

Etiquette and the Cultural Diffusion of Golf: Globalization and Emotional Control in Social Relations

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This article examines the cultural diffusion of golf and its etiquette code. In so doing it sheds light on the role of emotions and psychological life in broader debates about global-local interrelationships. Data collected from 38 interviews in England and Norway indicate that while the general ethos of golf etiquette has been broadly accepted in Norway, its reception (the perceived importance, mode of learning, and extent of conformity) has been contoured by ideologies which characterize Norwegian sport more generally; namely voluntarism, inclusiveness and collectivism. The study therefore shows both how emotional control is central to the regulation of social relations and the way in which local adaptation of this global cultural product is more characteristic of a process of glocalization than globalization. The article argues that to fully understand global-local interrelations, research needs to be as cognizant of psychosocial effects as it is of media representations and corporate interventions.

Keywords: golf, etiquette, globalization, emotion, cultural diffusion

As Brian Stoddart (1990, p. 378) has argued, “while golf is perhaps the most socially pervasive of games on a global scale, its social contours have been ignored by academic analysts.” Since Stoddart wrote, sociologists of sport have examined gender issues (Crosset, 1995; Nylund, 2003; Shin and Nam, 2004), Tiger Woods’ impact on racial politics in the US (Cole and Andrews, 2000), and the political and economic interests which benefit from the diffusion of golf to Asia (An and Sage, 1992). Our literature review identified just two papers which looked at what is perhaps the most distinctive feature of golf; namely, the role of etiquette (Collinson and Hoskin, 1994; Varner and Knottnerus, 2002). This paper seeks to address this

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under-researched aspect of this under-researched game. Specifically, what happens to golf etiquette codes when the game undergoes a process of global diffusion?

Golf Etiquette

Etiquette is both a written aspect of the game's rules and an unwritten aspect of the game's conventions. According to the game's ruling body, *The Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St. Andrews*, there are four main etiquette categories which regulate golfers' interactions:

1. *Safety*. Players must ensure that their actions will not harm other users of the course, being particularly aware of those in front of them, and miss-hit shots.
2. *Courtesy*. Players should avoid distracting others who are ready to take a stroke. Players should only play when it is their turn, and while waiting should not stand directly behind the ball or hole or cast a shadow over another player's putting line.
3. *Pace of play*. Players should play at a "good" pace, play as soon as it is their turn, leave the green immediately upon completing the hole, leave equipment in such a position as to speed their passage to the next tee, and record scores while in transit. If delaying the group behind, players should invite them to "play through." Priority on the course is determined by a group's pace of play.¹
4. *Care of the course*. Players should repair any damage they make to fairways, bunkers or greens, and avoid making unnecessary damage, e.g., when taking practice swings (Royal and Ancient, 2004).

An additional aspect of etiquette which many see as integral to golf, is *dress code*. Books, magazines and websites, devote considerable attention to how golfers should dress. Some golf clubs have large displays reminding players of dress expectations on the course and in the club house, or print the dress code on the green fee ticket (Kleppen, 2006).

The importance of golf's etiquette code is illustrated by the fact that it comprises the first section of the game's official rules. Among major international sports only cricket, the laws of which were augmented in 2000 by a preamble on the "Spirit of the Game," has anything comparable. The roots of this sporting exceptionalism are though unclear. With evidence of similar games concurrently played in France and Holland, the game was codified into something resembling its modern form by *The Honourable Company of Edinburgh Golfers* in 1744 (Stirk, 1987). The explicit and pronounced importance of etiquette may be a consequence of the social location of the game's codifiers (being the only sport codified in the eighteenth century outside the narrow social circles of London-based aristocrats) and the peculiar balance they struck between inclusionary and exclusionary practices (Cousins, 1975), the influence of freemasonry on the early development of the game (Stirk, 1987), or the role of the middle classes in popularizing the sport in England (Lowerson, 1983).

The enduring significance of etiquette is manifest in the way these initially somewhat esoteric behavioral codes have been globally diffused. Established in 1958 with a council of 32, the International Golf Federation (IGF) (formerly the World Amateur Golf Council) currently has 143 member nations.² Golf emerged in

Norway in the 1920s after students, business people and tourists who had encountered the game abroad transported it back home, and British engineers working in Norway introduced their Norwegian colleagues to the game (Kleppen, 1998). Only a few thousand middle and upper class participants played the game for the following 60 years, but from 1985 golf participation experienced exponential growth with the number of players rising from 5,600 to 125,000 in 2005 (Tangen and Istad, 2012). Three main factors for the growth of golf in Norway have been identified: a general growth in welfare with oil revenues increasing wages, access to higher education, the availability of middle (or service) class occupations and the leisure opportunities for an aging population; changing agricultural politics which provided economic incentives for changes to land use; and changing networks of family and friendship relations (Tangen and Istad, 2012). While the upper middle class dominated, the golf population became more broadly socially representative. Crucially, in this context, each player had to be a member of a golf club and to go through a certification program where they learnt the rules *and* etiquette of the game.

