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What Makes a Champion?

– Motorcycle World Champions' recipe for success



University of Jyväskylä
Department of Sport Sciences
Master's Thesis
Social Sciences of Sport
Autumn 2011

UNIVERSITY OF JYVÄSKYLÄ

Faculty of Sport and Health Sciences

Master's Degree Programme in Sport Science and Management

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Master's Thesis, 155 pages (+ appendices 4 pages)

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This thesis explores what are the factors that impact the success in motorcycle racing. The subject is relevant to investigate since there have not been many scientific researches of motorcycle sport and the factors behind the success. Fifty-four motorcycle World Champions and representatives of the six most successful motorcycle sport countries answer to the research question: “What makes a champion in motorcycle sport?” It is also investigated how the society influences the success in motorcycle sport and how the federations and clubs could improve their training programmes. The empirical data was collected by interviewing the experts in the field of elite-level motorcycle sport. The interviews of the World Champions were carried out as structured interviews. The research process was completed by using a mixed method that consisted mostly of qualitative data which was supported by quantitative findings. The information gained from the World Champions was interpreted against societal theories and compared with their cultural and family backgrounds. The results of this thesis show that the main societal factors influencing the success of motorcycle rider are the training possibilities near their home place, a supportive societal environment and previous motorcycle success of the country. The main personal factors influencing the success are competitive personality, passion, flair, good balance and determination of the rider.

Key words: motorcycle sport, motorsport, elite-level sport, sport success, cultural and structural factors in sport

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis is based on the information gained from the motorcycle World Champions whose names are listed later in this thesis. I would like to thank you all for the time you have spent helping me and sharing the information that has been really important in order to execute this work.

This thesis is done for the International Motorcycling Federation FIM. I would like to thank the people helping me most; The CEO of FIM Guy Maitre, HR Manager Brigitte Zufferey, International Technical Commission Coordinator Charles Hennekam, Information Resources Officer Marc Pétrier and Sports Director Ignacio Verneda.

The FIM's Women's Commission CFM has also provided me with a lot of support and help. I would like to give special thanks to Beulah Schoeman, Stefy Bau, Susanne Hüttinger, Iris Krämer and Sarah Schilke for their significant help.

The CEOs or general secretaries of the most successful federations have been interviewed for this thesis. Thank you Peter Gregory / Great Britain's Federation, who also did the proof reading of this thesis, Kurt Ljungqvist / Finnish Federation, Stijn Rentmeesters / Belgian Federation, Alberto Rinaldelli / Italian Federation, Andres Somolinos Jr / Spanish Federation and Per Westling / Swedish Federation.

Thank you my supervisors and mentors professor Matti Urrila and Dr Hanna Vehmas, as well as researcher Päivi Pirkkalainen and Dr. Tech Pertti Korhonen who have provided me with helpful comments.

Finally, thank you Tomi Konttinen, Chief Coach of the Finnish Federation, Ferry Brouwer, Team Manager and owner of Yamaha Classic Racing Team, Sauli Mäkelä, former Chief Coach of the Finnish Federation, Eliane Pscherer, Team Manager and motorcycle racer, Lilamani de Soysa, Youth and Development Manager at European Table Tennis Union, Doctor Monica Lazzarotti, my family and all of you who in one way or another have helped me over the last 1,5 years that I have worked on this thesis.

PREFACE

When I started to think about the subject for my thesis the first sentence that came into my mind was "What Makes a Champion". The fact that the topic of my thesis is from motorcycle world is not coincidence. I have spent all my life within motorcycle sport. My father used to be a professional Road Racing competitor and achieved for example World Championship bronze in 1975. I have been surrounded by motorcycle riders, World Champions and -medallists since I was a child. I have also been fascinated by the sport myself; I tried the bike for the first time when I was about 3 years old, took part in the off-road competition when I was about 5-6 years old and was selected a board member of motorcycle club Konnevesi when I was 17. I have been a sport journalist concentrating in motorsport for years, have written two books about motorsport, and have been a member of Fédération Internationale de Motocyclisme (International Motorcycling Federation) women's commission since 2006 and a board member of Finnish Motorcycling Federation SML since 2010. The only matter I have regretted is the fact that I have never really tried to compete, I have never found out if I could have succeeded in motorcycle sport. According to some speed reaction competitions I have had extremely good reactivity and according to my driving test supervisor I was a natural talent on handling the motorcycle (I tried a motorcycle for the very first time on my driving test day). Motorcycling has been always a passion to me, I come from the country of motorsport and I have had all the contacts needed around me. But still, how many of these factors come indeed as a heritage from my father, and how many of them are just coincidence? Despite all these qualities needed in racing I could have been really lame motorcycle competitor. Now it is 20 years too late to find out if I could have succeeded or not. But I can still find out what really are the facts that make some people succeed in motorcycle sport. The Sport Science and Management - programme, provided by University of Jyväskylä, has given me an opportunity to investigate this subject scientifically especially from the World Champions point of view. This thesis is also socially significant because the structural and cultural factors influencing the success have been investigated from the perspective of the six most successful motorcycle sport countries. I hope this thesis helps to understand what are

the main factors that influence the way to the success.

This thesis is written to a person who is aiming to be a top level motorcycle rider, to his or her parents or other supporters and to national federations and motorcycle clubs who want to find out what are the main factors that impact on success in motorcycle sport and how they could improve their training programmes.

Even if the main target group are the people already involved in the motorcycle field I hope that I have managed to write and interpret subjects in a way that also a person who is not familiar with the motorcycle sport can understand the sense of the different disciplines and to realize the true nature of this remarkable sport.

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1 INTRODUCTION

“A Champion is a man, and only has a meaning when presented as such, together with his merits and defects, his quirks and habits and his moments of sporting glory. Only then can we hope to comprehend how a rider becomes a champion.”

Giacomo Agostini

15-times Road Racing World Champion

Motorcycle sport fascinates people all over the world. High speed, tough battles, impressive moves and jumps are the features why millions of people watch motorcycle sport year after year.

A motorcycle is a motor vehicle that is based on the bicycle. The motorcycle has either an air-cooled or water-cooled engine supported in a metal frame between two wheels. The motor is a two- or four-stroke gasoline engine. Its cylinder capacity generally ranges from 50 to 1,500 cc. Motorcycle's convenience and economy have made it very popular and it is widely used for pleasure riding and racing. There are also side-car motorcycles which means that a third wheel is added to support an open carriage, which is attached to the motorcycle. (Columbia Encyclopedia, Answers.com 2011.)

The history of motorcycle sport dates back all the way to 1870s when the first two-wheel vehicle with steam engine was invented (Korhonen 2005, 6). However, the elite-level, i.e. professional, motorcycle sport has a history of 75 years. Since 1936 there have been World Championship events in motorcycle sport. (FIM 2011.) Today the motorcycle sport plays an important role in elite-level sport and elite-level sport has a big influence to the society. It for example creates jobs, offers people entertainment, encourages people to be physically active through role models, helps newspapers to sell and enables companies to create images and do effective marketing through sponsoring. All in all elite-level sport has a remarkable impact on the people and on the economies all over the world.

Often, people think that motorcycle sport is not a true sport because there is a machine involved and generally motor sport has not been accepted as a part of the sport by the academic world. However, motorcycle sport has more in common with any other elite-level sport than is often acknowledged. Today the sport is also recognized by the International Olympic Committee and can therefore be considered as one part of elite-level sport (FIM 2011).

While the media coverage has grown over the years, more and more motorcycle World Champions become celebrated heroes and famous role models. People know their public image and recognize their success but the reason why they become so successful is quite often unknown.

A frequently asked question is therefore: What really makes a champion?

There are several factors that affect the success of motorcycle riders and most requirements for success are already acknowledged. In this thesis I also investigate some of the basic matters which motorcycle athletes need to realize in order to be a top rider. However, the main purpose of this thesis is rather to find out if there are some previously unknown factors that influence the success in motorcycle racing and need to be discovered, than to repeat the basic aspects of preparation and training. There are lot of materials of how to get a successful sports career including aspects such as training, psychological factors and nutrition. However, how the World Champions themselves think why they have succeeded and how the structural and cultural factors of the rider impact the success, are more problematic and less researched subjects. The main concentration of this thesis is on the issues which top riders cannot control for. Therefore, the objective has been to find out if there are also other aspects which, when acknowledged, could help to understand the holistic viewpoint of the success i.e. why some people are more successful than others. When the key aspects of the success are understood it is easier for the future rider to start planning his or her career and for the federations and clubs to improve their training programmes and preparations of young riders.

Since there is not much scientific literature or researches of motorcycle sport this thesis will give to the sport the attention and honour that it deserves. Hopefully, this

thesis will also encourage other researchers to include motorcycle sport in their investigations.

Most likely this thesis will have an influence not only on the motorcycle sport but also on other elite-level sport as well since quite often there are many similarities that the world's best top athletes share. This thesis will beside offer new information to the elite level sport but it also gives more value to the researches that already exist.

The information gathered of the six most successful motorcycle sport countries gives useful information of the sport in general in the societies Italy, Spain, Great Britain, Belgium, Sweden and Finland have offered. Therefore, this thesis could have impact on wider societal aspects than just a motorcycle sport alone. More importantly there are not many researches that include personal interviews of such a many World Champions therefore this thesis can also gain a remarkable cultural meaning.

This thesis is divided into seven parts. After the main introduction the elite level sport in society is introduced shortly. Chapter three gives more detailed information of motorcycle sport in society and explains the different disciplines. The research question and the implementation of this thesis are explained in chapter four. Chapter five describes the main personal, and societal factors that are needed for the successful sport career. The main focus in this chapter is given to the six most successful motorcycle sport countries, Italy, Spain, Great Britain, Belgium, Sweden and Finland. The information in this part is created based on the literature review. The representatives of the six most successful countries also play a significant role here since material gained from their interviews is widely used. The results and findings of this thesis are detailed in chapter six according to the information gained from the World Champions. Also, some information is gathered from the statistics in order to compare the different countries. At the end of the chapter the representatives of the most successful motorcycle sport countries give their ideas why their countries have been able to produce so many World Champions. Finally, chapter seven further supports the findings and provides suggestions to different parties involved in motorcycle world.

2 ELITE LEVEL SPORT IN SOCIETY

Sport is an important part of society and it influences many aspects of life. Even if the meaning and the value of sport differ significantly between countries and societies, at its best sport can have a massive positive impact on the society. It can increase the social capital for example by improving people's physical health, bringing people together and boosting the community spirit (Maguire et al. 2002, 103). Sport is also used as a tool for education and learning. Children are taught norms and rules with the help of sporting games and they learn how to interact with different people. (Vehmas 2009; Francis 1995, 33.) Sport can also prevent crimes in a society (Maguire et al. 2002, 104) since it helps people to feel that they are part of something and they learn how to act in a community. According to the report made by The Mannerheim League for Child Welfare (Taloussanommat 2011) a child needs to have an opportunity to have hobbies and be involved in something so that he/she can feel to be part of the society. Governments intervene with sport quite considerably since sport improves people's health and social integration but it also affects the economic development (Houlihan 1997, 62-65). Sport studies have also become appreciated and relevant aspects of academic world (Andrews et al. 2005, 1) and the elite level sport has been greatly based on scientific research already for over ten years (Müller et al. 1999, 146).

Sport has been able to spread all over the world despite all social, religious or political barriers. Dunning, as cited in Allison (2000, 108), describes sport in the following way: *“Along with religion and war, sport represents one of the most successful means of collective mobilisation that humans have so far devised.”* That has been possible due to the combination of representational and excitement-generating functions that sport can perform. Dunning highlights the importance by saying: *“Sport can even be said to be in certain respect functionally homologous with religion and war.”*

Sport is part of almost everybody's life. A study made in middle of the 1980s already showed that 96,3 percent of the American population was involved in sport either actively or passively, reading the sport news or identifying with teams or players.

(Simon 1985, 2.) Over the recent years sport has gained new political meanings for example as a promoter of peace and reconciliation in the conflict areas (Giulianotti 2011, 52). Maguire et al. (2002, 12) even mention that sport is most likely one of the most powerful transfer mechanisms for culture. Sport indeed has a significant role in building national identities and it can reduce tensions between people and nations. Using national symbols such as flags and national anthems in the international events have been extremely important especially for those countries which have fought for their existence and independence (Ilmarinen 1984, 62, 67) but sport has also great value for every country when building the solidarity and teamwork spirit (Kamat, 2009).

