British general or prime minister or something that said, ‘Plans are nothing, planning is everything’”.

They talked about how the ability to plan properly is not something you get just from experience. There is a value system and acknowledge base that only comes with education.

You are tested all the time; you get observed and challenged all the time ‘what are you doing?’ ‘Why are you doing it?’ there is a professional community that shapes you both as a person and guide. Through the community you get certain habits, you get some opinions, you get some ways to work that are very systemised and very influenced by safety doctrines and professionalism. And I don’t believe that those who just have an experience background have in the same way, because they don’t have access to that systemised knowledge and training. – Esther

4.4.1 Residual risk and seeing the gap

A major point that was brought up, both spontaneously and sparked by the clips of Zahan, is the fact that there is always a residual risk, a gap as Zahan puts it. A gap that can never be removed no matter how much you plan and how much education and experience you have, it’s always there.

Don’t think that by planning and being studious you have solved everything, no, absolutely not. Be very, I am very humble and know that even when I have done everything I can, there I still a

residual risk there, maybe it will get me one day, probably, I'm aware of that, but I do everything I can to avoid it. – Charlie

Charlie then talked about the tendency of negating risk in guides who have not experienced close calls, and don't have the knowledge they impart, he recognises this phenomenon based on his own observations and experiences through his long career as a guide,

The things he says, I have been occupied with for many years. And I am aware of it because I have seen people and been close to people who said a bit like he does 'read the signs' and like 'narrow the gap' they feel they have control of the environment. And that has not gone well I can tell you [...] psychologically we have tendency to just see the green light and not the red ones [...] nature is too complex, and we humans are too complex. As I said earlier, I'm very humble in regard to this. I do everything I can to make it as safe as possible. But there will always be a gap as he says, a residual risk that you cannot control [...] it's very, very important to all this to not become as cocky as he was.

Esther mentions some the many pitfalls and traps an actor can fall into, when they get too comfortable from their good experiences.

There are many pitfalls, you go out and think, you have been her ten thousand time before and no avalanches happened you don't need to plan very much. Then you are there on the wrong day. I think he makes a good point saying planning is important, but as he says, he had grown so accustomed to everything going well that he didn't consider that it could actually go wrong. But damn it's difficult with that residual risk, is it big is it small, can you minimise it?

This tendency to feel safer and be more risk willing because you are familiar with the area and terrain has been extensively researched by Ian McCammon, a now retired, researcher, guide, and scientist, that primarily worked in avalanche forecasting and disaster prevention. He published the paper *Heuristic Traps in Recreational Avalanche Accidents: Evidence and Implications* (2004). One of the heuristic traps he focuses on is exactly the one Esther describes. He calls it familiarity: In this context familiarity means that the actor tends to make the same choices as in previous experiences in the terrain, because they worked the last time, instead of making new evaluations and new decisions based on those. The research showed that actors, with a higher level of avalanche training or education, have a higher tendency to take more risk in familiar terrain (McCammon, 2004). The tendency, pointed out earlier by Charlie, that actors have to think that they can narrow the gap and control the environment has also been observed by Jakob. He mentioned the massive amount of information that has been made available in recent years, and the effects it can have on an actor's confidence and feeling of safety.

Yes, I think especially in this snow science that has become so popular in the last couple of years, with the avalanche warnings and Varsom⁷. I work as an observer for NVE⁸ myself. And have noticed that in that community you think you can predict things, because you understand the mechanics of it. But the fact is that it's a game of chances, a snow profile is just a hole in the snow.

Esther echoes the sentiment that there is too much reliance on snow profiles and the partial, , at its best, information they provide,

I mean you can't, you can make so many good assessments, but there is a gap as I talked about. There is a residual risk, and it's much bigger when you are in steeper terrain compared to more moderate terrain. And I won't at all do those calculations, and those margins you can't play with, you can't as a human, you can't take into considerations all the layers in the snow the entire way up. You can get a feeling from digging and doing it several times. But you can never be 100% sure.

Liv expresses it in a simple and concise manner, “you focus so much on all the things you are doing to make it as safe as you can, then you can forget that there is a residual risk”. Liv then draws a parallel between Zahan and Alison Hargreaves. She says “Like her (Alison Hargreaves) that had done so much right. So many good experiences in the bank, so much mastery can cause you to go a bit blind. You have been in so many tricky situations and made it out right?”

Henrik points out that because Zahan has gone so long and been so successful without ever having a close call, the fall and the shock he experiences are so much bigger,

You can say it's a trap, when you start with steep-skiing, ski-touring, and you take an avalanche course, you become confident, then something happens, and you fall a bit down and so on. This goes for mountain climbing as well and guides who have their exam, their certification. But the longer it takes before you get caught in something the bigger the fall and the greater the shock.

4.4.2 Theme summary – Education, experience and planning

In this section the value given to education by the informants, and the advantages it gives them over people who have a background relying purely on experience, have been fleshed out. This is primarily in the form of systematised training, and socialisation into a professional community focused on strict safety doctrines. And the ability to studiously and meticulously engage in vast amounts of planning prior to a trip, and how this planning makes you visualise scenarios and potential outcomes and consequences. However, they also acknowledged that there is always a residual risk, a gap as Zahan Bilimoria puts it. This gap is always there, it is non- negotiable and impossible to circumvent. I would argue that this acknowledgement of their own limitations is a sign that their education does indeed, as Charlie puts it, make them

⁷ Varsom is the Norwegian avalanche warning and forecast service varsom.no/

⁸ NVE is the Norwegian waterway- and Energy directorate. They are responsible for Varsom. nve.no/

much humbler when it comes to acknowledging and identifying the traps and pitfalls, they can fall into. I would argue that their education and the inherent socialisation that comes with it has a profound effect on their habitus, as the internal values of the field and the community they enter are internalised and made their own.

4.5 Value of a close call

In this section, I present the findings that pertain to the learning the value a close call holds for the person experiencing one. These findings have primarily emerged from discussing the case of Zahan Bilimoria and his avalanche survival in March 2020 (Patagonia, 2020).

