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The continued importance of family sport culture for sport participation during the teenage years

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ABSTRACT

Growing up in a family with an affinity for sports increases the likelihood of participating in club-organised sports. Few studies to date have addressed whether the importance of family sport culture is stable or changes during the teenage years. This article examines the association between family sport culture and participation in club-organised sports during teenage years and whether it differs between boys and girls. We utilise data from Norway and the comprehensive ‘Young in Oslo 2015’ survey ($N = 6121$; 79% response rate; ages 13–18). Three questions were combined into a measure of family sport culture in the present study: the importance of sport in the family, parents’ training habits, and whether parents would like their children to participate in sports. We observed a clear positive relationship between family sport culture and participation in club-organised sports. Except for a slightly weakened relationship with age among girls, the relationship was equally strong in all age groups. We suggest that the overall continuity in the relevance of family sport culture for young people’s sport participation reflects a prolonged socialisation effect that we utilise Bourdieu’s theory of habitus to understand.

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KEYWORDS

Family sport culture; youth sports; participation rates; gender; family habitus; parenting; family effect; youth

Introduction

The aim of this article is to contribute to the evolving field of research on what Elliott and Drummond (2015) term the ‘sport-parenting paradigm’ (p. 4) in youth sports. We take as a starting point that parents’ role in youth sports has changed over the last few decades, from being distant and peripheral to becoming supportive and involved (Johansen & Green, 2019; Sjödin & Roman, 2018; Wheeler & Green, 2018). The study of parenting, which comprises both ideals and practices, is therefore critical in furthering the understanding of youths’ relationship to sports. This article addresses a particular dimension of the sport-parenting paradigm – namely, ‘family sport culture’, which we define as a family culture with a strong affinity for sports, and its relationship to youths’ participation in club-organised sport. Our empirical context in Norway, a country characterised by general cultural approval of sports and high participation rates in child and youth sports (Goksøyr, 2008; Green, 2016). For instance, a recent national representative study found that 93% of Norwegian teenagers were, or had been, active in sports clubs (Bakken, 2017).

Our specific interest in this article is whether the importance of family sport culture for participation in club-organised sports is stable or changes during the teenage years – a period in which young people are assumed to become less dependent on their parents both emotionally and

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regarding practical issues. By using survey data collected from youth aged 13–18, we tap into an often overlooked issue in the sociology of youth sports: that there may be age differences in factors linked to sports participation within the wider youth category.

Our main hypothesis is that there is a strong relationship between family sport culture and teenagers own sport participation, and that this relationship continues through the teenage years. This hypothesis is inspired by Bourdieu's (1984, 1996) theoretical framework and sport researchers that have described the socialisation into sport and an active lifestyle, grasped by the concept 'family habitus' (Coakley, 2006; Dagkas & Burrows, 2016; DeLuca, 2016). This tradition captures the family's fundamental role in early socialisation; in fostering ideas about sport as a natural part of life, as well as in facilitating an active life style through family activities. In line with the habitus tradition's emphasis on deeply embodied motivations, habits, and lifestyles, we would anticipate stability in the relevance of family sport culture through teenage years – contrary to commonly held expectations that teenagers are increasingly independent of their parents.

In addition to this main explanation, processes operating more at the surface level might also contribute to stability in the effect of family sport culture on participation in youth sports: Since participation in organised sport to a large extent is normatively expected, highly valued, and common among younger children (Strandbu, Stefansen, & Smette, 2016), their participation might not be as strongly dependent on family sport culture but instead may be more related to peer relations and community factors – suggesting a stronger importance of family sport culture for older youths compared to younger youths. In addition, youths' needs for parental support and backing might also become more important once sport becomes more elitist and 'serious' in the higher age brackets of youth sports, as it often does. We should also take into account that among older youths, a continued importance of family sport culture may be caused by a selection effect: youths often leave organised sports before they enter their late teens. Those youths who remain may be more influenced by a family culture that revolves around sport than those who have left sports earlier.

Gender should be taken into account when studying links between family sport culture and participation rates from early to late teenage years. Gender roles are described as being particularly salient in the sports context, and gender norms are often thought to predominantly support boys' sport participation, despite the increase in girls' participation in sport in recent years (Heinze et al., 2017). This idea corresponds with descriptions of organised sports as an important arena for developing and strengthening masculine gender identity (Fundberg, 2003; Messner, 2011) and the claim that 'boys achieve status through athletic ability, though research indicates the same is not true for girls' (Heinze et al., 2017, p. 636). In line with the assumption that sport is primarily a masculine endeavour, parents may be especially concerned with supporting participation among teenage boys; they may also see sports achievement as contributing more unequivocally to status and recognition for boys compared with girls (Heinze et al., 2017) and will therefore invest more in their sons' sporting activities.