Etiquette is of sociological interest because it is centrally concerned with emotional control and the regularization of social relations. While the content of golf etiquette has changed over time, the overriding principle remains “that consideration should be shown to others on the course at all times” (Royal and Ancient, 2004, p. 19). The rationale for regulating social relations in golf through an etiquette code is that it will make the game more *enjoyable*. Advocates justify the heightened consideration of others’ feelings by pointing to the game’s “sensitive” and “fragile” nature (Watson with Hannigan, 1984) which stems from the “intense concentration” required to play golf (Hay, 1992, p. 193). Players and commentators on the game typically claim that, “Etiquette is possibly more important in golf than in any other game” (Hay, 1992, p. 192).

While under Rule 33–7 the R&A make provision for the punishment of infringements, the emphasis is on individuals to voluntarily fulfill the expectations of etiquette. Since golf, unlike many other sports, is normally played without the supervision of a referee or an umpire, both its rules and etiquette are heavily dependent on *internalized* self-control. The game, therefore,

relies on the integrity of the individual to show consideration for other players and to abide by the Rules. All players should conduct themselves in a disciplined manner, demonstrating courtesy and sportsmanship at all times, irrespective of how competitive they may be. This is the spirit of the game of golf (Royal and Ancient, 2004, p. 19).

The little academic research that has focused on golf etiquette suggests that it has considerable exclusionary rather than inclusionary elements. Varner and Knottnerus (2002) argue that between 1894 and 1920 America’s privileged classes used golf etiquette to express their civility and so distance themselves from, and assert their social superiority over, lower classes. Collinson and Hoskin (1994), drawing on the work of Elias and Foucault, argue that the emergence of golf was shaped by “civilizing” and “disciplining” processes. Golf became not only the “quintessential civilised and middle class sport,” but entailed the technical and social discipline of the body in the pursuit of playing success (Collinson and Hoskin, 1994, p. 621). Through the publication of rules, playing guidance and reminiscences,

“golf became a fertile field for the exercise of disciplinary and quasi-disciplinary knowledge” (Collinson and Hoskin, 1994, p. 623).

Theoretical Grounding

Emotional control in social contexts is an issue that has caught the interest of key sociological theorists. Three are of particular relevance for this study. Elias (2000) has argued that what he terms the civilizing process is characterized by a shift in the balance between external and internal constraints on social behavior with proscriptive and often physically enforced norms increasingly being replaced by rationally guided and habitually embodied self-control. From the historical study of manuals of advice and etiquette from the thirteenth to the nineteenth century, Elias documented how the increasing functional differentiation and relational complexity of society has been paralleled by the development of more even and stable behavior among individuals. External regulation increasingly gives way to internal self-regulation. Consequently, in addition to the individual’s conscious self-control is an automatic, blindly functioning, apparatus that Elias termed *habitus*. Shame and embarrassment become increasingly important regulators of social behavior,³ and where social behavioral norms are offended, these emotions are automatically and unconsciously evoked. Golf, through the formalization of etiquette, combines elements of external and internal self-regulation.

Goffman (1969) conceptualizes emotional control as arising out of role taking and introduced the term “impression management” to enable understanding of interpersonal behavior. Goffman argued that people are always worried about their image in the eyes of the others and do almost everything to avoid something that can result in embarrassment. Goffman noted that embarrassment arises out of the slightest incident; be it real, anticipated or just imagined. To use a golfing example, even when you are some distance away from the other player, you can almost feel their eyes on you, when the ball rolls back in the fairway bunker after an unsuccessful attempt to get the ball all the way to the green. The sense of being seen magnifies the embarrassment causing, for instance, blushing. It is therefore of upmost importance to manage yourself and present yourself to others in the way you want them to see you; for example, in relation to pace of play, care of the course, dress, etc. For Goffman embarrassment is a core mechanism in the social organization of day-to-day conduct. This emotion plays an important part in sustaining the individual’s commitment to social organization, values and conventions (Scheff, 2001).

The socioemotional control demanded by golfing etiquette can also be understood using the work of Bourdieu. For Bourdieu, playing games is a metaphor for social life. We learn to perform to show that we “take the game seriously” (Calhoun, 2011) and we are constantly struggling with others and ourselves, more or less deeply committed, and well aware of being part of something bigger. Playing a ball game like golf demands knowledge of both the rules and a sense of *how* to play. It requires constant awareness of opponents, teammates and onlookers. Through thousands of hours of training and competition a sense of how to do things—a practical sense—is developed and embodied. Bourdieu also uses the term “*habitus*;” an intuitive and habitual capacity to playing the games we encounter in

our everyday life. We are not born with a given habitus, but we may be born with greater or lesser genetic potential for both playing and emotional control. “We learn and incorporate into our habitus a sense of what we can ‘reasonably’ expect” (Calhoun, 2011, p. 363). Golf is particularly interesting with regards to how people relate to codes of conduct, to unwritten rules and expectations, to emotional control and anger management to play the game in a socially acceptable way, for this has changed through history and varies between social contexts. For this reason golf is regularly cited by Bourdieu as a particularly prestigious and exclusionary sport, and therefore illustrative of his broader theory in *Distinction* (Bourdieu, 1978; 1994).