Close calls or near-death experiences and the knowledge they impart through first-hand experience was described by Charlie, *“If you get one, that’s perfect. It’s the best that can happen. There is nothing you learn more from than a close call”*. He explains further why close calls are so important for actors to learn and gain valuable feedback from, improve their knowledge, and increase their chance of survival.

Say you are skiing down a mountainside, avalanche doesn’t trigger, it was super. You get feedback that says you did well today, you made a good evaluation. But it could be that if you had made a turn just two meters further left, the whole side of the mountain would have come lose, right? [...] it’s easy to find yourself in a thought pattern that you are an expert and master this. You ‘can read the signs’ as he [Zahan] says right? So, I think it is very healthy, if you survive you will gain an incredible amount of knowledge and you become humbler.

Charlie continues saying that of course there is also luck involved.

Jakob and Henrik further touched upon that learning from close calls and learning in general is a curve linked to experience.

I think that the vast majority of people who have a professional, or semi-professional, career in the mountains, have a learning curve. In the beginning we test where the limits are, and from that you gain some experiences in the form of close calls that enables you to understand the inherent danger and then your risk willingness level goes down or your conservativity goes up, you become more prudent. I think most of us experience this. You just have to hope this curve goes well. [...] it’s the close calls you remember best. If you burn yourself a little bit sometimes, it impacts how you work in the coming years. – Jakob

Henrik expands on the idea of the curve, saying that it is not good to get the close call to late in your career like in Zahan’s case. *“We can never have all the knowledge, all the information. And the longer you are pushing, the longer it takes before you get it, the fatter the fall will be [...] I have had relatively safe incidents so I never became too cocky as you would if you never have one.”* Close calls however should be reoccurring, not in the sense that you should be taken by an avalanche every few years but in the sense that you need to be reminded of the

danger and consequences from time to time in order to not believe you have surpassed your previous level and are therefore not in danger. Jakob, however, thinks this is a rather natural process, “learning by burning, if you work for many years and nothing happens, you start to test the limits again and then something happens again and so on”. Henrik echoes this, “I have had many small ones, that way I think it’s easier to stay humble”. Humility in receiving new knowledge and learning is also something Charlie brings up.

I am very humble in regard to always picking up on the knowledge that is presented to me all the time. It’s not like I had a close call twenty years ago and then I can live on on that experience, I have been close to dying many times in the mountains over the last thirty years.

4.5.1 Theme summary – Value of a close call

This section made clear that there is great and valuable knowledge in pushing the limits and experiencing a close call, as surviving a close call renders you humble. There was agreement that the close calls should be reoccurring to keep actors humble, and aware of the danger they face when working in the mountains.

4.6 Low risk job

Although appreciating that close calls happen and that the knowledge granted through experiencing a close call keeps one humble, several of the informants pointed out that their risk profile differs between working and private trips. They argue that the risk on the job is small enough, that it is not hard to justify having the job, even though they recognise that they will frequently experience close calls.

I have a completely different risk profile on the job and privately, I’m very aware. I don’t feel like having kids has changed what I do in my job [...] I don’t know if the kids are aware but when I work, I have a completely different risk acceptance compared to private trips. So, I don’t really have a problem justifying it - Charlie

Jakob also pointed out the difference in risk willingness on the job and on private trips.

Yeah, I think, privately the changes are even bigger, because the acceptance of exposing yourself to risk on the job has always been lower. At least for me, my experience is that you don’t want to expose yourself or your guests to danger, but then privately you allow yourself more.

Charlie mentioned that the thrilling value of risk adds to the activity, and acknowledged that there is of course a chance to make a mistake, however he did not believe that his work in general includes a particularly high degree of risk,

Much of what I do, I don't see as very risk filled, there is always a risk to make a mistake of course, but overall, what I do is not so extreme. But I feel that if you remove the risk completely it is not so exciting anymore, I always miss something.

His statement that what he does is not particularly extreme ties back to the findings in section 4.1 where he talked about risk being subjective. An outsider can probably see his job as extreme, but potentially because of his habitus, he himself does not consider it very risky. This personal risk evaluation could potentially stem from his own socialisation into an environment where risk is a constant companion, an accepted necessity and a legitimiser of the job which lead actors to not evaluate the risk for what it is. This denial of risk is also touched upon by Jakob,

There is a large degree of, call it risk denial, I would say in the mountain guide job. You always think it won't happen to me, I will survive, it a type of survival instinct, I think.

This denial, or non-admittance of risk, fits with the findings of Langseth and Salvesen (2018), who mention that actors rarely openly admit to taking risks.

Charlie, however, brings up a valid point regarding this topic, the sheer amount of exposure time adds to the overall risk.

Maybe 150 or 200 days a year in the mountains on the job with clients, it's easy climbing, safe things, at a lower level than what I do in my free time, right. But its ads up, it numbers, I do it a lot, exposure time. So, you just now things will happen.

This illustrates that even though the perceived risk is subjective, and therefore not necessarily regarded as significant by the actors, they are aware of the cumulative effect of the exposure to many small instances of potential risk. The small, unlikely risks will eventually sum up to a high chance of something going wrong.

4.6.1 Theme summary – Low risk job

This section enlightens the fact that several informants do not regard the risk involved in their job to be significant. The informants find that because their risk tolerance while working is already so much lower than their private risk tolerance, it does not change significantly after having kids. Another interesting point that came up in this theme was the fact that according to an informant there is a certain degree of risk denial within the mountain guide profession. In my opinion, this could be due to a socialisation into a higher degree of risk acceptance, that occurs gradually through the education and induction into the community. That actors will rarely talk openly about exposing themselves to risk, this has previously been brought up by Langseth and Salvesen in *Rock Climbing, Risk and Recognition* (2018). However, it would not

be correct to state that the informants completely deny the risk. They argue that the risk level is subjective and thus not perceived the same by them and outsiders, and they acknowledge that even if the risks are low the exposure time inherent to the job adds up the low risks and increases the likelihood that something will eventually happen.