Globalisation has had a significant impact on the modern sport. Maguire et al. (2002, 5) mention five dimensions that can be detected in late 20th-century sport development. The migrant dimension includes the international movement of people such as tourists and exiles. The technology dimension includes the flow between countries of the equipment produced by corporations and government agencies. The economic dimension includes the prompt flow of money around the world. The media dimension involves the flow between countries of information and images that are produced and distributed by different media such as newspapers, radio, television, and World Wide Web. The fifth dimension is ideological which is linked to the flow of values centrally associated with state or counter state ideologies and movements. (Maguire et al. 2002, 5.)

A society has a major impact on the sport. The societal differentiation has been remarkable for decades and also countries and societies relationships to sport differ significantly (Ibrahim 1976, 71). The model of Camy et al. Figure 1. demonstrates the European Sport Policy Systems today. According to it Belgium, Finland and Spain have high degrees of state involvement in sport policy, which means that the public authorities play a very active role in regulating the sport system. Whereas Great Britain belongs to the entrepreneurial configuration model, which means that the market forces are highly involved with the sport system and the regulation of the system is created according to the social or economic demand for sport, for Italy and Sweden the voluntary sector acts with delegated powers. (Henry 2009.)

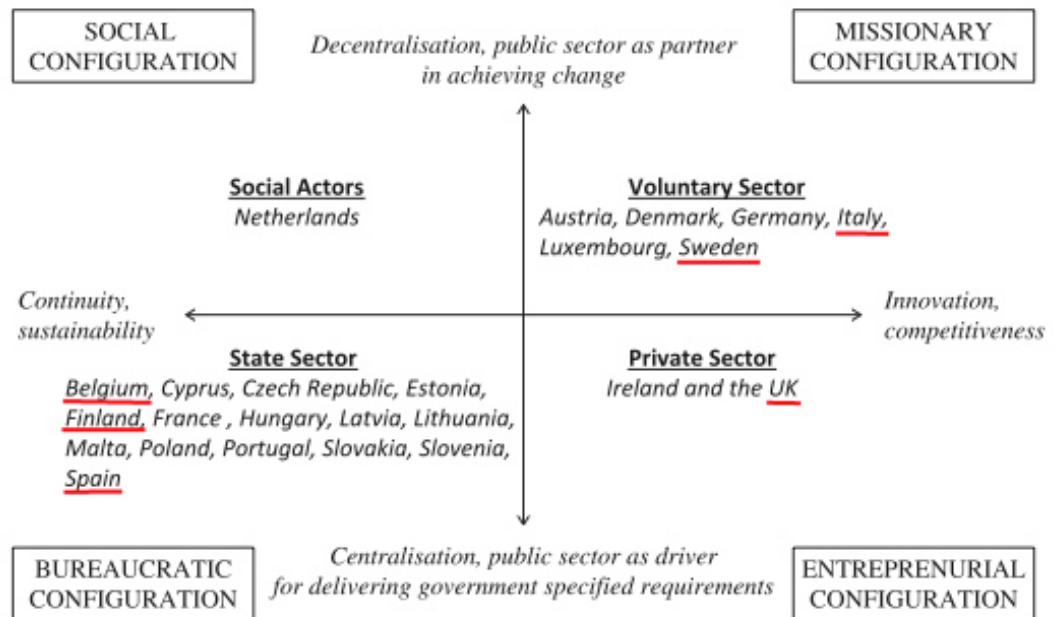


Figure 1. The relationship between the four vocasport types of national sports policy system (Camy et al. 2004)

There are many levels of sport and classifying them is challenging (Ibrahim 1976, 47). According to the theories of Karl Marx as cited in Vehmas (2009) there are three applications to sport: Play has a use-value in which people play just for fun, Games have exchange value in which athletes produce pleasure for spectators and profits to the owners and Sport has a surplus value in which the athlete and the owner are able to gain financial outcome from sport. Norbert Elias, as cited in Dunning et al. (2004, 8-9), has mentioned that there are two meanings for sport: it either refers to the non-work related physical activity whether it is in competitive sense or not or, as in this thesis, to competitive physical activities such as elite level motorcycle sport. Elite level sport has been increasingly separated from other fields of sport and it has impact of several different elements. Bouchout (1993, 174) describes elite level athletes as a persons “*who by pertinent national authorities are recognized as participants, or having the potential to participate, in major sports events such as Olympic Games, World Championships and European Championships*”. (Müller et al. 1999, 51.)

Coakley (1998, 98) determines elite-level sport following:

“The use of strength, speed and power to push human limits and aggressively dominate opponents in the quest for victories and championships; the idea that excellence is proved through competitive success and achieved through intense dedication and hard work combined with making sacrifices, risking one’s personal well-being, and playing in pain; the importance of setting records, defining the body as a machine, and using technology to control and monitor the body; exclusive participation based on physical skills and competitive success; hierarchical authority structures in which athletes are subordinate to coaches and coaches are subordinate to owners and administrators; antagonism between opponents; opponents defined as “enemies”.”

As Vince Lombardi, American football coach has said: *“Winning is not the most important thing: it’s the only thing.”* The idea of competitive sport has always been clear: to find out who is the best. However, the demands of top-level sport have changed. While during the true amateur sport period the practice and competitions were just one minor part of life beside the school, work or other more important aspects, during the last decades the elite-level athlete had to totally devote him- or herself to his or her sports career. (Ilmarinen 1984, 21.) Many athletes enjoy the competitive aspect of sport and it has many positive impacts such as increasing physical and mental conditions (Francis 1995, 33-34) but there are also negative impacts in competitive sport. The positive aspects like commitment and good self-esteem may turn into features such as winning at any cost and having a selfish and egoistic attitude (Simon 1985, 18-19).

While professional sport has changed over the years it has always had a significant meaning to the society. As stated by Niemi (1997, 43) *“sport is a mass phenomenon,*

a political phenomenon, a social phenomenon, an economical phenomenon, and a global phenomenon.”

3 MOTORCYCLE SPORT IN SOCIETY

Motorsport has two governing bodies the Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA) is the governing body for world motor sport and the Fédération Internationale de Motocyclisme (FIM) is the world governing body for motorcycle sport.

In 2005, the whole motorsport was worth approximately £50 billion representing 0.23 % of global Gross Domestic Product (GDP). All together there were approximately 600 race circuits (excluding kart tracks) and 56 global motorsports events. (Angus et al. 2007.) It is apparent that motorcycle sport today is a big business and as such it is also an important contribution to the economy. It is a sport that attracts millions of viewers worldwide. A vibrant motorcycle industry is vital for sporting, leisure motorcycling, transport activities and urban mobility. Sport at a very high level is helping research and development of new technologies that provide more security and quality to the consumers. Moreover, motorcycle sport, through its educational and formative dimension, contributes to a better social integration of young people. Major sporting events have a real economic and touristic impact, which is benefiting the economies that host them and the sport of motorcycling today is a major one. (Maitre 2009.)

Motorcycle racing like many other sports from ice hockey to boxing and from baseball to surfing, are considered as dangerous sports. Nevertheless there are differences between the contact sports with no particular corner on danger and noncontact sports such as racing which can also involve serious threats. According to Russel (2005, 1-4) a sport that is categorized as dangerous must involve “a significant risk” for loss, i.e. there is major degree of physical danger that is expected to happen from time to time. Hence, there is a need for effective protection such as a helmet and other safety equipment in motorcycle racing. Especially during the 20th century, many dangerous sports, including motor racing, became a popular public spectacle but in fact all kinds of dangerous sports and activities have always fascinated both the competitors and spectators. Dangerous sport gives an opportunity to go beyond certain limits and physical and psychological capacities that are not available in other human activities.

Sports talent is hard to define since all the sports and disciplines require different abilities. Different sports require different talents and also every sport requires multiple talents. (Brown (2001, 4.) It is same in motorcycle sport; all the main disciplines Road Racing, Motocross, Enduro, Trial, Track Racing, likewise their sub-disciplines require several talents that range from physical strengths to quick reaction speed and from mental power to agility. But also all the disciplines have their own characters that require different talents. (Bau 1.12.2010.)

Likewise, all the disciplines fascinate different spectators. The history and popularity of certain motorcycle disciplines can be seen from the spectator amounts that differ significantly between disciplines and also between countries. For example Spain has a long history in Road Racing and it has many successful riders within the sport. Therefore, the Spanish events gain most spectators. For example in 2007 Spain hosted three GP's. The GP weekend of Jerez had 244 461 spectators, GP of Catalunya had 201 970 spectators and 237 149 spectators came to see the GP of Valencia whereas in Qatar where the history of motorcycle sport is relatively short and country does not have its own competitors the amount of spectators on that same year at the Losail track that was built just few years earlier was 6 744. The average amount of spectators in Road Racing World Championship Grand Prix events in 2007 was 129 050. Totally, there were 2 322 908 spectators in 18 GPs organized in 2007. (FIM 2007.)

In Motocross events the average amount of spectators in 2007 in MX1 and MX2 events was 25 353 and in MX3 events 7 850. Totally, in MX1, MX2 and MX3 events there were 490 200 spectators. In 2007 Enduro competitions there were all in all 132 000 spectators in eight events. The average amount of spectators was 16 500 but the amount of spectators varied a lot between 2 000 and 50 000. In nine Trial events the total amount of spectators was 52 000 and the average amount of spectators per event was 5 777. In indoor Trial the total amount in eight events was 54 600 and average amount of spectators was 6 826. In Speedway, the amounts of spectators also varied significantly. For example, in Cardiff in Great Britain there were 41 267 spectators whereas in Lonigo in Italy the amount was 4 300. Totally there were 182 913 spectators in eleven Speedway events held in 2007 and the average amount of spectators was 16 628 per event. (FIM 2007.)

3.1. Fédération Internationale de Motocyclisme

The world governing body for motorcycle sport, Fédération Internationale de Motocyclisme, FIM was founded in 1904 to control and develop the sporting and touring aspects of motorcycling. FIM is an independent association formed by 101 national federations throughout the world. It is recognized as the sole competent authority in motorcycle sport by the International Olympic Committee (IOC). The purpose of FIM is to develop, promote, co-ordinate, supervise and govern motorcycling activities throughout the world. (FIM 2010.) Among its 49 FIM World Championships its main events are MotoGP, Superbike, Endurance, Motocross, Supercross, Trial, Enduro and Speedway (FIM 2010; Maitre 2009).

FIM is engaged in non-sporting activities such as tourism, gatherings and leisure, mobility, transport, road safety and public policy, environment, and the place of women in motorcycling activities. It also works with activities linked to sport, such as technical, medical and judicial aspects. (FIM 2009.) In 2001, FIM became an affiliate member of the World Tourism Organisation (WTO) (Maitre 2009).

The FIM is incorporated in Switzerland having its headquarter in Mies and its legal status is subject to Swiss law (FIM 2010). The FIM family is organised in six continental unions to develop the sport worldwide, particularly with young people. In Europe, the continental union is the European Motorcycle Union (UEM), with Headquarters in Rome. (Maitre 2009.) The bodies of the FIM are the General Assembly that is the supreme authority of FIM, the Board of Directors, the Executive Board, the Internal Auditors, the Commissions, the International Disciplinary Court, the International Appeal Tribunal and the Arbitration and Advisory Tribunal. The commissions include Road Racing Commission, Motocross Commission, Trial Commission, Enduro Commission, Cross Country Rallies Commission, Track Racing Commission, International Technical Commission, Commission for Women in Motorcycling, Touring and Leisure Commission, Public Affairs Commission, International Environmental Commission, International Medical Commission and International Judicial Commission. (FIM 2010.)

In every motorcycle discipline all the official titles of World Championships, Continental Championships (excluding the events organized under the authorization

of CONUs and recognized by FIM) and FIM Prize Events are exclusive property of FIM. FIM also is the sole owner of all television, radio, video cassette, sponsoring, marketing, advertising, merchandising, promotion and licensing for the World Championships, Continental Championships and FIM Prize events. (FIM 2010.)