It would appear, therefore, that the presence of an explicit and clearly defined etiquette code in golf which both requires sophisticated impression management and has historically been used in exclusionary ways, has the potential to restrict the game’s cultural diffusion. Golf’s etiquette code not only requires those adopting the game to embrace an existing set of rules, but also behavioral and emotional regulation and a degree of affect modification. It requires an embodied and mostly unconscious capacity to act respectfully, mannered and polite in social settings. These practices are less easily translatable across cultures than prescriptions of what actions are legal or illegal within the game. This paper looks at the implications of the global diffusion of golf for the incorporation of the emotional regulation prescribed in the game’s etiquette code.

The Global and the Local

As Andrews and Ritzer (2007) argue, sociologists of sport analyzing globalization have come under the influence of a “persuasive glocal hegemony.” Robertson’s concept of *glocalization* can be defined as the process “whereby local cultures adapt and redefine any global cultural product to suit their particular needs, beliefs and customs” (Giulianotti and Robertson, 2004). Andrews and Ritzer are however critical of this status quo, arguing that analysis of the global-local nexus is “yet to be exhausted” and, suggesting that the “exact nature of this ‘mutual constitution’ remains to be specified” (2007, p. 137). They suggest that researchers are frequently led by political sympathies which fetishize the local and resist the global, and postmodernist tendencies to give a voice to the peripheral and marginalized. Combined, this leads to an empirical selectivity in searching for local “heroism” as resistance to globalization. In response they posit *glocalization*—defined as “the imperialistic ambitions of nations, corporations, organizations and the like and their desire, indeed need, to impose themselves on various geographic areas” (Andrews and Ritzer, 2007, p. 148–49)—as more adequately conceptualizing globalization.

It seems in part that different empirical emphases underpin glocal-glocal debates. For instance, the “glocal hegemony” owes much to the role of the nation in demarcating participation in major sporting events (Rowe, 2003), structuring spectator engagement (Bairner, 2001), and staging sports mega events (Horne and Manzenreiter, 2006). In a similar vein one could argue that the majority of the examples cited by Andrews and Ritzer relate to corporate engagements with sport, and thus cultural commingling driven by capitalist profit making. At heart though, this debate is about the balance of global and local forces, premised on an acceptance of their essential interdependence. It remains the case, however, that

“the individual, *psychosocial consequences* of the intersection of global forces and local cultures … remain largely unexplored” (Melnick and Jackson, 2002, p. 430. Emphasis in original).

In contrast, this paper engages with the perspectives of people within recipient countries, and in so doing offers an additional perspective on globalization debates. By looking at the way the game is experienced as a leisure pursuit, this research sheds light on a largely overlooked aspect of globalization processes, namely the impact on affective behavior. To what extent have affective controls been “imposed” from above via the diffusion of golf, and to what extent does the game’s adoption illustrate elements of local resistance and/or reinterpretation?

To answer these questions, this paper compares and contrasts the experiences and perceptions of golfers in a country with a long golfing tradition (England), with those in a comparatively new golfing nation (Norway). Despite their geographical proximity, and some close sporting affinities (see e.g., Hognestad, 2006), there are distinct cultural differences between these two countries. In terms of welfare regimen, England is an archetype of Esping-Andersen’s (1990) liberal type, while Norway is social-demographic. The regimes differ with regards to decommodification, social stratification, and the private-public mix. This may influence the learning and use of etiquette on the golf course. In contrast to the class-bound character of English sport which golf etiquette seems to exemplify, Norwegian sport is strongly democratic, and traditionally reliant on an extensive voluntary sector. Organizers of the Lillehammer Winter Olympics drew on this in representing a Norwegian national identity based on equality, closeness to nature and love of sport during the games (Puijk, 2000). More specifically, Steen-Johnsen (2007) highlights the notions of inclusiveness and collectivism as concepts which have traditionally defined Norwegian sport. Such ideas closely relate to Jante Law, a concept which describes Nordic negativity toward individual achievement, personal pride and self-promotion. This may underpin the Norwegian public and media perception of golf as snobbish, exclusive, expensive and time-consuming (Tangen, 2013). This paper argues that the reception of golf etiquette in Norway has been contoured by these existing Norwegian ideologies and attitudes, particularly those of *voluntarism*, *inclusiveness* and *collectivism* and that this has shaped the way emotional control in social relations is regulated and performed.

Research Methods

The findings reported in this paper emerged as part of a broader study of etiquette in golf funded by the Norwegian Research Foundation. The project consisted of a historical analysis of the development of the game and its etiquette, and a comparative examination of the way in which golf etiquette was experienced and practiced in England and Norway. In relation to the latter research goal, the researchers are well aware of the challenges of having respondents reflect upon practices and behavior that are both embodied and largely unconscious. Ideally, one should have carried out extensive fieldwork observing the emotional control and etiquette behavior of golfers. However, due to practical and economic reasons, this was not possible. Instead, the researchers developed a semistructured interview schedule based on both the literature and initial observations during one of the researcher’s

experiences of playing golf in Norway and Britain. Formulating questions that related to practical situations, actions and decision-making, the researchers sought to trigger interviewees' memories and help them remember how they experience and practice the etiquette of golf on the course. In turn, respondents' answers revealed their understanding of golf etiquette in general, and aspects of emotional control and the regulation of social relations in particular. Through a comparative method we could assess how these aspects were influenced by the social and cultural context in the two countries.