We know little about parents' gendered beliefs and practices related to older youths and sports participation. Stefansen et al.'s (2018) qualitative study among parents of 14-year-olds, found that sport as a self-evident part of growing up was strongly supported, regardless of the child's gender. Active fathers with 'laid-back' and uninterested sons, however, expressed concern for their sons lack of competitiveness (Smette, Stefansen, & Strandbu, *in preparation*), thus mirroring ideas that connect masculinity to physical ability and an affinity for competition. One hypothesis could be that when boys' motivation for sports decreases as they grow older, their parents may increase their support or even apply pressure for their sons' continued participation.

One could also argue that since sport is often perceived as being less important in social networks among girls (Shakib, Veliz, Dunbar, & Sabo, 2011), and because the overall conditions for participation are less favourable for teenage girls, they would have a stronger need for a family sport culture that encourages their participation. In line with these assumptions we may thus expect the importance of

family sport culture for sport participation to increase more during the teenage years for girls than for boys.

While several studies have addressed the relationship between sport participation and family sport culture (we provide a review on the next page), only a few quantitative studies have touched on how this relationship may change during the teenage years (Gustafson & Rhodes, 2006; White & McTeer, 2012); and even fewer studies (Garcia et al., 1995) have examined how such patterns may be gendered. On this background we will address the following questions:

- (1) How do youths perceive the sport culture in their family? Does perceived family sport culture differ between boys and girls and does it change during the teenage years?
- (2) What is the relationship between family sport culture and youths' sport participation? Does this relationship differ between boys and girls, and does it change during the teenage years?

Next, we turn to how researchers have approached the issue of the family effect on sport participation among children and youth.

Empirical studies on the family effect on sport participation

Growing up with parents who have an affinity for sports increases the likelihood that children will become involved in sports (Dagkas & Burrows, 2016; Downward, Hallmann, & Pawlowski, 2014; Gustafson & Rhodes, 2006; Hayoz, Klostermann, Schmid, Schlesinger, & Nagel, 2017; Turman, 2007). Parents influence the sports-related lifestyles of their children in a number of ways (Knight, 2019), and specifically by (1) being role models (Smoll, Cumming, & Smith, 2011), (2) introducing their children to sport (MacPhail & Kirk, 2006; Wheeler, 2012), (3) encouraging them to take part in sport (Smoll et al., 2011), (4) providing transport and equipment (Wheeler & Green, 2018), and (5) by their mere interest in sport, manifested in joint activities such as hiking tours and by making sport a topic of conversation in the family (Stefansen, Smette, & Strandbu, 2018).

Previous studies have employed different approaches to examine the family effect on sports participation. Hayoz et al. (2017), for instance, utilised a rather complex measure of sports-related family lifestyle that included questions about the importance of sport in the family, family support related to sports, enjoyment of playing sports together, behaving in ways that are beneficial to health, talking about sport regularly, and whether participation in sports is taken for granted. They found that a lifestyle that includes sports and sport-related activities influences children's sports participation. Downward et al. (2014), focused on the relationship between parents' sports activities during their own childhoods and their children's physical activity, and found a substantial intergenerational transfer of exercise habits, particularly between fathers and sons.

Even if studies on the parental effect on children's sport participation have all pointed in the same direction, we should still keep in mind that, because the measures differ, assessing the strength of the family effect between various studies is difficult (Beets, Cardinal, & Alderman, 2010). In addition to finding a mere unidirectional parental influence on youth sport participation, some studies have also addressed a conceivable reciprocal influence: children's sport participation could both initiate and strengthen parental involvement (Dorsch, McDonough, & Smith, 2009; Dorsch, Smith, & McDonough, 2014), which in turn may contribute to an increased role of sport in family life.

What do we know about gender differences in the family effect? Several studies have reported a gender difference in perceived parental support (Fredricks & Eccles, 2005). A majority of the studies included in Gustafson and Rhodes's (2006) review of 'parental correlates' (i.e. parents' opinions about sport, their exercise habits, and the like) with physical exercise found that boys received more support from their parents and were more physically active than girls. The authors discussed whether the gender difference in physical activity levels could have been attributable to the difference in parental support, since such support is highly correlated with physical activity (2005, p. 93).

Echoing these findings, Heinze et al. (2017) found that parents placed somewhat greater value on sport for their sons than for their daughters both ideologically and financially, measured by questions about how they thought sport would benefit their sons and daughters and how much they were willing to pay. Downward et al. (2014) also found a strong gender effect on the parental impact on the sports participation of children aged 5–15 years. Fathers who had participated in sport while growing up were much more likely to have sons who participated in sport. The effects of mothers' activities on their sons' activities were nearly the same. For daughters, only their mothers' activities as children had an effect, and the effect was not as strong as for sons. We should mention that Hayoz et al. (2017) found no gender differences in the intergenerational transfer of sports-related lifestyle within the family.