3.2 Road Racing

Road Racing, previously known as TT (Tourist Trophy) was the most popular motorcycle sport in Europe already in 1930s. In Road Racing the competitions are held on tarmac surface. Road Racing includes Grand Prix i.e. MotoGP, Superbike, Supersport, Endurance and Sidecar –disciplines. (FIM 2010.)

Road Racing World Championship Grand Prix including MotoGP, Moto2 and 125 cc is one of the biggest sports in the world. During the last decade the following of GP's has become a global phenomenal with over 100 000 spectators attending the events and hundreds of millions of spectators watching the live broadcasting. In 2010 2.2 million people went to see the events. The mentality of Road Racing World Championship Grand Prix is ideal for spectators, TV broadcasters and sponsors all over the world. (MotoGP 2010, 2011.)

At the moment Road Racing World Championship Grand Prix has three classes, 125 cc, Moto2 and MotoGP. The MotoGP season includes 18 Grands Prix in 14 countries. Riders come from around the globe. For example riders taking part in the 2011 season came from the following countries: Australia, Austria, Colombia, Portugal, Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, India, Italy, Japan, Malaysia, the Netherlands, Norway, Qatar, Russia, San Marino, Spain, Switzerland, Thailand, Great Britain, USA and Venezuela. (MotoGP 2011. A MotoGP competition day is quite similar to Motocross but the physical aspect is a bit lower. Even though the rider sits all the time on the motorcycle he or she has to lean according to the curves. Concentration and accuracy are really important in order to get good racing lines. (Konttinen 26.11.2010.) The main talents needed in Road Racing are focus, skill, smartness and strength (Bau 1.12.2010).

Superbike has been created from MotoGP and it has been a World Champion

competition since 1988. Bikes in Superbike-series are two- or four-strokes and a maximum of 1 000 cm³. Bikes are modified production motorcycles. (Wikipedia 2010.) In Endurance racing the endurance of a rider and a durability of a motorcycle are tested during the long competition, which can vary from six to 24 hours. In Endurance there is a possibility to change the rider during the event. (Wikipedia, 2010.)

There are also other subspecies in Road Racing. In Supersport series the bikes are a bit smaller than in Superbike but they are also based on mass production. Supersport bikes have a four-stroke engine of between 400 and 600 cc for four-cylinder machines, and between 600 and 750 cc for twins. Supersport has tighter regulations than Superbike and the engine tuning is possible but tightly regulated. (Wikipedia 2010.) In sidecar racing there is a rider and a passenger. A sidecar is a three-wheeled vehicle with one-wheeled device attached to the side of a motorcycle. (Wikipedia 2010.)

The figure 2. below shows how Italy has dominated the World Championship Motorcycle Road Racing series.

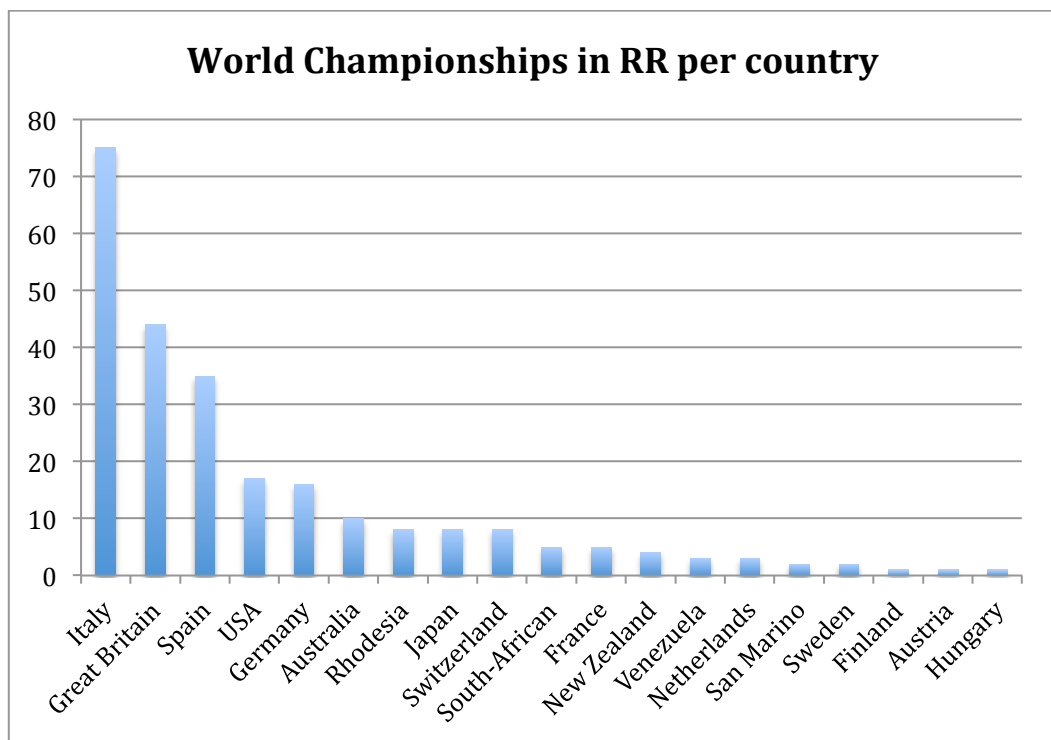


Figure 2. World Championships per country in Road Racing discipline 1949-2010 (FIM 2011)

3.3 Motocross

Motocross (MX) is the second most popular competitive motorcycle sport in the world. The word Motocross comes from "Motorcycle" and "Cross Country". The events are held at enclosed off-road circuits. The FIM Motocross World Championship is mainly held in Europe with few races in non-European countries. Since 2004 the championship series has included three classes (previously 125cc, 250cc and 500cc): MX1 (250 cc 2-stroke and 450 cc 4-stroke), MX2 (125 cc 2-stroke and 250cc 4-stroke) and MX3 (over 250 cc 2-stroke and over 450 cc 4-stroke). Beside three solo classes there is also the sidecar class and Motocross of Nations where national teams are competing against each others. (Wikipedia 2010; FIM 2010.)

The Motocross discipline also includes Supercross, SuperMoto, Snowcross, and Freestyle. Supercross is an indoor Motocross with plenty of jumps and is typically situated in a stadium. It is more technical to the riders and has become really popular especially in North America. Supermoto is a combination of Road Racing and Motocross. The motorcycles are Motocross types but they have Road Racing tyres. The tracks are a combination of tarmac roads and dirt surface. In Snowcross, the competitors are racing with snowmobiles on tracks comparable to Motocross bike tracks. The speed can reach up to 100 km/h. Whereas in Freestyle Motocross, the rider does impressive jumps and stunts with a modified Motocross bike. (Wikipedia 2010.)

In Motocross and in Enduro, the oxygen uptake is most demanding. During the competition day a rider will complete two half an hour rounds which require a really high performance tempo from beginning to the end. Before the rounds there are practices and qualifications and between them there are long resting periods. (Konttinen 26.1.2011.) According to Bau (1.12.2010) the main talents needed in Motocross are smartness, agility, skills, fitness, focus and strength mass to be able to control the bike in unexpected situations.

The figure 3. shows how strong Belgium has been in Motocross compared to the other countries.

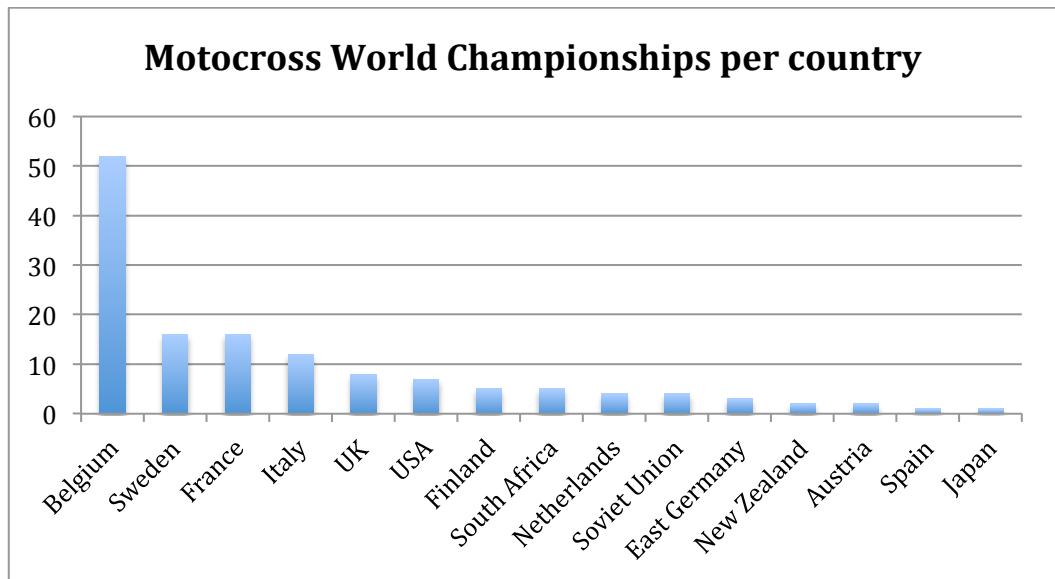


Figure 3. World Championships per country in Motocross discipline 1957-2010 (FIM 2011)

3.4 Trial

The discipline of Trial includes Individual Trial, Indoor Trial, Trial des Nations, Women's Trial, Women's Trial des Nations, Junior Trial and Youth Trial (FIM 2010).

The skill and regularity of the riders form the basis of the results in Trial. Each sections of the course observe the skill of the rider and penalties are given when necessary. In addition, there are time limits set either for part or for the whole course. The course may consist of cross-country terrain that means for example minor roads, country lanes, and woodland tracks. (FIM Trial 2010.)

Indoor Trial events are held within the confines of a sports hall. The skill and regularity of the riders are measured at man-made sections. Penalties are given when necessary. A time limit is usually set for part of, or for the whole course. (FIM Indoor Trial 2010.)

In Trial, it is not the speed that matters most but the talent and balance of the riders. The rider needs to keep the balance of the bike while crossing obstacles in off-road tracks. He or she gets penalty points when his or her leg touches the ground. The one

who has less penalty points wins. (Wikipedia 2010.) Hence, Trial is a motorcycle sport that requires a good balance (FinnTrial 2010).

Trial requires good basic resistance so that a rider can concentrate on the extreme talent performances during the whole long competition day. The rider also needs to have explosive strength and mobility. Trial is partly similar to Enduro, in both the rider is competing the whole day but in Trial he or she also gets familiar with the track by walking, also the rounds are shorter. The racing tempo is in a way slower but there is a big variation between the tempos when it comes to the racing intensity, hence during the racing periods there are extremely hard physical performances that require talent and which last from one second to few seconds. (Konttinen 26.1.2011.)

The figure 4. below shows how Spain has succeeded well in the Trial World Championship series.

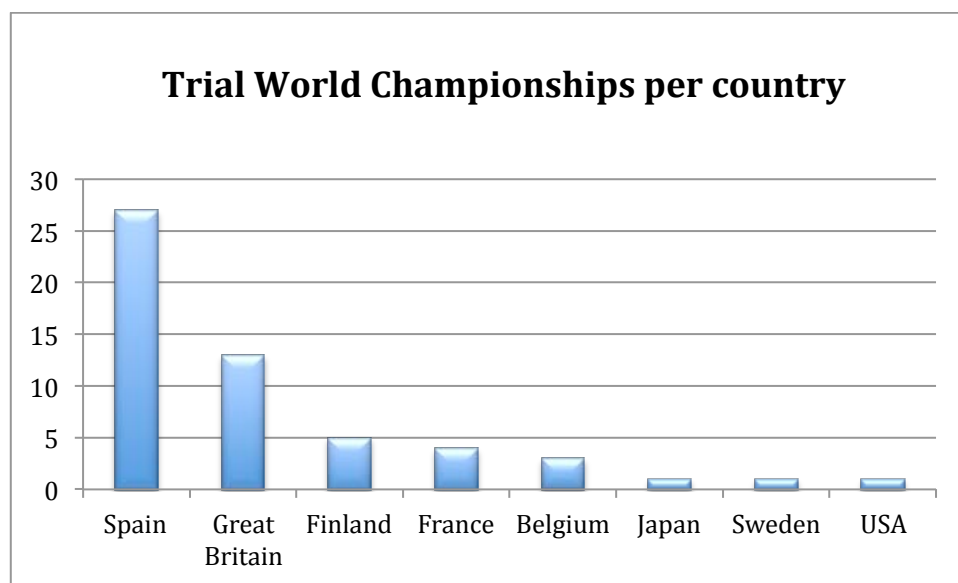


Figure 4. World Championships per country in outdoor and indoor Trial discipline 1975-2010 (FIM 2011)

3.5 Enduro and Cross-Country Rallies

Besides the World Championship Enduro there are also other competitions such as the Indoor Enduro World Cup and the International Six Days, which has run since 1913 (FIM 2010).