The interview schedule explored golfers' sociocultural background and views on people's engagement with etiquette: their perceptions about its importance; their learning and knowledge of etiquette; their own conformity and experiences of others' breaches of etiquette. More than 70 questions were preformulated to be used in the interview situation. While the two interviewers (one each in Norway and England) addressed these research themes using different prompts, follow up questions, etc., the common core of the interview schedule enabled comparability of data from the two research sites.

To embrace the views of as wide a range of respondents as possible, a variety of golf clubs was identified in each country. These included municipally owned, commercial "pay and play" and private members' clubs with differing degrees of exclusivity. Differences in the local organization of the game were immediately evident. The researchers attended each of the clubs and used a combination of convenience and purposive sampling methods to identify interviewees. Most interviewees had just finished playing on the course and were drinking or eating before leaving the club. Consequently, some golfers were interviewed individually, while others were interviewed while sat with their friends and playing partners.

Nineteen interviews with five females and fourteen males were conducted at three Norwegian courses. Players ranged from 18 to 78 years old and had various playing abilities (three were scratch golfers, others had handicaps up to 33). In addition to this, nineteen interviews (some of which were group interviews) were conducted with 30 males and 5 females at four courses in England. Players ranged from 16 to 75 years old. Seven players, all at a commercial "pay and play" course, had no handicap suggesting a relatively recent adoption of the game. The others had handicaps ranging from 4 to 25.

Interviews were recorded and transcribed in full. The researchers compared findings through a series of meetings and emails. Initially the main points of similarity and difference were identified. As the analysis developed, the researchers each identified relevant pieces of empirical evidence and reflected on the "fit" of each other's evidence with theoretical literature and the broader argument that was developing. This led to the further investigation and analysis of some themes, and the rejection of others.

In the following sections we examine the degree to which the diffusion of golf has been marked by similarities and differences in the way in which the game is played in these two cultural settings. While we occasionally identify places where demographic differences influenced responses, these were less significant to the analysis than cross-cultural comparison. Consequently, in addressing the way people perceive the importance of, learn about, and conform and react to breaches in golf etiquette, we argue that where preexisting (English) interpretations of etiquette align with traditional Norwegian cultural dispositions, behavioral forms have been

adopted relatively unproblematically. Where, however, preexisting interpretations of etiquette contrast with Norwegian cultural mores, such practices have been revised or rejected.

The Importance of Etiquette

As noted earlier, advocates of the game argue that the existence of an etiquette code is in players' self-interests, and thus beneficial to the golf collective. In this regard Norwegian interviewees mirrored their English counterparts in describing the importance of etiquette and thus illustrated that this aspect of the game's ethos had been diffused alongside golf's more fundamental rules. An experienced Norwegian player summed up her view on golf etiquette as follows: "Never overlook a golf rule, that's a rule!" Similarly an English interviewee noted, "I wouldn't want to go to a club that was indifferent to etiquette because I think that there is a certain level of standards that you want out on the golf course."

Interviewees explicitly verbalized the importance of concern for others in expressing their valuation of golf etiquette. English interviewees argued that, "the most important thing is the way you treat other people on the course ... I feel that you should treat other people how you'd like to be treated ... treat people with respect." Another, when asked what was the most important aspect of golf etiquette noted, "Consideration of others, above all else. Be aware of where you are on the course ... be aware of what other people are doing, and then concentrate on your bit." Norwegian interviewees similarly noted that, "Your fellow player will spend four hours of his free time with you. You should not spoil his day by being rude and grumpy." The idea that this behavioral code conforms to traditional Norwegian perceptions of socially acceptable behavior were illustrated by an interviewee who argued that, "It all boils down to *good old fashioned manners*, respect for other people so that they can perform as well as they can" (emphasis added).

Interviewees in both contexts also verbalized how etiquette was a source of distinction for golfers and thus, in some respects, could act as an exclusionary mechanism. This is reminiscent of Bourdieu's (1994) claim that golf is one of the more prestigious and exclusionary sports. English interviewees described etiquette as "part of why it's a lovely game," seen to define the game's aura: "Once you step on to the first tee you realise that it is one of the few games where there is etiquette, gentlemanly understanding, letting people play through." Others argued that etiquette was related to the positive quality of self-control: "that's why golf is such a good game. It's all about self-discipline ... (and) ensuring that standards are maintained throughout the game." As a consequence a number of people were of the view that, "People who play golf do tend to be nice people. It must be a bigger percentage than in any other walk of life." Golfers viewed themselves as exhibiting high levels of self-control, commensurate with predominant self-perceptions of "civilized" as identified by Elias (2000).