What do we know about changes during the teenage years in the relevance of family sport culture for youths' sport participation? A recent interview study among 14- to 15-year-olds (Strandbu et al., 2017) found that parents play an important role in regulating their children's sporting activities. Most youths portrayed some guidance and control to be appropriate parental behaviour, especially during periods when their own motivation to continue with sports had been low. The youths also wanted their parents to be present at sporting venues and to offer practical and emotional support. Strandbu et al. (2017) study involved young teenagers; such youths are at the crossroads where parents still have a legitimate position in non-professional sports, even when they do not necessarily act as a 'ground crew' for their own children. The teenager-parent relationship changes over time, and parents' actual presence at sporting venues might be less valued in the later teens and therefore diminish.

Several previous studies support this idea of the teenager-parent relationship. For example, Gustafson and Rhodes's (2006) review of studies on parental correlates on physical exercise revealed that (1) support from parents directly or indirectly predicts their children's physical activity levels, (2) these effects tend to be stronger for younger children, and (3) the most important forms of parental support are encouragement, involvement, and facilitation (p. 89). Garcia et al. (1995) found that older children were less likely than younger children to receive social support for exercise, while Sallis, Algaraz, and McKenzie (1992) found that verbal prompts were less effective for older children. Lisinskiene, Guetterman, and Sukys's (2018) qualitative interviews with adolescent athletes point in the same direction. The athletes saw parental involvement as being more important early in their sporting lives, and this involvement became less appreciated and even unwelcome for some of the athletes as they gained more sporting expertise themselves. Based on a review of developmental sport research, Harwood and Knight (2017) concluded that parenting in sport 'requires the ability to recognize and successfully negotiate shifting roles as children transition through the stages of athletic development' (Harwood & Knight, 2017, p. 31). They found a lack of evidence regarding parents' adaptation experiences, 'especially how they cope with transitions between the different stages' (p. 31) – the sampling, specialising and investment stages. The overall focus in Harwood and Knight's (2017) review was *athletic* development. We would add that changes in the teenager-parent relationship in general are relevant for how this relationship is played out within the sports domain.

Theoretical explanations: family sport culture and family habitus

Our understanding of family sport culture draws from the Bourdieu-influenced sociological literature on the practice of parenting and the materially anchored cultural logics of childrearing (Lareau, 2003). These cultural logics are composed of a myriad of everyday practices; ways of being, talking, and doing that combine to a specific 'lifeworld' that helps to orient the child towards different activities (e.g. academic learning, cultural activities, or sports) (Lareau, 2003; Reay, 1998). Applied to the field of sports, some researchers have employed the concept of 'family habitus' to grasp how family values and practices influence the sport participation of children and youth (Coakley, 2006; Dagkas & Burrows, 2016; DeLuca, 2016). The starting point of this idea is the family's fundamental role in

establishing deeply embodied motivations, habits, and lifestyles, which in Bourdieu's vocabulary is captured as 'habitus'. Habitus is developed on the basis of 'formative experiences of earliest infancy, of the whole collective history of family and class' (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 91). Coakley explains that family habitus incorporates developmental goals and 'the types of activities believed to be helpful in reaching these goals. By implication, family habitus subsumes activities that parents think will best facilitate the development of their children' (Coakley, 2006, p. 160).

Since participation in sport is often seen as a natural part of growing up in Norway and similar countries, socialisation into sport – much like socialisation into other parts of what Bourdieu calls 'legitimate' culture – tends to be overlooked. As Bourdieu (1984, p. 3) argues, 'acquisition of legitimate culture by insensible familiarization within the family circle tends to favour an enchanted experience of culture which implies forgetting the acquisition'. The strength of the habitus concept is its ability to explicate the 'socially elaborated desire' (Bourdieu, 2000, p. 165) to participate in sport, and how this cultivation occurs within the family (Aarseth, 2016). Following Reay (1998, p. 527) family habitus is understood here as 'the deeply ingrained system of perspectives, experiences and predispositions family members share', which in our case we have applied to sports. The advantage of the habitus construct is that it can be used to illuminate why the connection between family values and practices and sport participation may continue past the age when youths need their parents' practical support and hands-on involvement.

As we will discuss next, in the methodological section, our measure of family sport culture includes three components that can be thought of as rough indicators of the conditions that constitute the basis of a shared affinity towards sports within families.