4.7 Value of risk

In the previous section Charlie expressed how if the risk was removed completely, he would be missing something. His statement indicates that a value has been given to risk. This sentiment is shared by Jakob “no doubt that if the risk had not been there, it would have been much less interesting”. This is somewhat related with Jakob’s previous statement presented in the introduction, that the job of being a mountain guide is legitimised by the inherent risk. He elaborates on this,

I think that, both for myself and for those I have with me (the customers/guests) risk is very important, because it adds a consequence, something to be beaten, it’s often just a perceived risk but that fact that there are consequences if something happens is absolutely essential.

Henrik also touches upon this and adds that the importance and value given to risk is, linked to age, as we saw in section 4.2, and this value can in some cases diminish with age. “It’s culturally conditioned and it changes over time [...] in my closest circle, risk is in tandem with competence. But if I look at those who are fifteen years younger, the risk has more value [to them].” Esther adds to this and brings up the argument presented in relation to aging that the priorities and motivations change with age, and so does the value accorded to risk

Earlier it was maybe a small part of my inspiration, but now it’s more something I have to handle in order to have a beautiful nature experience. The aesthetic perspective takes more space than the risk perspective.

Charlie echoes this and adds that, for him, it is the combination of the natural aesthetics, physical challenge and risk that makes the sport and job appealing and interesting, but he acknowledges that the pull of risk was bigger when he was younger.

When I found climbing as a sixteen-year-old, I understood that there was an arena where I could combine my love for nature and outdoor life with training, doing something physical and exiting, when I simply had a risk. That was an important draw, especially in the beginning and it’s still similar today.

He elaborates that he is drawn to climbing because of the fact that it is dangerous, that it requires his utmost concentration, experiences a focus that he had never found anywhere else.

The base attraction for me is that it's potentially lethal, I'm drawn to it. I thought it was great when I first started climbing, what struck me the most was that there was something that was so dangerous that it required my absolute presence in the moment, I forgot time and place, and became so absorbed and gained such a focus that I had never encountered before.

An important finding that emerged from the interviews is the difference in how risk is talked about by men and women. The men, as seen above, openly value the inherent risk of their activities while the women see it more as an obstacle that must be handled in order to get a meaningful nature experience,

Going into the mountains maybe brings some beautiful traverses or trips in the Alps or in Norway. I know of course that there is a risk, but the beautiful nature experiences, the sense of community and friendship, that's my motivation. Sure, risk is something I have to handle on the way, but it is not a driving motivation. – Esther

Liv argues that it is the challenge that drives her, but that the challenge does not necessarily have to be handling the risk itself. She says that she generally likes to avoid risk.

Actually, as a base I like to avoid risk. If I can choose between to climbing lines where one has risk and the other one does not, but they are equally fun to climb and equally technically challenging, I don't feel that I must take risk, but I have a need to feel that I perform well [...] the risk is not so important, I don't need risk to thrive, it's more accurate to say that I need challenges to thrive. But a challenge can be many things, planning a specially tailored trip for a group of young people, or it can be something difficult like steep-skiing or difficult climbing, the main thing is that I have to solve it.

4.7.1 Theme summary – Value of risk

To summarise, the value of risk is determined subjectively. Risk is given more or less of a value depending on the person dealing with it. In accordance with the findings of Langseth and Salvesen (2018), risk itself does not have an inherent value, rather the value comes from seemingly being able to handle the risk, whether it be in the form of an increased focus, a challenge to be overcome or an obstacle to handle in order to experience nature. Another significant finding relating to my research questions is the difference in how risk was spoken about by men and women. The male informants more openly gave a value to the risk itself and saw it as a primary motivator, when the females do not give risk a value in itself, but to the fact that it must be handled in order to achieve their primary motivators.

4.8 Cred

Cred or credibility is a major factor to explain why we are willing to take risk. As developed in chapter 2.1.2, Bourdieu argued that an agent's motivations and actions in his/her field are fuelled by the agent's hunt for recognition. He also writes that recognition acts as the

foundation which we build all capital upon (Bourdieu, 1999). Langseth and Salvesen (2018, p. 9) write:

To cash in on the symbolic capital that risk-taking is, certain considerations must be taken into account. An act deemed foolhardy by other climbers will not grant any status. The climber must show that they are in control and have margins on what they are doing. They must also show that there is correspondence between their skills and the risk they are taking.

This link between skill level and activity level that must be present for the actor to receive cred is vital in the field of mountain guiding. The credibility of a guide comes from satisfied customers and impressed colleagues. It results in a release of symbolic capital that can lead to higher status as in the field, and therefore social capital. Good reviews from clients lead to more clients and consequently an increase in economic capital. The informants did not hide that recognition plays a role in their motivation. Esther states, *“there was both an interest because I think it’s fun, but also an interest based on recognition, it’s clear that this has been part of it as well.”* Jakob points out that it is definitely motivating knowing that others are watching,

It’s inescapable that the social prestige part of it is also motivating. You feel that you are performing in an environment where you are being watched maybe by other rope teams. So, you want to have good flow and effectivity when others are observing.

He further emphasises the points made by Langseth and Salvesen, as well as in section 4.7,

Risk in itself has no value, but it has quite a big value if you apparently can handle risk well [...] the guides who appear to be able to handle risk effectively, and in a god way, they get creds, while those who do something visibly stupid, get branded as being dumb. And then there is this flow-zone for risk handling, there I am probably a notch more conservative when I have people with me.

Of course, in a guiding context there is a balance between helping people achieve their goals and making sure they make it back alive. Therefore, it makes sense to tailor the trip according to the level of your guests and not to your own. Jakob elaborates on this, *“But mostly, because it sucks if something happens, you will for sure be judged, and you don’t want to be judged socially in the aftermath, it’s embarrassing”*. Jakob also points out the negative effect, competition can have on this in some areas, he uses the difference in the amount of people between a place like Chamonix and Norway,

The social aspect of it being embarrassing to turn around when all your colleagues go for the summit. I think the same mechanics are present in the Norwegian guides, but the element of competition is smaller because there are so few people in the mountains to compete with.