There were many parallel comments in the Norwegian data. Self-control was again cited as an important characteristic: "Golf disciplines people. Compared to other sports, golf is peculiar in this way." Another interviewee stated, "I take pleasure from being with people who are nice and polite to each other." A third illustrated the moral worth of golf by making comparisons with other sports: "In golf you

should not cheat. In soccer and handball you are trained to cheat." Norwegians, however, also appeared to value the voluntarism implicit in the self-regulatory aspects of golf etiquette. One interviewee went on to note, "Former athletes find it difficult to play golf. They still believe that if you are not caught red handed it is allowed." Another echoed these thoughts: "In soccer everything is allowed until the referee blows his whistle. If you take that attitude with you out in society and working life, you will not get very far."

Impression management in Goffman's (1969) terms could be achieved through clothing. Questions about the importance of dress code as an aspect of etiquette revealed the most marked differences between English and Norwegian golfers' predispositions toward exclusivity and inclusivity. English interviewees described the various aspects of etiquette as interrelated. An interviewee at a commercial "pay and play" course argued that a smart appearance was to be valued because it demonstrated discipline while another at a members' club argued that, "If you're taking pride in your dress you're taking pride in everything else. Like everything else in life, sloppy dress, sloppy play, sloppy this, that, and the other." One interviewee, despite citing strictness of etiquette as one reason for previously leaving a members' club, noted that a strong dress code was something that he still aspired to. Others saw the defense of dress codes as the thin end of the wedge: "you have to apply that standard. If you start letting people fall away from that standard then effectively you have anarchy. If people start falling away then all of that etiquette will go out of the door."

In contrast, Norwegians viewed dress code as distinctly less important than aspects of etiquette such as safety, pace of play and care of the course largely due to the exclusionary consequences of the former. While some Norwegians, like their English counterparts, expressed the belief that a certain degree of smartness should be maintained and spoke about how it contributed to their enjoyment of the game, it was only when playing team events and representing their club that most Norwegian golfers dressed to a particular code. Most interviewees said that they usually played in ordinary clothes and even at the most prestigious clubs their actions illustrated a relatively high degree of dress code flexibility. During a single day the Norwegian researcher observed nine different people playing in jeans in contravention of one club's published dress code. Those Norwegians who had played abroad (mainly in Spain and Britain) not only believed the dress code there to be stricter but recalled instances of being prohibited from these courses due to dress code infringements. Most, however, were personally indifferent and typically expressed their concern in the following terms: "The dress code is OK, but it is wrong if somebody is not allowed to play due to just a T-shirt!" Despite such statements, it is still rare to observe players using T-shirts on Norwegian golf courses.

It would therefore appear that Norwegians have part accepted and part adapted the behavioral regulation made manifest in golf's etiquette code. Golfers' beliefs that etiquette distinguishes the game from other sports are not surprising given that this ideology reflects positively on their own self-image, but the greater tradition of valuing inclusivity is apparent in the extent to which Norwegians do not embrace etiquette's more exclusionary aspects (Steen-Johnsen, 2007). Given the recognition of cross-cultural differences in adherence to dress codes, moreover, it is clear that to a large extent, this response is conscious rather than inadvertent. The

sociodemocratic ideals of the Norwegian welfare regimes (Esping-Andersen, 1990) seem to have softened dress code attitudes. These attitudes reflect a commingling of cultural practices, the local redefining of a global cultural product, characteristic of glocalization (Giulianotti and Robertson, 2004). While not necessarily a conscious act of resistance, Norwegian attitudes toward dress codes illustrate the modification of diffused practices which clash with preexisting local conventions.

Learning About Etiquette

Experiences of learning etiquette further suggested that in adopting the game Norwegians recognized and accepted that participation entailed the relatively strict regularization of social relations. In this respect the game's diffusion has led to a degree of shared understanding over the role of behavioral and emotional control in golf. However, aspects of difference also existed, for players in the two contexts initially learned about etiquette in distinct ways. These differences seem to relate to the strength of the notion of collectivism within Norwegian sport (Esping-Andersen, 1990), and thus further illustrate the way in which diffused practices which are incompatible with local conventions are adapted.

In both countries learning about etiquette was seen as an on-going process. Interviewees argued that, "You never stop learning," as it required both prolonged exposure to the game and regular practice. Older, more experienced players were seen as an important source of information. One interviewee argued that "you learn off your mates really," while another noted that he had a number of older friends "and you sort of go out with them and they show you and pass it on." Golfers in both countries discussed how they caddied for others as a way of learning more about golf etiquette.

Similarly trial and error was identified as a common feature of the learning process in both national contexts. Many Norwegian golfers admitted occasionally making accidental breaches of etiquette when novices and being corrected by fellow players. An English interviewee similarly recalled, "I made mistakes and picked it up like that." Another Norwegian said that as a youngster he had often lost his temper, hitting the club into the ground and shouting "Fuck!" He continued, "Gradually I recognized that you don't do that on the golf course." A parallel example was given by an English golfer who recalled how, as a youngster, he would often throw clubs. Implicitly describing the role of habitus (Bourdieu, 1994), he went on to say, "of course I don't do that anymore, you just don't do it. You see it but you just don't do it any more." Shame and embarrassment (Elias, 2000) were important regulators of behavior as the inability to conform was identified as an unpleasant experience: "I learnt by breaking all the rules I suppose, and being told off, which I didn't like ... it's been quite an uphill struggle for me really ... I felt I was treated like a child."