Method and variables

We use data from the 'Young in Oslo 2015' study, the details of which have been previously reported (Bakken, 2017). That study contains self-reported information about a range of topics, including participation in sports and other leisure activities, family background, school life, relations to peers, and problem behaviour. The information was collected in a school-based survey administered in 2015 among 58 lower and 30 upper secondary schools (grades 8–13), including all public schools and a majority of the city's few private schools. A total of 24,163 students participated in the study. The response rate was 79%, and the sample represents approximately 70% of the total Oslo population aged 13–18 years. Parents and students were informed about the purpose of the study in advance, including the fact that participation was voluntary. The study was approved by the Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD).

Some parts of the questionnaire, including questions about family sport culture, were given to randomly selected subsamples. In this article, we use the subsample consisting of students who responded to questions about their parents' interest in sport and other sport-related questions. The analyses are based on the 6121 respondents who had no missing values on any of the included variables. The average age was 15.4 years ($SD = 1.72$), and 53.8% of the respondents were girls. A comparison of the subsample with the rest of the sample showed no age differences and no differences in the proportion of respondents who participated in sports; girls were slightly over-represented in the subsample, however.

Dependent variable

Participation in club-organised sport activities was measured by asking 'How often do you exercise or take part in the following activities?' Different activities were listed, including 'Exercise on your own', 'Exercise in a gym', and 'Exercise or compete in a sports club'. We used the third alternative to identify those who were active participants in sports clubs. The variable had six response options, from 'Never' to 'More than five times a week'. We defined 'active participants' as those who exercised in a sports club on a weekly basis, specified for this study as at least '1–2 times a week'. In addition, we

constructed a variable to measure the weekly frequency of training activities. The variable was based on all active participants and was coded in the following way: '1–2 times a week' was coded as 1.5, '3–4 times a week' as 3.5, and 'More than 5 times a week' as 5.

Independent variables

We measured 'family sport culture' by asking whether the respondents thought the following statements applied to their family: 'In my family, sports mean a lot', 'My father/mother usually exercises at least a couple of times every week', and 'My father/mother would really like me to play sports'. The respondents were asked to indicate their agreement on a four-point Likert scale varying from 'Fits very badly' to 'Fits very well'. The answers were coded from 0 to 3, with high scores indicating positive agreement. The correlations between the items were fairly high ($r = .42$; $r = .46$; $r = .55$). The Cronbach's alpha was 0.73, indicating an acceptable internal consistency; we thus constructed a composite measure of family sport culture by averaging the three items.

Gender was coded as boys = 0 and girls = 1. The respondents' age was measured by asking what age they were at the time they had filled out the questionnaire. Due to privacy concerns, information about age was not included in the questionnaire used in lower secondary school (age group 13–15 years old). For this age group, we use information about school grade as a proxy for age. Because the survey was conducted early in the calendar year, most eighth graders were 13 years old, most ninth graders were 14 years old, and most tenth graders were 15 years old. In the regression analysis, age was coded from 0 (13 years old) to 5 (18 years old). A few 19-year-olds in grade 13 were coded as 18-year-olds. Any respondents with missing age information and those aged 20 years and older were excluded from the sample.

Statistical analyses

We will first provide an overall picture of the prevalence of youth participation in organised sport, broken down by gender and age; we will then present descriptive statistics on how boys and girls in different ages perceive family sport culture. We used chi-square testing to determine whether frequencies varied with gender, while we used F-testing to examine whether the mean differences were statistically significant. We examined the association between family sport culture and sport club participation by calculating the proportion of youth who participate in a sports club across the whole range of the measure of family sport culture. We used logistic regression analyses to investigate whether this relationship was statistically significant; we further used logistic regression to analyse whether this association differed among girls and boys and to examine any interaction effects between age, family sport culture, and participation in sport.

In general, when comparisons are made across models, the OR- or B-coefficients in logistic regression can be problematic to interpret because they can reflect the degree of unobserved heterogeneity in the models (Mood, 2010). To overcome this problem, we estimated average marginal effects (AMEs) by using the margin command in Stata. One advantage of using AMEs is that the interpretation of the coefficients is more straightforward than is the case with logistic regression coefficients: one can simply interpret the marginal effects as the absolute increase (or decrease) in the probability of participation in a sports club (in this case) when the independent variable increases by one unit. To help interpret the results, we present figures showing the estimated probabilities of being active in a sports club based on the regressions.

Results

Within the total sample, 40% participated in a sports club at least once a week. As [Figure 1](#) shows, a sharp decrease in participation rates was noted with increasing age; this decrease held for both boys and girls, with a steeper decline among girls.