Henrik and Esther point out that some things give more cred than others, for example there is a lot of cred in mastering ice climbing, presumably because it statistically is riskier than rock

climbing. And some mountains are also linked with more prestige than others. However, in link with the findings in section 4.2 on the changing of priorities with aging, they both say that the prestige is no longer the main factor.

I don't have much focus on risk to begin with, it's more about a need to show that I can physically master certain things, like ice climbing and so on [...] but I don't have a need to show off and get confirmation from others in that way anymore. - Esther

An example of what you get most cred from in the community when climbing in Patagonia is Cerro Torre. I always found Fitz Roy has more aesthetic [...] so I have always dreamed of climbing that one rather than Cerro Torre, because, well it's more important with aesthetic and style I say. - Henrik

4.8.1 Theme summary – Cred

There was no doubt that several of the informants were aware of and acknowledged that cred and recognition was an important factor in why they do what they do. They also acknowledged that it makes a difference, in risk willingness, whether someone else is observing them as they work. An informant also brought up points in regard to the skill level of the practitioner and the feat he/she is trying to achieve. This correlates with the findings Langseth and Salvesen(2018) presented via the cred zone model (see chapter 2.2). The observers in Jakob's example were another rope team or other guides; however, I would argue that the observer could also be the actor's child. I would assume that getting recognition from your child, being the cool dad or mom, is something that could motivate parents to push for success in the field of mountaineering and mountain guiding. Lastly, we saw that, as a result of changing priorities and motivations, the hunt for recognition potentially decreases as the actors age. This would seem to not correlate with Bourdieu's theory that our motivations are being driven by the hunt for recognition. However, I would argue that rather than a change in priorities with aging, it is rather a change in our community and therefore of what has the potential to unlock recognition. Rather than new physically impressive or difficult climbs or disciplines, it rather becomes focused on flow, style, and aesthetic.

4.9 Change in Risk perception/willingness after having kids

During the interviews I asked the informants whether their risk willingness and risk perception had changed after having kids. The main outcome was an agreement that their perception of

risk was still the same and the risk hadn't changed, but their willingness to take it had, as illustrated by this quote from Charlie,

I won't say that it's my experience of risk that has changed. But it's the willingness to take risk that has changed [...] I am not willing to risk it because maybe I wouldn't be able to watch my kids grow up or participate in all the fun things we are going to do together soon. That's what I think, I have definitely changed in my practice of my private climbing activities.

Liv has the same point of view, adding that the risk stays the same no matter if you have kids or not.

I don't think my risk perception has changed but my risk acceptance has probably changed a bit. I don't see risk differently, the risk is the same, I don't analyze things differently, but I accept less risk [...] I haven't been in many critical situations after I became a mother, and that probably has a bit to do with that I am very focused on not ending up there [...] you notice it more now than you did before, and I think that's a thing I will be even more aware of, not ending up there.

Liv later provided an example of how priorities change as a parent, so contentment comes with less challenging things.

I talk with a Swedish mountain guide who lives in Chamonix, she has worked as a guide for many years and has a kid now. What she says is that she can ride Vallée Blanche five days a week, even though other guides would die of boredom, and that's because there is now something else that is more important, so it feels okay.

Charlie mentioned that how they talk about the risk at home also makes a difference, they choose to focus on the good aspects of climbing, they don't deny the risk but it's not their focus.

We focus on the nature experiences, the cultural journey, the adventure. Then of course we say that we have to be careful, and they [the teenage kids] know that there can be risk, that there is risk, but it's not the main focus. No if it was like that, that maybe I won't return from this trip, then I wouldn't go [...] when I leave on an expedition it's never with my life on the line.

This statement is almost identical to the words of Alison Hargreaves before she left for her fateful trip to K2. It became even more significant when Charlie said that he had declined an offer to climb K2 because the risk was more than he was now willing to accept. I would argue that he had a more realistic view of the statistical risk of climbing K2 than Hargreaves. One of the people he would have gone with, actually died under their second attempt.

Esther gave a personal example of how she had to go back to her old risk willingness for a while after having her first child, because she needed to pass an exam in order to get her certification.

Yes, both yes and no. After I got the first child I still had to pass my last Nortind⁹ exam, so I used all of my maternity leave on physically recuperating to perform at the exam, that meant that I had to take a lot of trips to the mountains where I was at the same risk level as before [...] maybe on the first trip I thought 'uhh, how does this feel is it great?' and then I took that thought away, put it far away, and then I was back at the same level.

Henrik pointed to the fact that his perception did not change, he still wanted to do things, but his focus was on minimizing the objective risk.

I still have dreams and ambitions, and a desire to push myself. But since you have so much with you in the luggage, I can still become exhausted and tired, so the point is that you have to minimise the objective risk, I think.

When asked whether the communities had changed how it views and treats him, Henrik pointed out that it depends whether the observers are parents themselves.

That depends whether the observer is a parent themselves. If I look at myself ten years ago, I had a friend who was a parent when we climbed Fitz Roy in Patagonia, and I thought that was fine, nothing unusual about that, whereas now I would maybe think that was a bit irresponsible. It depends on the perspective.

Henrik mentioned that relations changed as well, especially which relations you choose to cultivate as you have kids and get older.

If you continue to live in the community, in this environment, you come to know more and more people who have accidents and so on. I have now changed in the way that I avoid getting close to those who are at the greatest risk of getting themselves killed. Let's say there is a party and there is a person who is up-and-coming, and pushes very hard, and everybody wants to get to know them [...] I talk to them sure, but I am not interested in a close relation with those who are in the greatest risk group, I know that there is a high chance that they get themselves killed.

4.9.1 Theme summary – Change in risk perception/willingness after having kids

The participants revealed that their perception and understanding of risk remained the same, they didn't analyse or approach the risk any differently, because the risk was still the same.