While there was a shared view that learning about etiquette was an important and sometimes difficult process, the relative emphasis on the collective in Norwegian sport meant that players initially learned etiquette in quite distinct ways. Norwegian golfers must acquire a "green card" by passing practical and theoretical examinations before being allowed on the course. Clubs provide newcomers with formal training which includes basic playing skills and extensive tuition on the game's rules and etiquette. While many players admitted that it made them

fearful of making mistakes when embarking on their first rounds, all Norwegian interviewees had experienced this form of training.

In contrast, for the majority of interviewees in England learning etiquette was more individualistic. Some clubs staged formal teaching sessions for youngsters while a few adults had received formal tutoring from, e.g., “a senior member,” but interviewees suggested that etiquette tuition was rare for recreational golfers. More commonly English golfers spoke of learning about etiquette through the literature they received upon joining a club or acquired themselves. Reading was often supplemented by playing experience or watching golf on television. For a small number of individuals the personal quest to conform to etiquette became a preoccupation. One interviewee, when asked whether he had felt the need to buy literature on etiquette stated, “Oh tons of books. I had all the magazines every month.” Like their Norwegian counterparts, English interviewees recalled the embarrassment entailed by making mistakes when playing their first rounds but it was notable that while for the English learning about etiquette was the duty of the individual, in Norway the onus of responsibility for etiquette education was to be borne by the collective.

Conformity to Etiquette

The similarity in the way interviewees in both countries perceived their own conformity indicated a significant degree of shared understanding of etiquette in the two cultural contexts. However, when examined in more depth, and in particular when interviewees were asked to reflect upon specific examples of their own infringement of golf etiquette, differences emerged. These differences seemed to illustrate different perceptions of whether conformity to golf etiquette was largely a matter of voluntarism or compulsion.

Most interviewees recognized that while there were others who were more conformist than they were, they themselves were distinctly more conformist than the majority of golfers. Most liked to describe themselves as “a happy medium” or “better than average.” This attitude stemmed from the perception that too strict an adherence to golf etiquette could also be detrimental to one’s enjoyment of the game. As one interviewee noted,

I’ve got a friend that I play with quite regularly and he’s a stickler for rules.

Whether you’re playing a friendly or whether its midwinter and you’re playing on temporary greens and temporary tees, he’ll pull you up on every little thing.

Despite seeing themselves as relatively conformist, interviewees in both countries discussed how one could be more flexible in certain contexts. A Norwegian club professional noted that:

When I play with colleagues (club and course managers), it is another matter. We know the rules and the etiquette (but) we might find solutions that are not written in any rule book. We are practical. We do not disturb anyone. We aren’t influencing others.

Another Norwegian stated that, “Sometimes we agree to drop a ball where we think the ball disappeared. But we do not count the points on that hole.” An English

interviewee at a “pay and play” course talked about using “leather wedges” to kick the ball out of a difficult position, while a former club captain at a private members’ club said, “I think that when you’re playing with friends, the swearing and the club abuse and the sledging is a part of the game, and a good part of the game. You’ve got to have that I think.” However this interviewee went on to note that, “When you’re playing with people you don’t know then clearly you don’t do that, well you shouldn’t.” There was, therefore, cross-national understanding of the boundaries to the appropriate level of conformity to golf etiquette.

However, differences between players in the two countries emerged when interviewees reflected on the times when they had not conformed to etiquette. Most Norwegian players admitted to a number of minor breaches of etiquette such as swearing and shouting after a bad shot, standing on the wrong side when an opponent was driving from the tee or walking across an opponent’s putting line. If others drew attention to etiquette breaches, people would commonly excuse their “forgetfulness” or preoccupation with their own game. Yet Norwegian players rarely elaborated on etiquette breaches, suggesting that failure to conform was not a particularly serious issue. So limited were these individuals’ concerns that most could not recall any specific occurrences, indicating therefore a relatively low degree of shame association with such incursions.

Conversely specific incidents remained prominent in the minds of English interviewees indicative of a more serious error in impression management (Goffman, 1969), or a more deeply internalized behavioral code (Elias, 2000). One player recalled an occasion when he spoke while someone was putting. Though admitting his error he sought to justify his actions, saying:

Now who’s to say that he would have got that putt if I had just kept quiet? Would he have said anything? Would he have got mad even if I’d have said something and he’d got the putt? But as it happens he missed it and he went berserk because I’d spoken ... And it was only a game with friends, it wasn’t a competition, and I’m thinking to myself, is it necessary to ... get to that level.

A pair of golfers similarly recalled being confronted by someone who pointed out that they should have waited before teeing off to a shared fairway. Although they admitted that they had not read the relevant notices, they described this person’s actions as “a bit off ... at the end of the day it’s not our fault.”