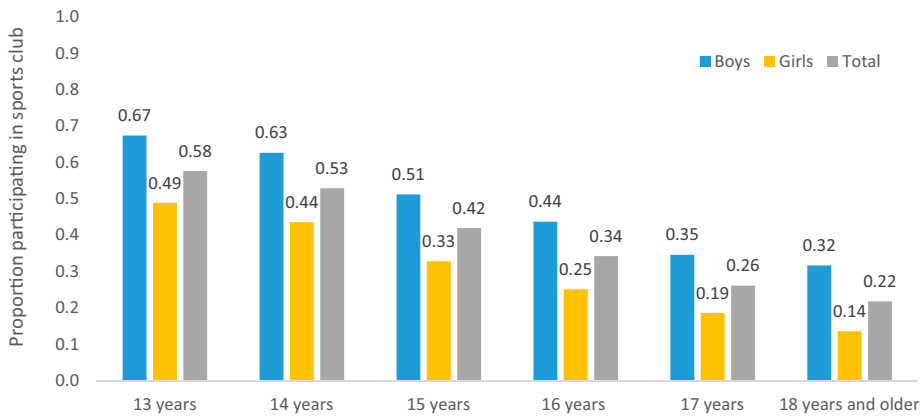


Figure 1. Proportion of youth participating in club-organised sports at least once a week, by gender and age; $N = 6121$.

Table 1 shows how youths responded to the items that measured aspects of family sport culture. The upper part of the table presents the frequency distribution of the three items, broken down by gender; the lower part shows the mean scores on all items as well as for the composite score. All mean scores were broken down by gender and age. The results show that the majority of youths perceived their parents to be quite interested in sports. Six out of ten indicated that sports meant a lot in their family, and an equal number indicated that their parents trained at least a couple of times each week. Even more youths (eight out of ten) indicated that their parents really wanted them to play sports (a figure that was much higher than the proportion of respondents who themselves actively took part in sports clubs). Taken together, the answers suggest that most teenagers today feel some normative pressure from their parents to take part in sport. Still, the figures show fairly large variations in youths' perception of the sport culture in their family.

Boys agreed with the items that measured family sport culture more often than girls; one exception was the item that measured training activity among parents, where no gender differences were found. All items showed a negative relationship with age. The strongest negative relationship with age was related to whether the youths perceived their parents to expect them to play sports.

Figure 2 shows the relationship between perceived family sport culture and youths' own participation in club-organised sports. As expected, this relationship was rather strong. The likelihood of participating in sports was 10 times higher when we compared those with the highest and lowest scores on the measure of family sport culture.

We used multivariate logistic regression analysis to test whether the association between youths' perception of their family sport culture and their participation in a sports club differed between age groups and between girls and boys. In Model 1, we tested the bivariate relationship between family sport culture and club-sport participation, both for the sample as a whole and separately for boys and girls. The results presented in **Table 2** show an equally strong relationship for girls and boys. See also **Figure 3**, which shows the estimated proportions of boys and girls who participated in a sports club based on their score on the family sport culture measure.

In **Table 2**, Model 2, we tested whether any interactions existed between the respondents' age, perception of family sport culture, and participation in sports. We found no such interaction in the total sample, which indicates that family sport culture is more or less equally important among different age groups.

When we analysed boys and girls separately, We found no interaction effect among boys, but we did find a statistically significant *negative* interaction effect among girls. To illustrate these interaction effects, we estimated the proportion who participated in sports clubs in two age groups (13–15 years old and 16–18 years old), again separately for each gender (see **Figure 4**). While the lines for the oldest and youngest teenage boys are almost parallel across the whole range of the family sport culture

Table 1. Adolescents' perception of family sport culture; frequency and mean scores by gender and age; scale 0–3.

Frequency	Item #1 In my family, sports mean a lot			Item #2 My father/mother usually exercises at least a couple of times every week			Item #3 My father/mother would really like me to play sports		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
Fits very badly	12.2	16.5	14.5	17.5	20.3	19.0	5.8	8.5	7.2
Fits pretty badly	23.9	26.9	25.5	21.0	19.7	20.3	10.0	13.0	11.6
Fits quite well	37.7	36.1	36.9	36.0	33.1	34.4	39.1	39.5	39.3
Fits very well	26.3	20.5	23.2	25.5	27.0	26.3	45.1	39.0	41.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
<i>N</i>	2801	3277	6078	2791	3266	6057	2776	3257	6033
Chi-square test	$\chi^2 = 43.4$	$p < 0.001$		$\chi^2 = 12.6$	$p < 0.01$		$\chi^2 = 41.9$	$p < 0.001$	