However, the amount of risk they were willing to accept was smaller. This changed because there was now something more important in their lives. They wanted to see their kids grow up, they wanted to interact with them, get to know them and be there for them. Henrik

pointed out that this change in risk willingness extended to who he was willing to put energy in getting close to. If someone was pushing hard and at high risk of dying, he was no longer interested in getting to know him/her on a personal level.

Even though I am not a parent myself, I would argue based on the information provided by the informants, that having a child is a mayor change to your habitus. There is a new

⁹ Nortind is the Norwegian school/association that certifies guides in the IMFGA program. nortind.no/en/

dimension in your value system that you have to merge with the doxa and value system of the field you work in. But because your life at home with your kids is more important than pushing limits and achieving recognition in your field, it becomes acceptable to have a lower risk willingness. As Henrik put it “*at least you get to keep your status as a has been*”, meaning that your previous achievements don’t disappear because you become a parent.

4.10 Partners

In this section, the importance of good partners is discussed, both with regard to significant others at home and climbing/ work partners as a means of risk management. I will first present the findings pertaining to the informants’ significant others as this is closely linked to my research questions, as their existence has a major role in having the kids.

The informants’ spouses play an essential role in allowing the informants to continue their jobs when they become parents. Having a person at home that, they know, takes good care of the kids enables them to better focus and accept the risks linked to their jobs.

The key to my success and the opportunity, for me at least, to both have a family and engage in extreme sports, has been choosing the right partner, choosing the right person to have kids with. It’s crucial in order to make it work and for the kids to feel and be safe [...] I experience it as crucial to my activity in the mountains, both job wise and privately, that I have a wife who is home with our kids and keeps a fantastic attitude towards it. She probably worries from time to time but does not show it and it’s good for the kids not to be with a constantly anxious person. She is very in control of it, and supports me 100 percent in what I do, both professionally and recreationally. It is completely essential. - Charlie

He emphasises that, if she had been worried, anxious, and scared all the time, the kids would be as well. Children might not comprehend risk yet, it’s an abstract term to them, just like it is for younger climbers as seen in section 4.2, but kids, even infants, do feel, register, and realise when a parent is scared and worried about the other parent. Charlie points out that it’s much easier to justify the risk he takes toward his wife than toward his kids,

It’s easier to justify it [the risk taken] towards my wife, she knew who I was when we got together, it was take it or leave it, right? So, she got into it with open eyes and accepted it, but of course the kids did not choose this.

Accidents can always happen with high-risk job or activities, even with less exposure time, and there is a risk that the partner at home can pass away. Esther evoked her unique situation after losing her partner, and how this affected her risk willingness.

There is a time after you have kids, and then there is a time after you lose your partner [...] right now there is only one person left to take care of the children [...] so having kids did not affect

my risk willingness in such a large degree, but losing my partner, that has made my risk willingness to drop significantly.

The contrast between the statements from Charlie and Esther prove Charlie's point. Esther's case clearly shows that having a partner to rely on at home is an incredibly big factor in an actor's risk willingness after having kids.

Other partners that have a big influence on the actor's safety and risk management is their choice of colleagues or climbing partners.

What I'm aware of nowadays is that I have good partners, that I feel safe with them, that I feel we have the same acceptance of risk. It's important that I know they want the same things as me. That they want adventures, something new with a bit of excitement and risk, but also, that they are not willing to sacrifice their life.

Liv further adds that choosing the right partners has become even more important after becoming a mother, "now it would be even more important to me who I would work with, it's important that you are attuned to each other."

4.10.1 Theme summary – Partners

This section clearly illustrates that a main factor in justifying to themselves that the risk inherent to their job is acceptable, is for the informants to have a partner they can trust at home, a calming and understanding presence for the kids. Someone that understands what they do and accepts it. We also saw how losing a partner can have an even bigger impact on risk willingness than having the kids in the first place, because you become the sole responsible provider and caretaker for the kids.

The choice of climbing and work partners is also an important factor in the informant's risk management, especially after becoming parents. Choosing a partner with matching values, needs and desires increases the likelihood of returning safely home to the kids.

4.11 Young vs. older kids

A theme that arose from the interviews regarding the change in risk willingness after having kids, was that it takes time to change and that there is a significant difference in having a baby or a very young child compared to have kids that are in their teens.

I think it takes a bit of time from when the child is born to you understanding that is has influenced your views [...] you go to work one day and you have no kids, and then the next day you have kids, but you still do the same job you think very similarly. -Jakob

Henrik points out the same thing, *“there is also a difference if the baby is just a couple months old, it’s more like a thing. But the older they get the more they become a person, the more of an impression they leave on you”*. When presented with the case of Jamie Pierre’s 87m drop, performed two months after his daughter was born, Henrik repeated his argument, *“okey but then the child hasn’t really become a person yet, it’s a thing to him, more like a doll [...] I think if they are just a couple years old it would be much harder to do”*. Jakob also points this out, and adds that when the kids get older and your interactions with them becomes more interesting and fun, the thought process of you wanting to be with them the rest of your life grows and becomes much stronger as the relations build.

Liv points to a similar experience, to the differences she is feeling now that she is pregnant again compared to the first time,

Pregnancy the first time we don’t really know what it is, or what’s going on, you kind of just continue like you did before. Whereas the second time, I notice that I am more careful. I realise more that ‘hey! This will actually result in a person.

Liv’s narrative differs quite significantly on one aspect though, when she talks of the difference in having a baby and having an older child. She points out, as the child gets older and more independent, she will be able to do more of her own adventures, *“when the child becomes older, it is not as critical if you should be gone [forever] one day”*. I would argue that this difference in male and female narrative stems from the fact that the mother has been feeling the child coming in a much more physical way than the father. She, through pregnancy, has been able to create an emotional bond to it before it is actually born, whereas the father can’t properly start this process until after the child is born. Some informants argued in section 4.1, that the child is more dependent on the mother for the first couple of years, this argument is, however, biologically true solely if there is and during breastfeeding, the supposed higher dependence of young, weaned kids to their mother relates to the traditional gender role.