Enduro events shall be run over two days plus possibly a Super Test (prologue). These competitions test the reliability of the motorcycles and the skill of the riders who must cover the entire distance under the prescribed conditions. (FIM 2011.)

Enduro is a mix of Motocross and Trial. In Enduro, a rider needs to accomplish the off-road track within the certain time period. When being late at the checkpoint a rider will get penalties to his scores. There are three classes in the World Enduro Championship: Enduro 1 (100 to 125 cc 2-stroke or 175 - 250 cc 4-stroke), Enduro 2 (175 to 250 cc 2-stroke or 290 - 450 cc 4-stroke) and Enduro 3 (290 to 500 cc 2-stroke or 475 - 650 cc 4-stroke). The FIM championship series usually consists of eight or nine Grands Prix all over the world. The events consist of two days and two different races. (Wikipedia 2010.)

Cross-Country Rally bikes are usually bigger than other off-road bikes. The cross-country events last several days. They can include various countries and usually take place in deserts. (Wikipedia 2010.)

Enduro is physically demanding since competitors race almost the whole day. Also bike maintenance work takes time between racings. Mainly riders compete in “semi-fast” speed but there occur short 5 to 10 minutes sprints time to time. (Konttinen 26.1.2011.) The main talents needed in Enduro are strength, endurance, agility, smartness and focus (Bau 1.12.2010).

The figure 5. shows how Finland has been succeeding well in Enduro, Italy and Sweden being quite equal.

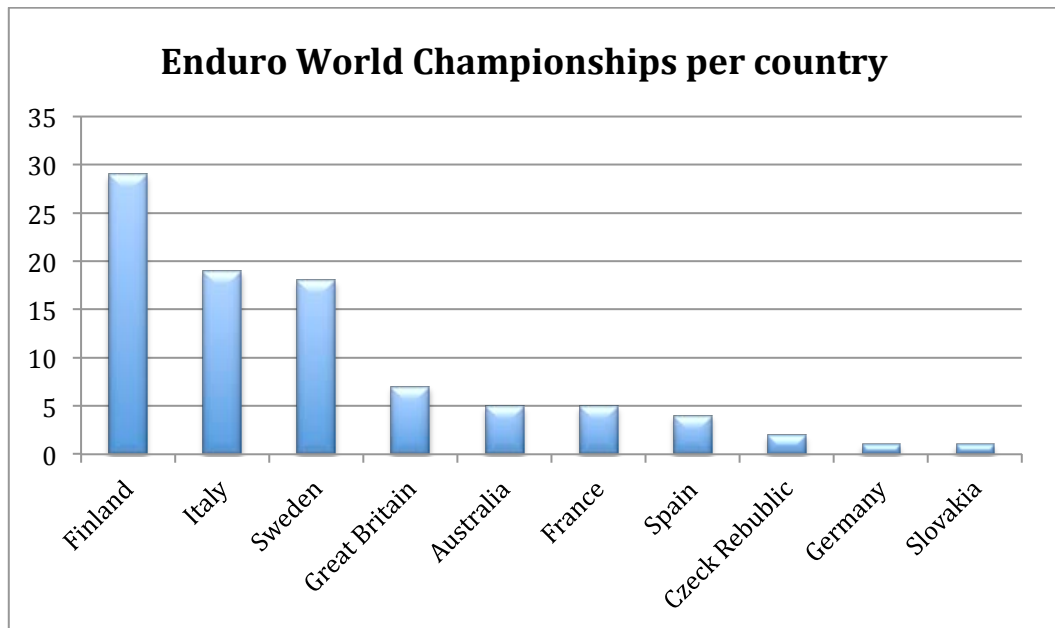


Figure 5. World Championships per country in Enduro discipline 1990-2010 (FIM, 2011)

3.6 Track Racing

Track Racing includes the Individual Speedway Grand Prix, the Speedway World Cup raced with teams, Junior Speedway, Long Track and Ice Racing with both individual and Team races (FIM 2010).

Speedway competitions are held on oval sand tracks. There are no brakes or gears in Speedway bikes and in curves the bikes are put in slide in order to slow down the speed. There are usually four riders at a time on the track. One competition includes several entries and the winner is the one who has gained most points from the entries. (Wikipedia 2010.)

In Speedway there are one-minute spurts throughout the day and clear resting periods in between with duration that differ a lot. The one minute spurt is really physically demanding but in order to get good performance times and resting periods it is important for the rider to perform up to full his potential for one minute time so it is not that hard for the oxygen taking but for reaction, speed qualities and physical skills even more. (Kontinen 26.1.2011.)

Ice Racing is comparable to regular Speedway but the events are held on ice. Long track is similar to Speedway but the competitions are held on the tracks that are 1 000-1 200 meters long and also the speed is higher. The bikes are slightly larger and there are also some technical differences compared to regular Speedway motorcycles. (Wikipedia 2010.)

The Figure 6. shows how the Speedway World Championship success has been relatively equal in several countries.

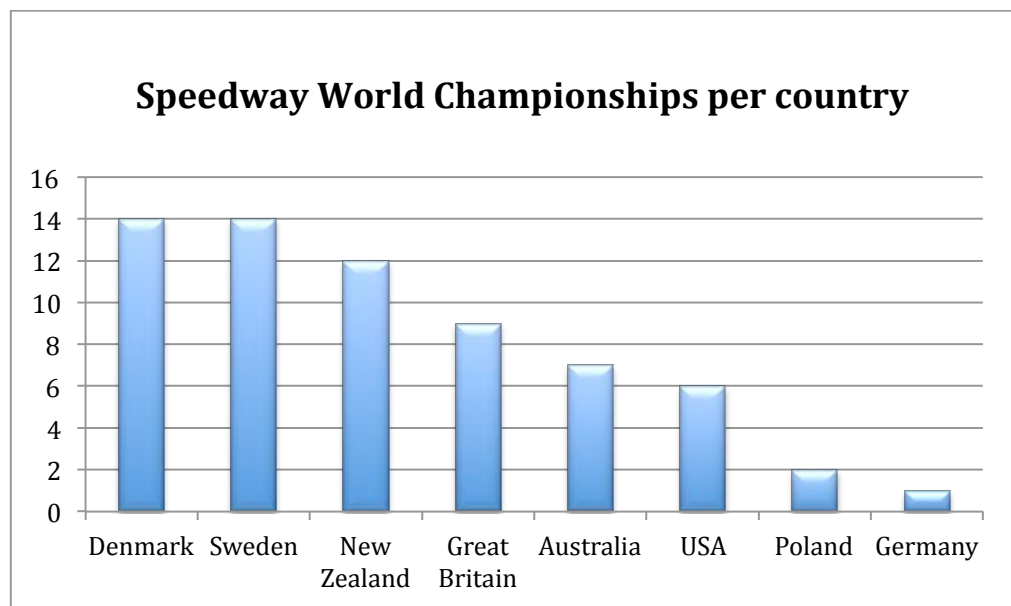


Figure 6. World Championships per country in Speedway discipline only (FIM 2011)

3.7 Women in motorsport

Even though women's sport has developed relatively slowly due to the simple fact that women usually have less free time because of unpaid work such as housework and care of children (Wimbush & Talbot, 1988) women's motorsport has grown significantly over the last few years (Maitre, 2009). However, the development has been hard and slow one reason being that sport has always had a masculine and powerful image. It has been created and controlled by men and even now sport is mainly organized for men (Birrell & Cole 1994, 182). Nevertheless, over all women's sport has developed greatly over the past three decades. Stephanie Twin described the situation of female sport in 1970s quite appropriately:

“The way sports are encouraged and organized for boys is perhaps the most impressionable way girls observe that males are to be active while females are not. Psychological theories, custom, and popular prejudice combine to measure women negatively against men.” (Twin 1979, xv.)

Women’s competitive sport started to develop properly in Europe before the Second World War and in USA after the war. But even after that women suffered for a long time with the lack of training places since many sport clubs were exclusively for men. But the 1960s and 1970s brought more possibilities for women and enabled women to take part in proper sport also at schools. (Wells 1985, 273-274.) The biggest improvement came in 1972 along with the Title IX of the Educational Amendments, the landmark legislation that bans sex discrimination in schools of the United States. The legislation affected both the academics and athletic aspects at schools (Birrel & Cole 1994, 111; Bailiwick 2011.)

There are no physical reasons why women should not practice all the same sports as men. Females generally respond to the stresses of physical training equally to males (Wells 1985, 239). Therefore, in female sport the support of the social environment i.e. society, parents, siblings and spouse has a significant meaning whether a girl or a woman will start doing sport or not (Yiannakis, Greendorfer 1992, 113).

3.7.1 Women in motorcycle sport

FIM took a big development step in women’s motorsport by signing the Brighton Declaration in 2006 (FIM 2010). The Brighton Declaration was made in 1994 in Great Britain, Brighton where the first international conference on women and sport was held. All together 280 delegates from 82 countries were present at the conference that was supported by the International Olympic Committee that also signed the declaration. All the participants endorsed the declaration that was created in order to improve all the issues which women face in their involvement in sport. (Sportdevelopment, 2010.) At the same conference the International Working Group

on Women and Sport (IWG) was established. IWG is aiming to realize a sustainable sporting culture that enables and values the full involvement of women in every aspect of sport. Their mission is *“to be a catalyst for the advancement and empowerment of women and sport globally”*. (IWG, 2011.) Also, the International Olympic Committee established a Women and Sport Working Group in 1995. The group that became a fully fledged commission in 2004 has worked in order to establish a positive trend to increase women's participation in sport at all levels, and especially over the last decades. (IOC, 2011.)

In 2006 FIM established a commission for women, CFM. The mission of the commission is to create egalitarian opportunities and to promote equal treatment for women involved in activities related to motorcycling. (FIM, 2010.) By the end of 2010 CFM had been able to support the creation of the 2007 Enduro Women's Cup and the 2008 FIM Women World Motocross Championship. It has also encouraged the promotion of women to more challenging roles. (FIM 2011.)

According to the survey *“Evolution of Women in Motorcycling”* made in 2008 for FIM, it is clearly seen that even if all the disciplines need more work in order to attract more women, Motocross has developed most and more emphasis should be put on Trial, Road Racing and Enduro. Even if Motocross has most women with licenses the amount of them had decreased between 2006 and 2008. The amount of events held for women has increased but there are still big differences between the continents Europe being far ahead while Latin America still has only few events for women. (Bousigue et al. 2008.)

The survey presented that the average number of licensed riders per federation had increased slightly between 2005 and 2008 but still being very low: in 2007 there were about 12 participating licensed female riders per national federation. There are significant differences between the countries and continents. Asia has highest number of licensed female riders (average almost 40 per federation) but it is also the continent with the least number of events organized for women. (Bousigue et al. 2008.)

While the economic reasons have been the most significant obstacles for women

practicing motorcycle sport the religious and cultural factors have also a major role. It is not coincidence that there are no female World Champions from Muslim countries. The simple fact that women are forced to wear a head scarf prevents them from wearing helmets and taking part in motorcycle sport. Therefore, it is clear that cultural factors have a bigger influence on women's motorcycle success than men's. (Bousigue et al. 2008.)