Even if the differences in the actions of Norwegians and English golfers are not particularly marked, the degree to which interviewees were preoccupied with their own etiquette breaches suggests that conformity to etiquette held different levels of meaning in the two contexts. The higher levels of shame and embarrassment which accompany breaches of etiquette suggest that for English golfers conformity to the behavioral code is seen as a matter of compulsion (Elias, 2000). In contrast to this, Norwegians’ relative disinterest in, or lack of concern with, their own breaches of etiquette suggest that conformity has a stronger element of voluntarism. This view was typified by a Norwegian who said that when playing with strangers: “If they insist on the etiquette, we follow it. No big deal!” While Norwegian and English golfers may conform to golf etiquette in similar ways, the varying emotional significance of conformity reflects glocalization. This is indicative of a lingering heterogeneity despite the fact that the regularization of social relations is widely seen as fundamental to the game and thus implicit in its diffusion. It suggests also

a more Goffmanesque impression management of emotions rather than an Eliasian model of subconscious internal self-regulation through habitus.

Reactions to Breaches in Etiquette

Differential meanings attached to similar behavioral forms were similarly apparent in relation to the way interviewees reacted to other players' etiquette breaches. Once again, the traditions of the game seemed to have been adopted at face value in line with globalization processes, but values attached to such behavior were mediated by local sporting customs, indicating a tendency toward glocalization.

In both countries divisions on the basis of age, sex, and social class appeared to influence perceptions of which types of golfers were most likely to breach etiquette. Females complained about the bad language, poor dress and dangerous play of male golfers while males argued that females played too slowly. Younger players were criticized for being lazy, "against all kinds of rules" and "think(ing) they own our club!" In contrast to this a younger Norwegian player said, "It is the older players that don't comply to the etiquette." A middle aged interviewee argued that "youngsters when they're starting and seniors when they're starting" were most likely to breach etiquette, while those past retirement age were critical of those in employment who only played at weekends. According to a golfer in his 70s,

on a Monday morning here you will see a lot more divots about than you will on a Wednesday morning ... (weekend players) are more pressurized for time and there's a lot of people working on handicaps who think they are important.

While some were keen to defend municipal courses—"I wouldn't have anyone condone (them), they're being bloody snobbish"—others talked in more negative terms: "playing at a municipal, you play with people who can't count, they're walking all over the place, they don't realise what the game's all about." Relative newcomers to the game criticized established players' lack of adherence to etiquette. Behavioral expectations were therefore reflective of self-image (Elias, 2000).

A further characteristic of the game in each country was the existence of a small number of players who had reputations for poor etiquette. At one Norwegian club a person was renowned for carrying two similar balls so that if one was lost, he could secretly drop the other and claim to have "suddenly" found it. An English interviewee described how he and other club members avoided playing with his brother-in-law, "because he's a bit of a shouter, bit of a swearer, throws his clubs around, that sort of thing. He's quite aggressive when he plays." Another English interviewee noted, "when you are a new member, you play with anyone you can don't you, but you suss them out over time."

However, the way in which interviewees responded, or felt they should respond, to other people's etiquette breaches distinguished golf in these two cultural contexts. In this respect Norwegian golfers exhibited considerable tolerance of deviance. Speaking about players who manipulated their handicap to give themselves an advantage in competitions, a Norwegian stated: "I feel sorry for them. It's so pathetic. So I do not confront them with it." Others stated that it was the cheats who ultimately lost out through nonconformity, but Norwegians interviewees generally expressed a lack of concern over such issues. For example, one interviewee stated, "if someone wants to have a low handicap, please be my guest! Let them carry on."

There were no examples of Norwegian interviewees who sought to exclude people from the game on the basis of such breaches, or who felt that such “deviants” should be compelled into compliance. The expression of disdain toward those who would seek such self-aggrandizement was more prominent.

In contrast with the situation in Norway, a number of English players expressed frustration at their inability to challenge etiquette breaches. For some the reluctance to act stemmed from potential embarrassment. One interviewee, when asked if he raised breaches in etiquette with other players said, “No, you don’t. You’d like to but you wouldn’t,” while another noted that, “You do (raise etiquette) with your friends but not other people … with strangers you’d just turn a blind eye really.” A third argued that “you don’t know what reaction you’ll get … it gets distorted, whether its embarrassment or what (I don’t know).”

Others, however, argued that it was actually behoven on them to challenge etiquette breaches. One interviewee said, “It is in a way (a duty),” and though this compelled him to proactively police etiquette, he recognized that he wasn’t universally supported in this: “There are some people who say, ‘Oh you’re getting too picky’.” Another interviewee said, “you’ve got to say something in a way almost, but it can be a bit difficult.” When questioned as to why he felt this way, the interviewee replied, “I think it’s an obligation to the game.”

The different underlying meaning of etiquette in the two contexts was further illustrated by reports of how people who breached etiquette would normally respond. Whereas Norwegians confronted with etiquette breaches responded calmly, English interviewees noted that people’s reactions could often be defensive, revealing a sense of offense to a more deeply internalized behavioral code. One interviewee noted that, “you get the type that will thank you for it and others who will tell you to mind your own business,” while others spoke of their concern about evoking an aggressive response, particularly from younger players. Direct and angry confrontations were reported. One interviewee recalled seeing two players walk back up the course to confront the players behind when a ball was driven close to the group in which they were playing. There was, he recalled, “lots of swearing, lots of shouting plus some stomping around.”