4.11.1 Theme summary – Young vs. older kids

The primary points in this section are that since the father has not carried the child for 9 months, the bonding process between him and the child starts later, and risk willingness therefore takes some time to adjust to the change in the fathers’ habitus. The doxa in the field of parenting has to evolve first and then compromises have to be made in the working field to accommodate this new factor. Mothers, at least some, are bound in another way to

the child through the physical bond with the fetus and baby, and because usually, following the traditional roles, the child is more dependent on the mother in the beginning.

5 Conclusion

This master's thesis set out to uncover and understand the personal justifications of parents working in high-risk jobs, that are legitimised by this inherent risk, in the mountains. To understand the personal justification, one must be aware of and understand which factors affect said justification. This exploration was operationalised through the following research questions:

- 1. Which factors influence the risk justification of professional mountain guides?**
- 2. How do parents justify having a job that has a non-negotiable and inherent risk?**

The purpose of this research was to expand the body of information and understanding in the field of outdoor studies by filling the gap of knowledge regarding personal risk justification. To fill this gap and answer the research questions, five qualitative semi structured interviews were conducted. The interviews were then analysed using the method of emerging themes and discussed through the theoretical framework of Bourdieu. The findings and conclusions drawn from the analysis will bellow be presented in a corresponding order to the themes presented in Chapter 4.

The primary findings were that traditional gender roles, and norms, are present within the field of mountain guiding. The traditional gender norms are based on the fact that the mother is biologically speaking more important than the father during the first few years. However, this is in fact only biologically true for the duration of breast feeding. The informants felt that these traditional gender roles make it less acceptable for mothers to take risk; and has led to fathers being devalued in terms of importance to the child. This can result in an unintentional reverse discrimination, that can loop into further distancing in gender roles. Potentially it thus makes easier for the fathers to justify the risk of their job. Genetic components were also found to be a key factor in their justifications. The mothers reported that the physical strain of being pregnant, giving birth and lactating, and the baby's reliance on the mother made it harder to leave for work and justify the inherent risk. The fathers reported that the process of aging and the accompanying loss of testosterone was a contributing factor to their decreased risk willingness with age. The last biological factor that emerged was that some informants argued, in accordance with Zuckerman's theory on high sensation seekers, that there was an addiction component to the risk. If they did not engage in their chosen field, they would consequently become miserable and as a result a worse parent.

Additionally, the career paths and educations of the informants appeared to be so ingrained into their identity that it proved impossible for them to have another job and still be happy. In line with the findings of Langseth and Salvesen (2018) and the Bourdieuan theory, the findings indicate that the informants were internalising certain sets of values, beliefs, and norms from the doxas of the fields they were socialised into during their education. The shared belief in their education and its superiority compared to actors who rely purely on experience, contributed to the informant's willingness to stay in the job after becoming a parent.

The informants pointed out that the belief system of the guiding and mountaineering communities includes assigning a value to the apparent ability to handle risk. Handling risk well meant that an actor must handle an appropriate amount of risk in order to receive symbolic capital in the form of cred. Cred can in turn lead to an increase in economic and social capital necessary to raise kids and nurture a family. This is consistent with the cred-zone model (Langseth & Salvesen, 2018).

Another major factor contributing to the informant's justification of their job was having a partner at home that supported them, understood what they do and could help taking care of the kids when the participants were gone. The loss of the partner appeared to greatly diminish the risk they are willing to take in the job. The age of the children also played a role in the justification. Several males reported that when the child was very small it was less reliant on them than on the mother. The first few years they could, therefore, justify of a higher degree of risk because strong bonds were not yet established to the child.

In conclusion, I found that the participants did not have a hard time justifying their risk-job to themselves. In particular, because of their education, and the experience and knowledge acquired through close calls, they did not find their job to be un-justifiably risky. They argued that, through good risk management encompassing meticulous planning and choosing the right climbing partners, they were able to minimise the risk to an acceptable level. They found it much harder to justify taking big risk in their recreational endeavours, and as a result their risk-willingness in that framework had significantly decreased but was and remained as larger than in their jobs.

Alison Hargreaves died on her way down from K2, leaving behind her husband and two young kids. This topic of personal justification is highly nuanced and complex. The answer is by no

means black and white, and the plethora of factors that influence a parent's personal justification of a high-risk job, presented in this thesis give an idea of the complexity of the dilemma. I hope it can act as a base and inspiration for future research.

5.1 Potential future research

5.1.1 The spouses

Interviewing the spouses of people in high-risk jobs to see what it is like to have to deal with a partner that takes risk. As suggested by my informant Charlie,

"When you have one half that takes risk in the mountains, it puts big demands to the other in the team at home. I think it would be a master's degree in itself to interview the wives."

Another project with a similar line of thought could be to interview the people left behind when a person with a high-risk job dies. This however would be a vastly more complex and delicate matter that would require the utmost dedication, ethical considerations and compassion without influencing the outcome.

5.1.2 Age vs. Having kids

Conduct a similar study with informants in similar jobs who do not have kids and compare it to see if aging and having kids can be separated as two individual factors or whether they are intertwined.

5.1.3 High-altitude mountaineering

in continuation of this thesis, it would be interesting to conduct a similar study with informants who engage in guiding at high altitude e.g., above 8000 meters. Because the inherent risk in this form of mountaineering is so much higher than in Norway or even in the alps, it adds a new dimension as the informants would likely not be able to say that it is low risk.

5.1.4 Choosing to not have kids

it would be interesting to conduct a study interviewing guides and mountaineers who have actively chosen not to have kids due to their profession. Of course, this would be reliant on finding such people, I did not encounter any during my research.