In motorcycle sport all the disciplines are open to women to participate. The real issue is: how to get to the sport. According to the FIM's Technical Coordinator Charles Hennekam the answer is: to create awareness, with special attention to women, families and groups (direct and/or through the national federations). A second aspect is culture. Does the culture of a country provide the opportunities? Is there any awareness in the culture of the countries? Can motorcycle sport be a "family" activity, like many families do have in California, i.e. weekend riding in the desert with minibikes and quads. Another example is in horseback riding: there are more girls than boys attracted in all the beginners' classes at a pony- and horse riding. Logically, at the top of the pyramid in high-level competition, there should be also a majority of females. But the truth is that men outrank the women by many. Main reason is the change of interest during the age group of 15-17 years due to the studies and costs. Naturally, for a family, studies prevail, and then come the outside activities. On a top-level competition, there is also a factor of physical strength involved to keep a thoroughbred under control. (Hennekam 10.2.2011.)

3.7.2 Women versus Men

Before puberty children whether they are boys or girls have basically equal possibilities to succeed in sport that requires physical skills as long as they are interested in it. When boys are approximately 12-14 years old they begin to develop more strength than girls. (Brown 2001, 61-61.) But even though there are some physical differences between women and men, there are no physical reasons why women could not do motorcycle sport. The major reasons why many boys but only few girls start to practice motorcycle sport come indeed from the society and from societal expectations. Also the overall appreciation of male sport is far more ahead than female sport. According to Lapchick (1996, 97) women received only 35 % of

all athletic participation opportunities in the 1990s and only one third of athletic scholarship funds in the United States where also the male college athletes got 179 million US dollars more per year than female athletes. Therefore, it is obvious that if girls and women suffer misbehaviour and are underrated in all sports the situation in male-dominated sports such as motorcycle sport is even worse.

In the mid 1980s the average woman was 12,7 centimetres shorter than the average man and her weight was about 16 kg less (Wells 1985, 16-17). In 2011 the difference is approximately the same (Wikipedia 2010) but still there are more women involved in motorcycle racing. Therefore, the main reasons for women doing motorcycling cannot be physical but related to society.

However, there are some physical differences between males and females that slightly affect motorcycling. Since women usually have a shorter and smaller skeletal system they also have a lower center of gravity and a lighter body frame. The main differences that affect riding a motorcycle are also women's narrower shoulders and shorter limbs. Women also have less muscle due to the physique that is less mesomorphic and due to the smaller proportion of muscle in relation to body fat women have lower ratio of strength to weight. (Wells 1985, 16-17.) Men's bones are more massive, their bones are longer and joints are larger (Wells 1985, 8).

The most commonly used argument when talking about women participating in male-dominated sport is that the female body is not functioning as well as the male body (Meyer, 2010). Motorcycle sport requires physical strengths that also women can gain with practising. The small size can sometimes be an advantage like in MotoGP where the minimum weight is a benefit. However, the society's attitude and expectations have affected so that girls are automatically guided towards traditional feminine sport such as ballet and horseback riding whereas boys are expected to do male dominated sport such as ice hockey and motorsport. If a woman chooses to have a male dominated hobby or sport she is expected to truly succeed (Meyer, 2010).

According to FIM's Motocross expert and former Motocross and Supercross rider Stefy Bau the only difference for women in Motocross on today's stage is purely in

the mind. Women do not have the same support of men in the sport and approximately they cannot train as much and as hard as men. This also has a negative effect in the confidence with the result of putting the most talented women a "step behind" compared to the most talented men. Now days in Motocross it is much more important to be agile on the bike than having pure strength and according to Bau women are much better in that than men. In Motocross there are no strict rules for basic physical requirements. The disability races which are organized for people that are hurt and are in a wheelchair, or people who have lost limbs, prove that whoever approaches the sport of Motocross will ride in any condition. (Bau 1.12.2010.)

In Road Racing it is required to have the ability to stay focused at high speed and according to Bau women with a chance to be supported as the most talented men, can excel in this type of racing. Bau also sees that in Road Racing the same "mind problem of women" applies. Since Road Racing demands less physical power than Motocross and Enduro Bau sees that women, given the chance, will be able to be much closer to the level of the most successful men. Small size and light weight definitely provide an advantage since there is less weight to carry in a sport where speed is the most important part. However, the rider cannot be too small because then he/she will lack the muscles. (Bau 1.12.2010.)

Enduro is most likely the hardest one for women at the top level, because the races are very extreme and require a lot of physical strength to be able to move the bike (Bau 1.12.2010). Also Trial's World Champion Iris Krämer admits that the rider needs to be really fit but that is something that can be practised. However, according to her in both Trials and Enduro there are no significant physical requirements such as special muscles or small body size that could differ between male and female riders. More significant is how much a rider practices, what kind of fitness coach he/she has and how much the coach knows about the discipline. Krämer admits that it is better to have longer legs in Enduro and Trial but there are examples such as Blondine Dufrene who is just 152 centimetres tall and she is one of the fastest Enduro female riders in the world. The most important aspect is how much feeling a rider has for the bike. (Krämer 17.11.2010.)

According to the FIM's Speedway referee Susanne Hüttinger in Speedway there are

no really significant requirements for the women riders since a person can race from 16 years old in 500 cc class. A successful rider needs to have a trained body and he/she has to be in a good physical condition. As in all kind of motorsport the muscle build up is a bit different in female Speedway riders than male. While women have a different construction of muscles, it is possible that they are unable to reach the kind of muscles that would be needed to be in top 16 in Speedway. However, Hüttinger does consider that the main issue also in Speedway is mental: if a male rider knows that he is competing against a female rider he behaves differently. Hüttinger also asserts that the biggest difference between female riders and their male counterparts is that they think differently when they race. This means that often girls and women plan, and then act accordingly and also have a backup plan. Therefore, too much thinking and planning ahead might slower or delay reactions. Of course, there are also some females who behave and react like men. (Hüttinger 17.11.2010.)

According to Sutton and Watlington (1994) men respond more to the hero worship associated with celebrity endorsements than women. Therefore, they are more often used in advertising. Men are also characterized as rational and active while women are seen as emotional and consequently passive (Lapchich 1996, 237). According to the study by Ross et al. (2009) women also face problems with their attractiveness, which can be good for advertising and sponsorship but can also give an irrelevant image of their talents.

Maguire et al. (2002, 15) have mentioned that “*media sport reinforces hegemonic masculinity and contributes to the symbolic annihilation, trivialisation and sexualisation of elite women*”. The study made for FIM also supports the fact that there are challenges concerning the media coverage of women’s motorcycle sport. While female riders do benefit from the media coverage it still is at the initial stage. (Bousigue et al. 2008.) Therefore, the media plays a vital role in spreading the information of women’s motorcycle sport. The media exposure also reflects straight to the sponsoring.

Often women’s motorcycle events have been held on Saturdays while men have competed on ”main days” on Sundays. This has affected a lot for media visibility since most of the journalists have only visited the events on Sundays leaving the

women without attention. Also, on Mondays the Saturday's news is often old news and therefore have been left out from the newspapers. It is clear that women's motorcycle sport has not been able to develop without proper visibility and people's knowledge about it. In countries where women's motorcycle sport is supported can be expected to have more World Champions.

There might also be some historical reasons that still in some stage occur. For example for media visibility in women's sport can still affect the simple fact that in the old days women were not allowed to act as writers and editors. And even now despite the fact that the number of female sport journalists has grown significantly the women are still in minority when it comes to sport journalism. (Lapchick 1996, 210-211.) Just few decades ago, in the beginning of 1990s The Association for Women in Sports Media reported that only 3 % of the 10'000 sport journalists in the United States were women (Lapchick 1996, 234).

3.8 Personal factors of motorcycle rider

"Ability is what you're capable of doing. Motivation determines what you do. Attitude determines how well you do it." – Women's Motocross Legend Steffy Bau

Whether a person will succeed or not depends greatly on his/her mental abilities (Straub & Williams 1984, 327), physical skills (Brannigan 1999, 4) and his/her commitment (Orlick 2000, 3). In the following athlete's personality, motivation with commitment and physical skills are reviewed reflecting them towards motorcycle sport.

3.8.1 Athlete's personality

According to Geron et al. (1986) the athletes differ from non-athletes on many personality traits. There are many theories about the differences; according to Schur et al. (1977) athletes are more independent, more objective and less anxious whereas Hardman (1973) says that athletes are more intelligent than other people. Cooper (1969) also has reviewed that athletes are more self-confident, competitive and socially outgoing. Also Morgan's (1980b) and Kane's (1976) researches indicate that

athletes are extroverts and low in anxiety (Cox 1998, 30-31). However, the defining of an athlete has been different among the researchers from people doing amatory sport to top athletes winning prizes so it is hard to make any common assumptions about the athlete's personalities (Cox 1998, 31). According to Brown (2001, 29) it seems that most of the sport psychologists would agree with sport psychologist Jim Loehr that *"the drive is the most important predictor of exceptional athletic success"*.

Motorcycle sport like any other high-risk sport attracts people who are sensation seeking (Jack & Ronan 1998; Straub 1982). The first level of sensation seeking is Thrill and Adventure Seeking (TAS), which measures the willingness to take part in sport or other activities that include speed and danger. Experience Seeking (ES) is the second level, which measures the willingness for new experiences and unconventional life style. The third level is Disinhibition (Dis). It foresees willingness for social and sexual incontinent, which includes lifestyle of partying, drinking, and several sex partners. The fourth level is Boredom Susceptibility (BS), which measures the aversion towards continual experiences, routines and boring people (Zuckerman 1983, 286). The studies made by G. Breivik from Norwegian University of Sport and Physical Education showed that athletes in high, medium and low risk sports have different personality profiles in both individual and team sports (Müller et al. 1999, 148).

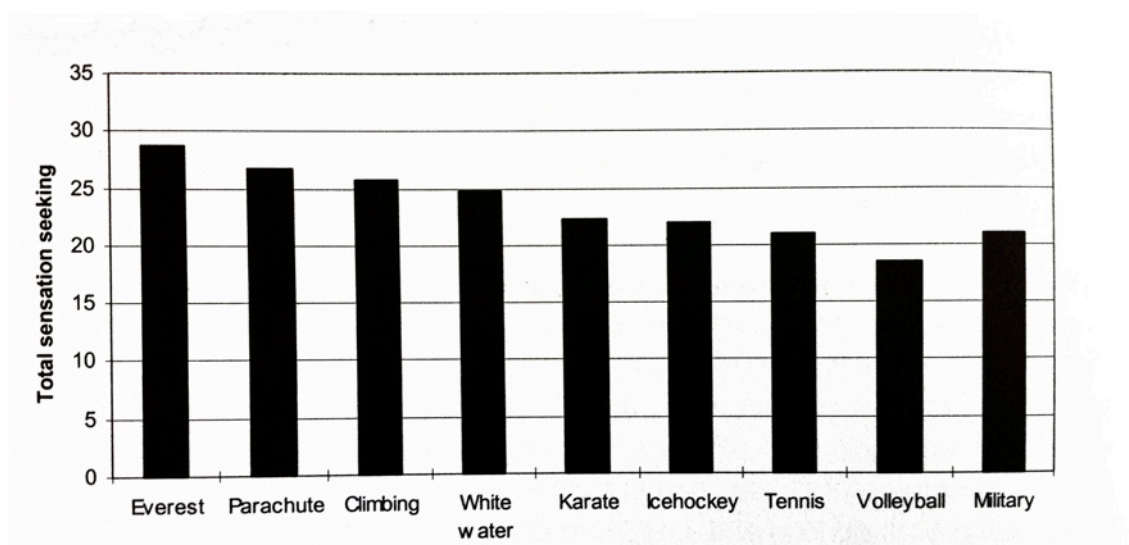


Figure 7. Total Sensation seeking scores of elite male athletes in different sports compared with a control group of military recruits (Müller et al. 1999, 148)

In his studies Breivik also found out that for example all the downhill skiers in the team that was researched had higher sensation seeking scores and different profiles than the typical slalom skiers. Both alpine skiing and motorsport are sports in which a person must love the high speed, fast reactions, and thrills but also he or she needs to handle the danger. (Müller et al. 1999, 150.) However, according to Russel (1993, 24) even if athletes involved in high-risk sports seem to score high in sensation seeking there might be other motives as well and that is why all the risk takers should not be put into the same category.

Athlete may have several reasons why he/she wants to succeed in sport. Among other things sport also gives ways to defend the pride, self-esteem or just to satisfy the need to prove oneself. Also family background can affect why a child or young person wants to use sport as a tool to prove something. (Clarkson 1999, 85.) Nevertheless, Russel (2005, 4) has mentioned that it is not always the public recognition that drives people to do dangerous sport but it might be just the activity itself.