These different attitudes were most evident in relation to slow play. Norwegian interviewees were resigned to slow play, seeing it as regrettable but unavoidable, the consequence, perhaps, of playing sport on an inclusionary and collective basis. In England, however, interviewees revealed more concerted action, such as the public stigmatization of slow players with club “awards,” or deliberate dangerous play designed to speed other players along. In such cases, an interviewee suggested, “Sometimes you just hit a ball. ‘Oh sorry I didn’t see you there.’ You have to do it tactfully.” Here, compliance was seen as the end which justified the means of enforced restriction of voluntarism.

Thus while there were many similarities in the way in which English and Norwegian golfers identify those who breach etiquette, there is a different emotional attachment to etiquette among golfers in England. Here shame and embarrassment (Elias, 2000) merged with aspects of distinction (Bourdieu, 1994). Conversely, in Norway golf appears to conform more closely to the national sporting traditions of inclusivity and voluntarism (Steen-Johnsen, 2007). Noncompliance is not seen as sufficiently shameful to justify social exclusion. While Norwegians have embraced the social regulation of certain forms of behavior, there are limits to the degree

to which Norwegians feel that acceptable and unacceptable behavior should be policed and thus exclusionary boundaries drawn. In this way we see glocalization (Giulianotti and Robertson, 2004); the interplay between the global diffusion of a game, and its local reinterpretation and modification. This difference also indicates that emotional control in the golfing context is more deeply engrained in the habitus of the English player, expressed in stronger emotional reactions and communications.

Discussion and Conclusion

One important, but often overlooked, aspect of Bourdieu's (1977) theory of practice is to take games seriously. In general, Bourdieu stressed that to understand any social situation and interaction, we should ask within what social framework the players are pursuing their goals, what unconscious learning informs their actions, what constraints are they facing, and what are other players doing? In other words, what is at stake in their play? In this paper, we aimed to show this. And, to a certain degree we succeeded in that.

Based on Elias and Goffman, we hypothesized that the concepts self-control, embarrassment and impression management would be valuable to understanding the phenomenon of golf etiquette. Our findings indicate that this is true. Face-to-face interactions like golf, where groups often play together for four or more hours, create situations where carrying out impression management is imperative: dressing properly; keep emotions under control; being polite to fellow players. In situations where etiquette was breached, for example when playing the ball so that other players' security was threatened, embarrassment is triggered and the player in question has to reestablish the impression he or she makes on others by making excuses.

These more or less universal mechanisms, are modified by locally specific cultural values and political ideologies as well as globalization in general. This paper has argued that while golf etiquette has broadly been embraced by Norwegians, some of its more exclusionary aspects have not been adopted. In particular, ideologies of collectivism and voluntarism perform important roles in justifying the existence, and mediating the legitimate boundaries, of golf etiquette practices in Norway. It is beyond the remit of this paper to account for the prominence of these values in Norwegian society but one might point to the synergy between such ideals and the tradition of social democracy in Nordic countries (Bairner, 2010). Most clearly this study demonstrates that there is more evidence of the local adaptation of a global cultural product than of imperialistic imposition of a behavioral code; that is to say glocalization.

It would, of course, be fallacious to project the findings of this study as broadly generalizable. It does, however, add an additional dimension to our understanding by highlighting how, in assessing the mutual constitution of the global-local nexus, one must be cognizant of the contextually specific balance of power and the nature of the relations between the societies involved. In this respect, while the Norwegian adoption of golf contains elements of the emulation and imitation, there is little sense in this case that difference stems from conscious attempts to create distinction or the assertion of individuality. Far from being an act of cultural resistance, locally distinct interpretations of golf etiquette would appear to be more a product

of a self-belief in a perceived national character and existing behavioral forms. Pace Elias (2000), “civilized” behavior is an internally defined self-perception rather than an objectively measured characteristic.

Andrews and Ritzer (2007) rightfully identify the dangers of lazily applying a theoretical paradigm which can broadly describe most aspects of globalization, but may fail to account for specific variations. In this respect studies which emphasize the psychosocial impact must take their place within the globalization research agenda alongside those which address commercial imperialism or nationalistic resistance. People, their emotions and affective behavior must be as prominent in globalization research as media representations and corporate interventions. What is required is an analysis of the development of emotions and psychological life in relation to the connections with larger scale processes such as globalization.

Notes

1. In the R&A's rules, this aspect is presented as a separate category.
2. See <http://www.igfgolf.org/about-igf/nationalmembers/> Accessed first May 2015.
3. Elias distinguished between these two terms in the following way. Shame he defined as “a fear of social degradation or, more generally, of other people’s gestures of superiority” (Elias, 2000, p. 414–415), while “Embarrassment is displeasure or anxiety which arises when another person threatens to breach, or breaches, society’s prohibitions represented by one’s own super-ego” (Elias 2000, p. 418).

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