5.1.5 Geographically comparative study

This thesis has only made use of informants coming from Scandinavian/Nordic countries. It could be interesting to conduct similar studies using informants from other geographic locations, in order to see if there is a difference in how risk is justified in other regions. An example of this could be the sherpas in Nepal as it is a much poorer region than the Nordic countries, and as such the need for a job that pays well compared to other jobs in the region.

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Appendixes

Appendix 1: Information letter and consent form

Are you interested in taking part in the research project?

” Parents justification of High-risk jobs. - A qualitative study of mountaineering parents”?

This is an inquiry about participation in a research project where the main purpose is to find out how parents who work in mountaineering justify having a high-risk job when they have kids at home. In this letter we will give you information about the purpose of the project and what your participation will involve.

Purpose of the project

The purpose of my master’s thesis is to find out what thought process lies behind the decision to work in what is arguably a high-risk environment while having kids at home. I want to find out what argumentation is used personally, what internal discussion has happened to justify having a professional career in the mountains. The motivation behind this comes from having grown up with a parent in a high-risk job and the fact that I am approaching an age where having kids is not such an unrealistic thought, while I am also moving into a career that includes an inherent risk. The results of the project will be published in my master’s thesis and potentially as an article later.

Who is responsible for the research project?

The University of South-eastern Norway is the institution responsible for the project.

My master thesis is done within the NoFri programme, this programme is a collaboration between GIH in Sweden, USN and NIH in Norway and Hólar University in Iceland.

Why are you being asked to participate?

The sample for this project will consist of 6 professionals from the mountaineering/alpinist/steep-skiing sector. The sample will consist of three women and three men all of whom are parents. The selection has been done using referral from contacts within or with ties to the community, coming from my supervisor, other teachers at USN and myself.

What does participation involve for you?

If you choose to participate in this project you would participate in a semi structured interview conducted, if possible, in person, if not online using zoom or a similar programme. The information will be recorded in one of two ways. If the interview is done in person I will record it as a sound, and if it is conducted online, I will make a video recording including the sound. I will also be taking my own notes during the interview.

The interview will take approx. 1 hour, and will revolve around your job (mountaineer, skier, guide, etc.) and how you merge job life with having kids.

Participation is voluntary

Participation in the project is voluntary. If you chose to participate, you can withdraw your consent at any time without giving a reason. All information about you will then be made anonymous. There will be no negative consequences for you if you chose not to participate or later decide to withdraw.

Your personal privacy – how we will store and use your personal data

We will only use your personal data for the purpose(s) specified in this information letter. We will process your personal data confidentially and in accordance with data protection legislation (the General Data Protection Regulation and Personal Data Act).

- *Only my supervisor at USN and I will have access to your personal data.*
- *Should you wish to remain anonymous I will change your name in the final product.*
- *I will leave out your age and other personal information that could identify you.*
 - *Of course, there is a chance that someone will be able to recognize you from the information you share during the interview.*

What will happen to your personal data at the end of the research project?

The project is scheduled to end *15.05-2022*. All raw data (recordings of interviews emails. Etc.) will be deleted after my master's project has ended and I have received my grade.

Your rights

So long as you can be identified in the collected data, you have the right to:

- access the personal data that is being processed about you
- request that your personal data is deleted
- request that incorrect personal data about you is corrected/rectified
- receive a copy of your personal data (data portability), and
- send a complaint to the Data Protection Officer or The Norwegian Data Protection Authority regarding the processing of your personal data

What gives us the right to process your personal data?

We will process your personal data based on your consent.

Based on an agreement with *The University of south-eastern Norway* Data Protection Services has assessed that the processing of personal data in this project is in accordance with data protection legislation.

Where can I find out more?

If you have questions about the project, or want to exercise your rights, contact:

University of south-eastern Norway via Tommy Langseth - Tommy.Langseth@usn.no +47 35 95 27 60.
Or Niels Emile Tony Rasmussen - Nielsras95@gmail.com +47 40 05 52 42 +45 31 52 17 67.

- Our Data Protection Officer: Paal Are Solberg Paal.A.Solberg@usn.no
- Data Protection Services, by email: (personverntjenester@sikt.no) or by telephone: +47 53 21 15 00.

Yours sincerely,

Project Leader
Tommy Langseth

Student
Niels Emile Tony Rasmussen

Consent form

I have received and understood information about the project "Parents *justification of High-risk jobs. - A qualitative study of mountaineering parents*" and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I give consent:

- to participate in an interview
- for information about me/myself to be published in a way that I can be recognised for example through mention of my exploits/achievements.

I give consent for my personal data to be processed until the end date of the project, approx. 15.05.2022

(Signed by participant, date)

Appendix 2: Interviewguide

Interview guide

Warmup/background questions:

- age – gender – occupation
- do you have kids?
 - o if yes, what age group are they?
- How did you get into this field/ how did you start?
- What motivates you in your trips/adventures?
- What experiences have given you the most?
- What characterises your trips/adventures?

Example based question/discussion:

- Alison Hargreaves.

She was a professional athlete climbed Everest unaided. All the big north faces of the alps in a single season. She also climbed the north face of the Eiger while pregnant. She died on the way down from an unaided climb of K2.

She had to young kids. Her son grew up to become an accomplished mountaineer himself, sadly dying on Nanga'parbat in 2015.

Before leaving for K2 she gave an interview to the BBC, I would like to show you a clip/read you a quote and tell me what you think.

“When we go climbing, we obviously minimise the risks, and if we thought it was that risky, we wouldn't go climbing. I mean anybody who went of thinking, you know, that there was a very high chance they wouldn't come back, I think is a very unfair thing to do, especially with a young family“ -Alison Hargreaves 1995.(BBC, 2021)

Example based question/discussion:

- Zahan Billimoria

Zahan is a well renowned high montain ski guide working mostly around the tetons in the US. He has been a member of the US national ski mountaineering team competing at the worldcup, he has several big first descents.

He has a wife and two kids; he has had them for most of his career. In March 2020 he was taken in an avalanche, he luckily survived the accident.

I will show you two clips/read you two quotes from the short movie “Solving for Z” where he talks about risk perception. I will read one at a time and we can discuss the first one before hearing the next one and discussing it.