Mean scores	Item #1 In my family, sports mean a lot		Item #2 My father/mother usually exercises at least a couple of times every week		Item #3 My father/mother would really like me to play sports		Family sport culture (average score across items)		<i>N</i>
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Total sample	1.69	0.98	1.69	1.06	2.17	0.89	1.85	0.79	6121
<i>Gender</i>									
Boys	1.78	0.97	1.70	1.04	2.25	0.85	1.91	0.77	2823
Girls	1.61	0.99	1.67	1.08	2.10	0.92	1.80	0.82	3298
<i>F-test</i>	$F = 41.7$		$F = 1.0$		$F = 41.4$		$F = 31.6$		
<i>sig p</i>	$p < 0.001$		$p = 0.35$		$p < 0.001$		$p < 0.001$		
<i>Age</i>									
13	1.82	0.94	1.79	1.05	2.39	0.79	2.00	0.75	1173
14	1.77	0.94	1.72	1.03	2.30	0.81	1.93	0.74	1091
15	1.65	1.00	1.64	1.09	2.17	0.92	1.82	0.81	1067
16	1.69	1.02	1.72	1.09	2.16	0.91	1.85	0.82	941
17	1.62	0.98	1.66	1.04	1.98	0.90	1.75	0.79	907
18	1.55	1.00	1.56	1.05	1.91	0.93	1.67	0.81	942
<i>F-test</i>	$F = 10.6$		$F = 5.8$		$F = 40.3$		22.1		
<i>sig p</i>	$p < 0.001$		$p < 0.001$		$p < 0.001$		$p < 0.001$		

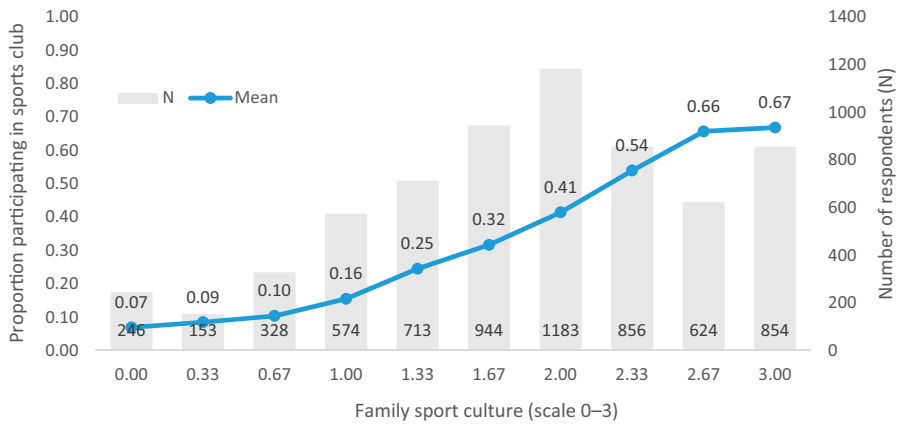


Figure 2. Proportion of youth participating in club-organised sports at least once a week by their perception of family sport culture; N = number of respondents.

measure, the two lines for girls widen with increasing scores on family sport culture. Among girls who perceived their parents as being rather disconnected from sports, the participating rates were very low, independently of age. As the figure illustrates, the participation rates do not increase as sharply among the oldest girls compared to the younger girls.

Discussion

In general, most youths in this study perceived their parents to be quite interested in sports. A majority stated that sports meant a lot in their family, that their parents trained at least a couple of times each week and that their parents really wished them to play sports. This is a strong indication of what earlier (mostly qualitative) studies have described as a normative pressure from parents to take part in sport (Johansen & Green, 2019; Wheeler, 2012). As an example, the vast majority of 14- to 15-year-olds in Strandbu et al.'s (2017) focus-group study, including those who no longer took part in organised sports, believed that their parents wanted them to participate.

Youths' perception of the importance that sports play in their family decreases during the teenage years; this change is most pronounced in whether their parents expect them to play sports. The fact that many parents pay more attention to keeping their younger teenagers involved in sport might reflect the centrality that parents often place in securing the social integration of their young teenage children (Stefansen et al., 2018). But changes in how youths perceive their parents' interest in sport may also be interpreted in the context of high dropout rates from sport activities during the teenage years. We assume not only that young people are influenced by their parents' valuing of sports but also that young athletes themselves contribute to an active family sport culture. For those who drop out of club-organised sports, sport-related issues will probably be less prominent in their interactions with their parents compared to the situation when they were active. Thus, to understand the value of sport in families, one must take into account reciprocal processes between youths' own participation in sports and the general role that sports play in the family (Dorsch et al., 2009; Dorsch et al., 2014; Holt, Tamminen, Black, Mandigo, & Fox, 2009; Trussell, 2016; Trussell & Shaw, 2012). However, in line with the studies of family habitus (Coakley, 2006; Dagkas & Burrows, 2016; DeLuca, 2016), we suggest that the family sport culture and especially the early socialisation process within the family is the main initiator of this pendulum.