Type A people are goal and achievement orientated and eager to compete. They enjoy rewards and appreciation. Due to their life style A type people get easily stressed which eventually can lead to health problems (About.com 2010; Discovery Health 2010). People with type B personality are more relaxed, calm and not competitive (Buzzle.com 2010). According to the examination made by Eby and Van Gyri (1987) the percentage of Type A personalities was significantly higher in the elite athlete student population compared to normal students. The result was not surprising because the typical characteristics such as competitiveness and achievement-orientation are also seen in many successful athletes personalities (HighBeam 2010).

Whether a person is an introvert or an extrovert might affect the sport he or she chooses. Usually, extroverts prefer sports, which are exciting, aggressive, fast paced with high arousal level, such as motorsport, while introverts usually choose sports with low arousal levels (Teach PE 2010). Extroverts seem to have a higher tolerance

to neurotransmitter dopamine so they need higher amounts of that in order to feel good or energized. Dopamine levels are raised by exciting activities such as motorcycle sport. Extroverts could also suit better to perform in motorsport since they seem to be able to react more quickly due to a shorter pathway in their brain for neurotransmitters to send messages from the original stimulus to the actual reaction to the stimulus (Suite 101 2010).

3.8.2 Athlete's motivation and commitment

A person needs to have an own interest towards a sport so that he/she is able to improve his or her ability and talent. Motivation is the key issue that drives an athlete towards better results and enables a complete training and commitment towards sport. Motivation is said to be one of the key reasons for succeeding or failing in sport (Pargman 1998, 63) and usually the top athletes are indeed highly motivated (Müller et al. 1999, 144). There are two types of motivations: internal where the athlete does sport for matters such as excitement or goal achievement, and external where the aspects such as social approval and trophies are the motivators. Former president of the Academy of Sports Psychology William J. Beausay has mentioned that there are seven motivations that drive an athlete: money, ego, camaraderie, expectations, achievement, excellence and love of the game. (Clarkson 1999, 73-74.)

An athlete is able to achieve best results when he or she is truly focused on the sport. In order to improve focusing skills one should set goals (Orlick 2000, 50-51). When goals are set already at an early stage a child wants to demonstrate his ability compared to others. The goals also help him/her to achieve more, because a child who is competition-oriented is willing to work harder (Lee 1993, 7-8). Goals help to motivate and guide but quite often the problem is that athlete sets only long-term goals and forgets to set specific small and short-term goals which enable to reach the main target (Orlick 2000, 60).

Mental training is a process in which an athlete ensures his or her mind is concentrated on the goals set and the performance in order to get better results (Elliott 1998, 70). Mental training plays a vital role since a proper mental rehearsal makes an athlete better prepared (Orlick 2000, 118). More athletes practice mental

training to improve performance but since the results are harder to see than in physical training one cannot tell if mental training is really helping and that is why athletes do not always appreciate mental rehearsals (Nideffer 1992, 14). However, an athlete's state of mind has a significant impact on competitive sport. Excellent performance usually increases self-confidence and improves future performances while failing correspondingly may affect the achievement negatively. (Stein, Hollwitz 1994, 202.) Therefore, the mental power has remarkable impact on succeeding like the following statement of former Chief Coach of the Finnish Federation shows:

“The most important abilities of an athlete are a persistence and absolute desire to win. A good example is an athlete who had to quit when leading but despite his disappointment he saw the positive side of the situation and said: “Now I know I can win”. So the positive attitude is exactly what is needed and often the success is between the ears.” (Mäkelä 3.4.2001.)

Commitment is also a vital factor in success because without commitment the proper goals are extremely hard to attain. When an athlete is fully committed and focused on his or her goals or sports career in general he or she will be able to ban everything else from his or her mind. According to Orlick factors such as enjoyment, passion and also the desire to feel needed or important are matters that contribute to the commitment. Also, a study of elite junior tennis players carried out in Sweden showed that those 12 year old children who became most successful adult players had three characteristics in common: they seemed to enjoy playing tennis, their parents put them under less pressure and they also played other sports (Brown 2001, 8).

For on-going learning Orlick suggests that focusing is the most important mental skill. He also sees that these following elements are important when pursuing excellence: confidence towards own capability and skills, creating positive images and mind-sets, mental readiness for practices and performances, distraction control

of internal and external issues and commitment towards on-going learning. (2000, 5-14.)

It is evident that all these elements mentioned in this chapter are linked to each other's and all support each other on the way towards success.

3.8.3 Athlete's physical factors

“The purpose of all physical training is to stress muscles, tendons, the heart, the nervous system and so on to improve each organ's capacity” (Müller et al. 1999, 98-99).

An athlete may have genetic makeup that either is an advantage or an obstacle. People have different kinds of predetermined types and numbers of muscle fibres that dictate in which kind of sport the person will succeed. (Brown 2001, 92.) A person might have some motoric abilities, which affect the sport he or she chooses (Pargman 1998, 62) but no one is born with talents. Some have more inherited abilities for sport or racing but everyone needs to practice and train a lot. According to Eckert (1987) the aspects which determine the individual's readiness to learn sport skills are structural, neurological and psychological developments. Only after repeating tasks constantly one can acquire the talent (Pargman 1998, 20-21). According to Müller et al. (1999, 13) the high level performances are usually achievable only after 10 to 15 years of consequent training. As almost in any other sport also in motorsport strength and power development are important aspects of training (Elliott 1998, 189). In order to be a successful athlete the training should be started at a really early age. Good training increases the child's performance (Lee, 1993). However, it is extremely important that the training is done in accordance with the child's desires and terms. Only a child can decide if he or she wants to do training and he or she has to enjoy of the sport. (Lee 1993, 37.) It is also noticed that if a child is performing well at the age of 10 he or she may not be doing so after few years. There are many good age-group athletes who are bigger or stronger than others and therefore succeed better than their friends but that is something which will not last. (Brown 2001, 6.)

All the motorcycle disciplines are talent sports that require durability and power. When a person is racing his or her muscle work is mainly isometric (static) which causes the heartbeat to rise extremely. For example, in running, skiing or in most of the other sports the hands and legs are moving rhythmically but in motorcycle racing when a person stands or sits he or she has to receive and tolerate the power which is caused by the moves of the motorcycle. Consequently, the person is working physically really hard all the time even if his or her joints are not necessarily moving. Despite that he or she should be performing as relaxed as possible and that is when talent has the highest effect. Also, the high level of concentration leads to the high heartbeat - this means that so-called stress hormones are being secreted much more than for example in running or skiing. This is caused by the high speed as well as the reaction to sudden changes and other competitors during the competition. (Konttinen 2005; Konttinen 26.1.2011.) While training and high level performances have developed significantly in every sport over the years the improvements will still proceed long in to the future (Müller et al. 1999, 11).

4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STUDY

The main research question of this thesis is:

What makes a champion in motorcycle sport?

Sub questions are:

What is the role of physical and mental factors on one hand and structural and cultural factors on the other hand in influencing the success in international motorcycle racing?

How the federations and clubs could improve their training programmes?

The aim of this thesis is to point out connection between the interview results and the culture and society where the World Champions come from rather than just to find out the personal motivation of World Champions. In this thesis the individual stories are interpreted with the culture of the champions where the word culture refers to a particular form or stage of civilization.

The research process started with collecting research data, statistics and other documents about international top level motor sports. Then experts of motorcycle sport were consulted in order to concentrate on main subjects and to create the questionnaire. In order to find out the personal and cultural features and factors, which riders themselves consider to have influenced most their success, 54 World Champions from 16 different countries were interviewed for this thesis throughout the whole research process. The World Champions represent mainly the Fédération Internationale de Motocyclisme's FIM's main disciplines: Road Racing World Championship Grand Prix, Motocross, Enduro, Trial and Speedway. Also Superbike was included on request of FIM since it is relatively new discipline compared to the others. It was also suggested that it would be interesting to study whether the factors for becoming a champion in a new discipline differ significantly from the more established ones. However, in order to gain the most reliable information of the most

successful motorcycle countries, only the five main disciplines (Road Racing World Championship Grand Prix, Motocross, Trial, Enduro and Speedway) have been included when counting the amount of World Championships of different countries. These five disciplines are representative of all the other disciplines of FIM and therefore give the best general view of the most successful countries. Accordingly motorcycle sport in this thesis refers to the World Championship level sport including the five main disciplines.

When counting the World Championships in Road Racing World Championship Grand Prix, Motocross, Trial, Enduro and Speedway, the six most successful countries in motorcycle sport are Italy (106 World Championships / 165 World Championships all together in every discipline), Great Britain (81 World Championships / 143 World Championships all together), Spain (67 World Championships / 102 World Championships all together), Belgium (55 World Championships / 60 World Championships all together), Sweden (51 World Championships, 145 World Championships all together) and Finland (40 World Championships / 63 World Championships all together).

In order to find out why these countries have been able to produce most World Champions the CEOs or general secretaries of the federations were interviewed in face to face and via emails halfway of the research process. While the material was gained from the World Champions it was placed to the Excel sheet in order to see the similarities between the interviewees. The answers gained from the representatives of most successful motorcycle sport countries were used in both literature review and also in result section in which their answers are used when comparing the countries.

4.1 Data description

For the basic information of successful motor sport career the information was gathered from previous research, publications, statistics and other documents provided by FIM. However, there is only a limited amount of scientific material of motorsport and especially of motorcycle sport. After getting consultancy from the motorcycle trainers and coaches it was agreed upon that the top level motorcycle athletes physical condition and training process can be compared to some extent to

the training and physical requirements in general elite level sport and therefore, the literature of general elite level sport was considered to be suitable to use in this thesis.

Also, the information from the reliable websites has been used. However, the main focus has been on the new information obtained straight from the World Champions and representatives of the most successful federations. The empirical data consists of all together 67 interviews including the motorcycle experts, representatives of the national federations and 54 World Champions in Road Racing World Championship Grand Prix, Enduro, Trial, Motocross, Speedway and Superbike. The concentration has been on multiple World Champions. Altogether the World Champions represent 201 personal World Championships. The champions are between 21-81 years old. The first championship was won in 1956 and the last in 2010. The relatively big age-gap of riders has given information about many different decades. Nine of the interviewees are Finnish, seven are Italian, six British, four are from South-Africa, four are French, three champions are from Belgium, three from USA, three Germans, two Swedish, two Spanish, two Danish, two are from New Zealand, two are from Venezuela, two are Dutch, one is from Australia and one is Swiss.