“In my mind I was very, very thoughtful about what I was doing. I was studious and engaged. And I think I came to a point where I started feeling like if you are studious and engaged enough, you'll be fine.”

- Zahan Billimoria

“As a veteran, you feel like I've really narrowed that gap and I can perceive what nature is telling me, I can read the signs around me. you know, the rime. The wind, the direction, the texture of the snow, all these... environmental factors that are just

like speaking to you and they allow you to, like, close that gap and... have this better sense of, like what's actually going on below the surface here. But you never eliminate that gap. And, um, when you have an accident, it reveals that gap. But looking back on yesterday or day before yesterday, I'm like... I'm left feeling like, oh that was a large gap."

- Zahan Billimoria two days after being taken in an avalanche.

Evt. Examples:

- Jamie Pierre 78m cliff drop – had a 2-month-old child at home.
- Hillary Nelson and Jim Morrison 1st descent of Lhotse couloir and Lhotse face 2018.
 - Hillary had kids at home, although older. She says that by doing what she is passionate about she hopes to convey to her kids that you can do anything you are passionate about, she hopes they will see her as a mom plus, as a passionate person who flows her dreams and ambitions.
 - She says that there is so much aversion to risk, and that that's not the way we should be going, it's risk that teaches us about ourselves.

Community questions:

- How is risk viewed/perceived within the community?
- How are parents perceived in the community?
- Has your perception of the community changed after becoming a parent?
- Has the community's perception/treatment of you changed after having kids?

Personal questions:

- Has your own risk perception changed after having kids?
- Are you still willing to go on expeditions/trips after having kids?
 - Where is your limit? How do you determine it?
- How do you manage your own risk?
- What role does risk play in your experience?
 - Would you say the risk adds value to your experience?
- To what extent would you say proper preparation, planning, education, and experience can minimise risk when we are in the mountains?
- Do you talk to your kids about risk?
- What do you tell them before leaving?
- What do you tell yourself when you say goodbye to your kids?

End question:

- To ask completely directly how do you personally justify the risk when you have kids?

Debriefing:

- Anything you would like to add?
- In order to improve my interview skills for further interviews and projects, what did you think of the interview and the project.

Appendix 3: NSD approval

4/27/22, 6:38 PM

Meldeskjema for behandling av personopplysninger



Vurdering

Referansenummer

925950

Prosjekttittel

Parents justification of High-risk jobs. - A qualitative study of mountaineering parents

Behandlingsansvarlig institusjon

Universitetet i Sørøst-Norge / Fakultet for humaniora, idrett- og utdanningsvitenskap / Institutt for friluftsliv, idrett og kroppsøving

Prosjektansvarlig (vitenskapelig ansatt/veileder eller stipendiat)

Tommy Langseth , Tommy.Langseth@usn.no, tlf: 35952760

Type prosjekt

Studentprosjekt, masterstudium

Kontaktinformasjon, student

Niels Emile Tony Rasmussen, nielsras95@gmail.com, tlf: +4531521767

Prosjektperiode

01.02.2022 - 15.05.2022

Vurdering (1)

10.02.2022 - Vurdert

Data Protection Services has carried out an assessment of the processing of personal data in this project. Our assessment is that the processing will comply with data protection legislation, so long as it is carried out in accordance with what is documented in the Notification Form and attachments, dated 10.02.2022.

TYPE OF DATA AND DURATION

The project will process general categories of personal data until 15.05.2022.

LEGAL BASIS

The project will gain consent from data subjects to process their personal data. We find that consent will meet the necessary requirements under art. 4 (11) and 7, in that it will be a freely given, specific, informed and unambiguous statement or action, which will be documented and can be withdrawn.

The legal basis for processing general categories of personal data is therefore consent given by the data subject, cf. the General Data Protection Regulation art. 6.1 a).

PRINCIPLES RELATING TO PROCESSING PERSONAL DATA

We find that the planned processing of personal data will be in accordance with the principles under the

<https://meldeskjema.nsd.no/vurdering/61e5917a-26a7-418c-807a-707aeb3b684c>

1/2

General Data Protection Regulation regarding:

- lawfulness, fairness and transparency (art. 5.1 a), in that data subjects will receive sufficient information about the processing and will give their consent
- purpose limitation (art. 5.1 b), in that personal data will be collected for specified, explicit and legitimate purposes, and will not be processed for new, incompatible purposes
- data minimisation (art. 5.1 c), in that only personal data which are adequate, relevant and necessary for the purpose of the project will be processed
- storage limitation (art. 5.1 e), in that personal data will not be stored for longer than is necessary to fulfil the project's purpose

THE RIGHTS OF DATA SUBJECTS

We find that the information that will be given to data subjects about the processing of their personal data will meet the legal requirements for form and content, cf. art. 12.1 and art. 13.

Data subjects will have the following rights in this project: access (art. 15), rectification (art. 16), erasure (art. 17), restriction of processing (art. 18), notification (art. 19) and data portability (art. 20). These rights apply so long as the data subject can be identified in the collected data.

We remind you that if a data subject contacts you about their rights, the data controller has a duty to reply within a month.

FOLLOW YOUR INSTITUTION'S GUIDELINES

Our assessment presupposes that the project will meet the requirements of accuracy (art. 5.1 d), integrity and confidentiality (art. 5.1 f) and security (art. 32) when processing personal data.

To ensure that these requirements are met you must follow your institution's internal guidelines and/or consult with your institution (i.e. the institution responsible for the project).

NOTIFY CHANGES

If you intend to make changes to the processing of personal data in this project it may be necessary to notify us. This is done by updating the information registered in the Notification Form. On our website we explain which changes must be notified. Wait until you receive an answer from us before you carry out the changes.

FOLLOW-UP OF THE PROJECT

We will follow up the progress of the at the planned end date in order to determine whether the processing of personal data has been concluded.

Good luck with the project!

Contact person: Henning Levold