The boys examined in our study agreed with statements about a family culture that involved sport slightly more often than girls, except in terms of their parents' exercise habits. This finding might also be interpreted as having resulted from some kind of reciprocity: because slightly more boys are

Table 2. Results from logistic regression analyses of participation rates in club-organised sports; separate analyses for boys and girls; average marginal effects.

	Total sample			Boys			Girls			Sig gender difference
	dydx	se	sig	dydx	se	sig	dydx	se	sig	
<i>Model 1</i>										
Family sport culture (0–3)	.246	.006	$p < .001$	.254	.009	$p < .001$	.230	.009	$p < .001$	$p = .06$
<i>Model 2</i>										
Family sport culture (0–3)	.233	.012	$p < .001$	.215	.019	$p < .001$	.243	.016	$p < .001$	$p = .26$
Age (0–5)	–.058	.011	$p < .001$	–.089	.016	$p < .001$	–.023	.014	$p = .10$	$p < .01$
Family sport culture * Age	–.003	.005	$p = .16$	.010	.008	$p = .21$	–.016	.006	$p < .05$	$p < .05$
		$N = 6121$			$N = 2823$			$N = 3298$		

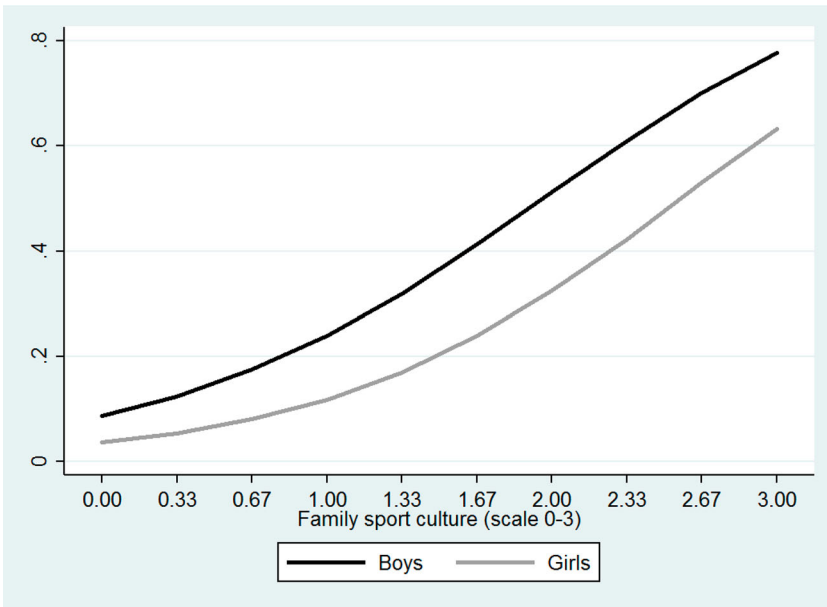


Figure 3. Estimated proportion of youth participating in club-organised sports by their perception of family sport culture, among boys and girls.

involved in sport, their parents might also be more involved in sport (Eliasson, 2018), and more boys might reasonably perceive the family culture as being preoccupied with sports. We should nevertheless underline that the gender differences in our study were small, and that the general picture held for both boys and girls.

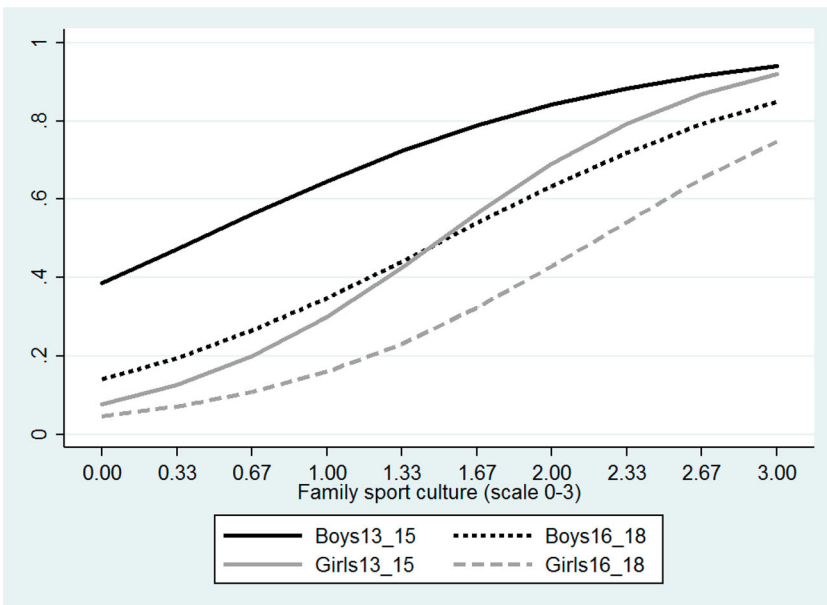


Figure 4. Estimated proportion of youth participating in club-organised sports by their perception of family sport culture, among boys and girls in two age groups (13–15 and 16–18 years old).