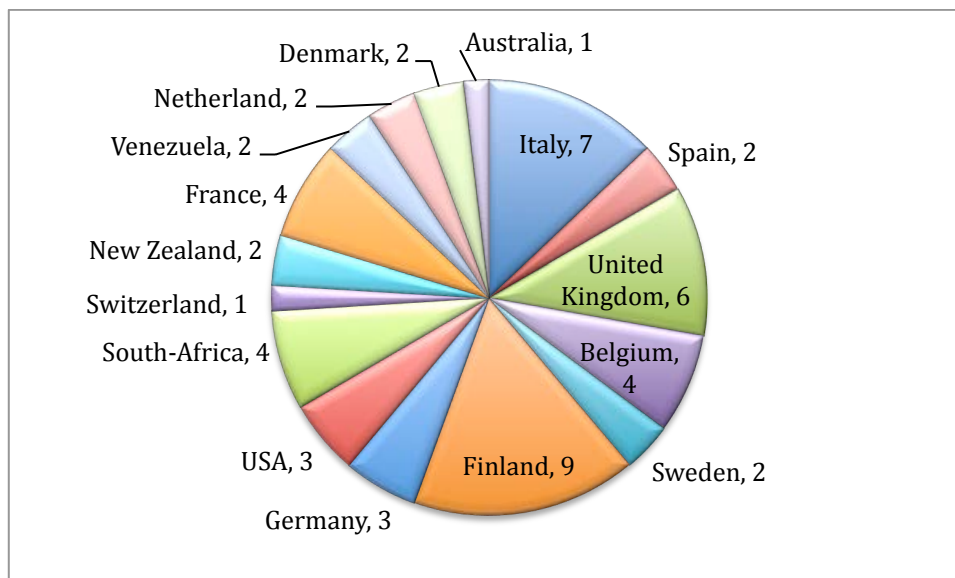


Figure 8. Country of origin of World Champions

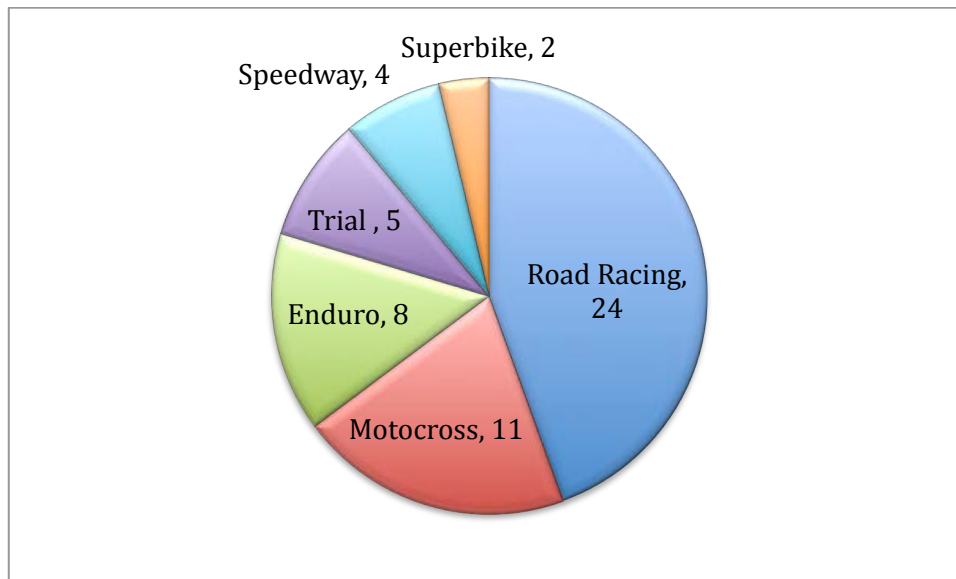


Figure 9. The disciplines of the World Champions

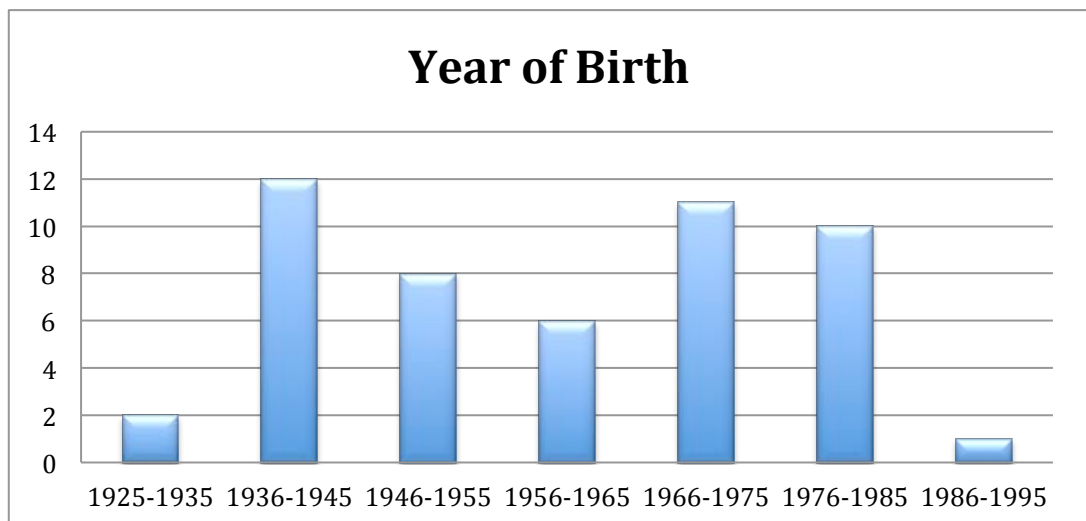


Figure 10. The year of birth of the World Champions (n=54)

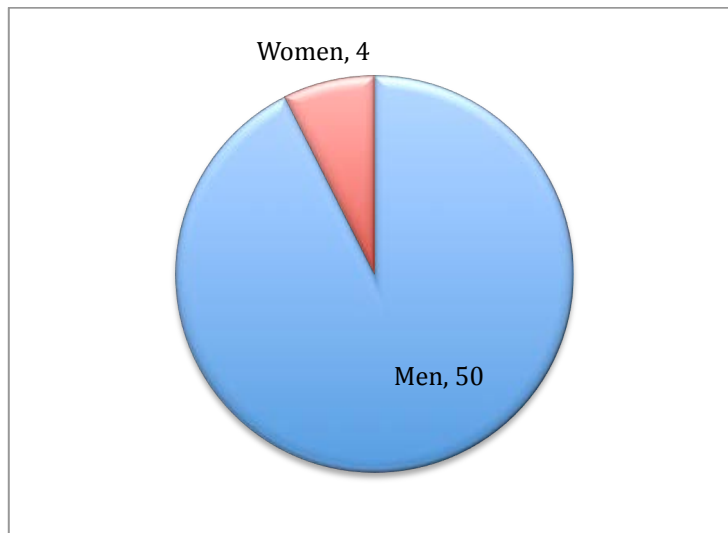


Figure 11. Amount of female and male World Champions that were interviewed

Table 1. World Champions who were interviewed

WORLD CHAMPIONS WHO WERE INTERVIEWED	
ROAD RACING	
Champion from Italy	15 world championships, 1966-1972, 1975 / 500 cc, 1968-1974 / 350 cc
Champion from Great Britain	7 world championships, 1968 / 125 cc, 1964-1965, 1968, 1971 / 250 cc, 1973-1974 / 500 cc
Champion from Rhodesia/South-Africa	6 world championships, 1962-1963 / 250cc, 1962-1965 / 350 cc
Champion from New Zealand	4 world championships, 1963-1964 / 50 cc, 1963, 1965 / 125 cc
Champion from South-Africa	4 world championships, 1978-1979 250 cc, 1978-1979 350 cc
Champion from Italy	3 world championships, 1976-1977, 1980 / 125 cc
Champion from Italy	3 world championships, 1978 / 125 cc, 1979-1980 50 cc
Champion from USA	3 world championships, 1985 / 250 cc, 1983, 1985 / 500 cc
Champion from Switzerland	3 world championships, 1962, 1964, 1966 / 125 cc
Champion from Germany	2 world championships, 1970 / 125 cc, 1973 / 250 cc
Finland	2 world championships 2008, 2010 / side car
Champion from Netherlands	2 world championships, 1971, 1973 / 50 cc
Champion from Venezuela	2 world championships, 1983, 1986 / 250 cc

Champion from USA	1 world championship, 1977 / 750 cc
Champion from Great Britain	1 world championship 1965 / 50 cc
Champion from Australia	1 world championship 1969 / 250 cc
Champion from Venezuela	1 world championship, 1975 / 350 cc
Champion from South-Africa	1 world championship, 1980 / 350 cc
Champion from Great Britain	1 world championship, 1970 / 250 cc
Champion from Italy	1 world championship, 1977 / 250 cc
Champion from France	1 world championship 1990 / side car
Champion from USA	1 world championship, 1993 / 500 cc
Champion from France	1 world championship, 1984 / 250 cc
Champion from France	1 world championship, 2002 / 125 cc
MOTOCROSS	
Champion from Belgium	10 world championships, 1991 / 125 cc, 1995-1997 / 250 cc, 2001-2002 / 500 cc, 2003 / MX2, 2004-2006 / MX1
Champion from Netherlands	8 world championships, 1999, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2010 / sidecarcross
Champion from Belgium	5 world championships, 1982, 1983 / 125 cc, 1987 / 250 cc, 1988, 1990 / 500 cc
Belgium	5 world championships, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1976 / 500 cc
Champion from Belgium	5 world championships 1995, 1997, 1998, 2000 / 500 cc, 2003 / MX3
Champion from Italy	4 world championships, 2005, 2007 / MX2, 2009-2010 / MX1
Champion from Finland	4 world championships, 1974, 1977, 1978 / 500cc, 1976 / 250cc
Champion from South-Africa	3 world championships, 1992 / 125cc, 1993-1994 / 250cc
Champion from Germany	3 world championships, 2005, 2009, 2010 / Women's Motocross
Champion from Italy	1999 / Women's Motocross World Pro Champion
Champion from New Zealand	1 world championship, 2004 / MX2
ENDURO	
Champion from Finland	17 world championships, 7 personal: 1999-2000 / 125cc, 2001 / 250cc, 2002 / 400cc, 2003 / 500cc, 2004 / Enduro 2 2004, 2000-2004 / overall

Champion from Finland	11 world championships, 7 personal: 1990-1991 / 250, 1992-1995, 1997, 2000 / 500 cc
Champion from Italy	10 world championships, 6 personal: 1993 / 500 cc, 1994-1995, 1998, / 250 cc, 1999 / 400 cc, 1998 / overall
Champion from Finland	10 world championships, 5 personal: 2002 / 250 cc, 2004 / Enduro 3, 2005-2006 / Enduro 2, 2008 / Enduro 3
Champion from Finland	11 world championships: 4 personal: 2007 / Enduro 2, 2008-2010 / Enduro 1
Champion from Sweden	8 world championships, 7 personal: 1995 / 350 cc, 1996 / 400 cc, 1998, 1999, 2001, 2002 / 500 cc, 2003 / 450 cc
Champion from Great Britain	4 world championships, 1990, 1993, 1994 / 125 cc, 1996 / 250 cc
Champion from France	2 world championships, 2008-2009 / Enduro 2
TRIAL	
Champion from Spain	10 world championships, 2000-2006 2008-2010 / Womens' Trials
Champion from Spain	6 world championships, 2003-2006 / indoor series, 2005-2006 outdoor series
Champion from Finland	3 world championships 1976-1978 / outdoor series
Champion from Finland	2 world championships, 1992 / outdoor series, 1993 / indoor series
Champion from Germany	1 world championship, 2007 / Women's Trials
SPEEDWAY	
Champion from Sweden	5 world championships, 1956, 1960, 1961, 1963, 1967
Champion from Denmark	3 world championships, 2003, 2007, 2008
Champion from Denmark	3 world championships, 1971, 1975, 1978, 1 long track world championship 1973
Champion from Finland	1 ice speedway world championship, 1990
SUPERBIKE	
Champion from Great Britain	4 world championships 1994, 1995, 1998, 1999
Champion from Great Britain	2 world championships 2004, 2007

4.2 Research method

This thesis is based on a mixed method research consisting mostly of qualitative data but also quantitative is used since the number of World Champions interviewed is relatively large (n=54). Mixed methods or combined methods research means that both quantitative and qualitative data are used to answer the research questions (Seale 2004, 294; Hesse-Biber 2010, 3). According to Creswell (2010) a mixed method approach is a valuable method to use when either qualitative or quantitative method alone does not give full understanding about the research question but it also provides a researcher with a broader and better understanding of the research problem. The qualitative data - which in this thesis are the interviews of the representatives of most successful countries and some World Champions – are in the centre of the thesis and the quantitative data – the questionnaire the World Champions filled out – supports the findings from qualitative mixed methods approach.

There are several reasons to use mixed methods, Hesse-Biber (2010, 3-5) has pointed out triangulation, complementarity, development (one method develops the other), initiation (findings that raise questions that require initiating a new study) and expansion. For this thesis the main reason to use mixed methods was the triangulation. It was predicted that qualitative information gained from some of the World Champions and all of the representatives of most successful countries would have more validity if it was combined with quantitative data gained from the World Champions. Also, the credibility of the findings became greater and the conclusions richer (Hesse-Biber 2010, 3-4). Likewise in order to get a better understanding of the research problem it was considered that mixed methods with complementary aspect would be beneficial. It turned out to be useful because the backgrounds of the World Champions were so different (for example big age gap, different nationalities and disciplines) so even if some of the results were not directly comparable with each other's the use of complementary aspect helped to find out similarities between the champions.