Our second research question was the relationship between family sport culture and youths own sport participation. In line with several other studies (Dagkas & Burrows, 2016; Downward et al., 2014; Gustafson & Rhodes, 2006; Hayoz et al., 2017; Turman, 2007), we observed that youth with parents who have an affinity for sports have an increased likelihood of being involved in sports themselves. We suggest that this relationship may be explained by various factors that can be grouped together in the 'family habitus' concept. As several studies have shown, children's activities are strongly connected to their parents' wishes and practices; this is not surprising, since 'family habitus subsumes activities that parents think will best facilitate the development of their children' (Coakley, 2006, p. 160). Our study indicate that the imprinting that occurs from youths' family background also continues to influence them during their teenage years. Our measure of family sport culture is broad and could be considered a rough measure of the 'perspectives, experiences and predispositions family members share' (Reay, 1998, p. 527). We should stress that this measure likely taps into both the direct influence from parents to their offspring and a reciprocal influence – from parents to their children and from children to their parents. Similar to other cross-sectional studies, we suggest processes lying behind the observed statistical connections based on our theoretical framework and other existing studies (e.g. Coakley, 2006; Dagkas & Burrows, 2016; DeLuca, 2016; Wheeler & Green, 2018). As we are trying to examine more long-term and processual influence of family sport culture, longitudinal data could have strengthened our argument.

How can we make sense of our results when it comes to gender? We found a slightly weaker association between family sport culture and participation among the oldest girls than among the youngest; among boys, family sport culture was equally related to sports participation, independent of age. When we analysed the sample as a whole, we found an equally strong relationship between family sport culture and sport participation among boys and girls. The small gender difference we found in the sample as whole was not statistically significant. Hence, family sport culture, as measured in this study, had the same influence on girls' and boys' participation rates. Even though we cannot distinguish the causal direction of this influence, the gender equality we found contradicts the findings from previous studies (Fredricks & Eccles, 2005; Gustafson & Rhodes, 2006), with the exception of Hayoz et al.'s (2017) recent study. Our results could be considered in relation to wider sociological debates on sports and masculinity/femininity. The parents in our study did not seem to have paid much more attention to boys' sporting life than to girls', although they may have conveyed their expectations and messages to their children in subtle ways that would have been difficult to capture with our methodology. Including detailed questions about gender issues also could have enabled more sophisticated analyses. In general, the study points in the direction of parents being equally concerned for their daughters' and sons' sport participation.

Our data clearly indicate that family sport culture has an enduring and relatively consistent influence on young people's sport participation. We suggest that the main explanation of the results is that the family habitus has a prolonged effect through teenage years – contrary to commonly held expectations that teenagers are increasingly independent of their parents. In addition to this main explanation, other processes (operating more at the surface level) might balance out the increasing independence: For some youths, staying involved in sport in their later teens might demand more support from their parents, thus implying a stronger dependency on a family culture that is in favour of sport. This is however the case for only a few. The general picture of continuity could be explained by a pattern of early socialisation into sports that continues to influence during teenage years.

A puzzle that remains unexplained is that we find the same strong relationship between family sport culture and youths' own participation through teenage years, and at the same time, there is a clear decline in participation rates, implying that the older teenage athletes are a much more selected group than the early teen athletes. It is a question whether our measure of family sport culture have slightly different meaning for the younger than for the older teenagers, depended upon how they have transitioned through youth as a life stage. What these differences might be,

is a topic for further research. Earlier research can offer a starting point. Harwood et al. (2017, p. 31) state that an important component in parental involvement in sport is that the parents are able to positively 'adapt to their children's sporting progressions and developmental needs'. We suggest a higher concern in future research for parental involvement related to the general development through teenage years.

Conclusion

Our main contribution is to show continuities in the relevance of family sport culture for sport participation through teenage years through a solid survey material including the whole population of youth – not only elite aspiring young athletes that has been the target group in many previous studies. By this we add to the growing field of studies on parent–child relationships in sport. The observed continuity in the relevance of family sport culture for sport participation through teenage years is explained by Bourdieu's habitus theory. We further suggest that even though there is a continuity that we explain with reference to early socialisation, the way this actually operates in families might change through teenage years – and is something that should be addressed in further studies. Hopefully not with the restricted scope of contributing to children's athletic success, but more broadly relating to sport as an arena for studying parent–child relationships – and changes in these relationships through teenage years. Our contribution is putting these questions on the agenda – and delivering background knowledge that shows the continued importance of family sport culture through teenage years – a period often assumed to be accompanied by de-attachment from parents.

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