There are several different opinions of the benefits of quantitative and qualitative data. Some of the quantitative researchers still do not appreciate the value of qualitative data (Flick 2007). For example as cited in Patton (1990, 478) a

philosopher Thomas H. Kuhn has mentioned: “*quantitative predictions are preferable to qualitative ones*”. This means that often the “hard data” is valued more than the “soft data” the qualitative data being referred as soft data. (Patton 1990, 478.) Nevertheless qualitative research has established itself as an academic discipline and today the trend is that an increasing number of researchers use qualitative or a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods (Flick 2007). Since there have been opposing opinions about which method to use, in this thesis the basis has been created according to the hard data i.e. statistics and the qualitative method have been used to support the findings of quantitative data.

After adding up all the World Championships the most successful countries were discovered. The interviews of the representatives of the most successful countries were then carried out according to those statistics. Also, when interviewing the champions the quantitative part enabled the researcher to make some assumptions that can be perceived as valid information since the similar outcomes were seen repeatedly.

The interviews of the World Champions were carried out as structured interviews with questionnaire forms. A structured interview in which the order of the questions is determined in advance is the most common interview method. Using the questionnaire was valuable since the interviews were easy to conduct when asking information from busy World Champions. Also the structured questionnaire interviews are suitable when the interviewer knows what kind of information the interviewees are able to give. (Hirsijärvi & Hurme 2000, 44-45.) The most important question was what the rider himself or herself thinks are the main issues which made him or her a World Champion. However, quite frequently the rider is unaware of the facts that have had impact on his or her success and it was also acknowledged that it is often problematic when asking interviewee his or her attitude towards something (Alasuutari 2001, 144). Therefore, with the help of other so-called background questions the idea was to find out mainly in which kind of society the rider lived when he started to practice racing but also how his/her personality and other aspects of his/her life have influenced.

The questions were created based on the literature review, the previous knowledge

and experience of the researcher and on consultancy of many motorcycle experts such as former riders, mechanics and team managers.

The representatives of the national federations were interviewed using semi-structured interviews in which the questions were specified but which gave the interviewer the possibility to move beyond the questions (May 1997, 110). The open-ended questions defined the area to be explored but also gave possibility for dialogue and to pursue an idea in more detail since it was expected that there will be national differences between the six most successful countries. (Hirsijärvi & Hurme 2000, 45; May 1997, 110.) Four of the representatives of the national federations were interviewed face to face in October 2010 in Macao during the FIM congress. Some information was also shared afterwards via emails and two of the representatives were interviewed only via emails.

16 of the interviews of World Champions were conducted in person with a questionnaire form during the summer and autumn 2010 in Finland (Imatra) and the Netherlands (Assen). The familiar place and atmosphere of paddocks helped the interviewees to open up more and it was clearly seen how an informal interview method helped to reach a deeper level of the interviewees mind (Alasuutari 2010, 146). 36 World Champions were interviewed via emails, for one the questionnaire was sent by post and one preferred phone interview when the interview was recorded and the researcher filled the questionnaire form afterwards. During every interview it is extremely important to create a trustful relationship between the interviewer and interviewee in order to reach credibility and to get reliable information. That is why so-called deep interview method is the best solution in order to get new and deeper information. The deep interview method also requires that interviewee and interviewer have a good relationship and they become friends. (Alasuutari 2010, 149.) Also, similar parlance may help during the interview process and when interviewer and interviewee belong to the same group they share similar culture (Ruusuvoori & Tiittula 2005, 39, 85). Since the researcher already knew many of the interviewees in advance and also had a background of motorcycle world it was considered that champions would give reliable and deeper information also with structured questionnaire form and therefore, there was no need for longer and deeper conversations.

Since the World Champions are public figures and some of them gave information that is confidential their names are not used in the quotations of this research in order to avoid unnecessary media attention. Instead they are referred to interviewee 1, 2, 3 and so on.

World Champions' interviews represent mainly the quantitative part of this thesis providing the answer to the main research question: "What makes a champion in motorcycle sport?" However, the material of the interviews is also to some extent used to answer the sub questions "What is the role of physical and mental factors on one hand and structural and cultural factors on the other hand in influencing the success in international motorcycle racing?" and "How the federations and clubs could improve their training programmes?" The material gained from semi-structured interviews of the CEO's and general secretaries of most successful federations represents the qualitative part of this thesis. This material primarily gives an answer to the sub questions. The results were gained after analysing both the interview materials and already existing economic and world championship statistics.

4.3 Analysis

In qualitative research the analysing is significantly based on the material gained and the purpose of the analysing is to clarify the material and consequently produce new information about the subject (Eskola & Suoranta 1998, 19, 138).

In many researches the interviewees have only few options where to choose their answers. This however limits the information and can affect the results. (Eskola & Suoranta 1998, 140.) Therefore, in this thesis it was decided that riders had a chance to answer as they wished without limitation. Most of them gave short answers with few words as they were encouraged to do. Since there were 77 questions in the questionnaire it was thought that giving detailed answers would take too long and they would not answer the questionnaire. However, some of the interviewees gave longer and more comprehensive answers that were used also in the theoretical framework. Also, the representatives of most successful federations were interviewed more intensively and the information gathered from them was mainly used in the theoretical framework.

In qualitative research the researcher can either stick very closely with the material and build interpretations exactly according to that or to have the material as a ground to his or her theoretical thinking. (Eskola & Suoranta 1998, 146). In this thesis the later option was chosen.

After the interviews of World Champions the material was placed to the Excel sheet so that the answers of the certain questions were at the same row and therefore the similarities and differences were easily seen. Also, a sheet that compared the similarities between different nations and a sheet that compared similarities between different disciplines were created. The figures that are seen on result part were created according to these Excel sheets. The results were interpreted against social and political theories and compared with the cultural (relating to a civilization) and family backgrounds where the World Champions came from. This way it was investigated if there were some similarities between them and what kind of structural factors encouraged the riders to succeed. Since the aim was to find the most essential information from the material obtained, thematic analysis was used. In thematic analysis the researcher identifies a certain number of themes that adequately reflect the whole data and divides the information according to those themes as in this thesis to physical, mental and structural and cultural factors. These themes emphasize the answers to the research question. Also, some direct quotations were used to support the themes and to give examples of the topics. (Eskola & Suoranta 1998, 146, 174-179.)

The information gathered from the interviewees gives an overall picture of the World Champions, their characters, talents and societal backgrounds. Results show that there are few obvious factors that the interviewees have in common and which can be seen as straight link to the success of the motorcycle rider. However, due to the fact that World Champions represent six different disciplines and 16 different countries it was challenging to interpret or generalize the results. Also the simple fact that the World Championships won are from seven different decades (1956-2010) and the age gap of the champions is so big (21-81 years) led to the result that the

answers are not entirely comparable but at the same time they give an overview of the development of motorcycle sport in World Championship level.

Since the World Champions answered mostly with only few words the results were easy to compare and analysing process was therefore relatively easy. The outcomes of the World Champions have mainly been used in the results section. The result section has been divided into three parts: physical factors, mental factors and structural and cultural factors which naturally get the greatest emphasis.

4.4 The significance of this thesis

Elite-level sport is a greatly examined subject but motorcycle sport has played only a minor role in scientific studies and literature. There has been a remarkable lack of information of motorcycle sport success in scientific world. Never before has there been researched how many motorcycle World Champions consider the facts that have impacted their success. Consequently, there have not been many researches – if any – that include interviews of over 50 sports World Champions, therefore the impact of this thesis goes beyond just the motorcycle sport alone.

Even though motorcycle sport has been amongst the most popular sports for decades and it gains great part of media visibility all over the world, the deeper sense of the sport is often forgotten. Motorcycle sport is not just entertainment that greatly affects the economy but it also impacts the road safety and pursues towards greener environment. It is disgrace that these aspects are often ignored when the greatest visibility is naturally directed towards the motorcycle events and races. Motorcycle sport gets the greatest attention when there is a fatal accident during the competition but when a regular person falls on the road and survives because of the helmet that has been designed according to the accidents and tests in motorcycle sport it does not get any attention in media.

The other aspects are the riders themselves. They have a certain public image but it is rarely acknowledged why they became famous i.e. why they are so successful. The deeper reasons are usually difficult to examine since most of the riders are not aware why they really became successful. Moreover they usually do not recognize the

impacts that society and culture have had on their careers and success.

Thirdly and most importantly, it is hoped that this thesis provides new information or supports the facts already known about the subjects that mostly affect the riders' success. The information could help Fédération Internationale de Motocyclisme and national federations to improve training programmes and coaching procedures but also to identify young riders who most likely have potential to become future World Champions.

5 THE SECRET OF SUCCESS

Predicting success is really difficult and there are many factors that have an influence on why some athletes become champions and some do not. According to Robert Singer, professor and chair of the department of exercise and sport sciences at the University of Florida as cited in Brown (2006, 7) an athlete may have a combination of genes that favours long-range talent but there are still too many variables. Factors such as environmental opportunities have an impact on the genetic makeup whereas variables such as motivation, coachability, and opportunity cannot be predicted.

Many young athletes have a dream to become a world famous motorcycle hero. While so many dream of it why do only few actually become one?

In motorsport like in any other elite-level sport in order to succeed one needs to take several aspects into account. According to Shogan (1999, 18) one must be persistent, strong-willed and not give in to competing desires. Pargman (1998, 21) summarizes performance in sport as something that has a goal or achievement orientation. It also includes excelling over others. According to Orlick (2000, 3) there are seven factors one needs to have in order to succeed in both life and sport: commitment, focused connection, confidence, positive images, mental readiness, distraction control and on-going learning. Many sport coaches have summarized the four factors that impact the athletes' success in the following way: physical ability, physical training, mental training and desire or drive (Clarkson 1999, 69).

The Pyramid of Success-example (Letts 2007) below describes well how many steps there are before one becomes a World Champion. Even if the example is from Ping Pong the same aspects apply to the motorcycle sport as well.



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Figure 12. Ping-Pong Pyramid of Success

The study of the best Norwegian athletes finished in 1999 by G. Breivik from Norwegian University of Sport and Physical Education showed that the key issues for being a successful athlete include playing a lot of different sports, variation of training, specializing later in life, enjoyment of hard training, being active in organized and unorganized sporting contexts and having supportive parents. The athletes interviewed felt that in order to become best in the world one should have certain psychological skills and a strong will. (Müller et al. 1999, 160.)

In motorcycle sport it is also known that successful athletes need to be eager to win, indomitable, long span and he needs to be able to handle the pressure. According to FIM president Mr. Vito Ippolito riders must also be highly focused, have very strong nerves and make the correct decisions in order to make a successful career (FIM 2009). According to the motorcycle sport coach Tomi Kontinen there are four aspects for succeeding in motorcycle sport: Technical readiness of discipline that

provides the right performing method, physical readiness that provides the utilization of skills, durability and power, mental readiness that provides the utilization of mental skills and technical readiness of equipment that provides the knowledge of the technical aspects of motorcycle and to develop, maintain and fix the motorcycle. (Konttinen 2008.)

In his presentation “To the Top” Konttinen (2009) has listed all the efforts the top riders have mentioned one should do in order to reach the top. The main features are: getting used to the life of a sports person including aspects such as having motivation for practice and competing, becoming independent, having control over life, taking examples from the top and infiltrating the top. One should get information and develop oneself constantly. It is also important to control the financial aspects so that a rider is able to concentrate on the most relevant matters. A top rider has to be used to the constant travelling and he/she should also have good language skills. It is important to have plans, such as how to reach the top step by step, how to separate the time between school and sport. Therefore, a rider should have both 3-5 years plan and one year plan. Both national and international training camps and competitions are useful. A rider should be hard but humble. Konttinen has also listed the main physical characters of motorsport athlete which are: goal orientation, high motivation to perform, frustration tolerance, courage, independence, self-confidence, self-discipline, persistency, stress tolerance, perseverance, ability to relax, ability to calm down and concentration. (Konttinen 2009.)

However, even if a person has good mental capacity for sport, has trained a lot and has all the physical requirements needed, also the structural and cultural factors, such as country of origin, the welfare of the family and society’s general attitude towards motorcycling, can have a significant impact on his/her career. In the following part the personal factors with rider’s personality, motivation and commitment as well as his/her physical factors are researched. The structural and cultural factors of this part include these aspects: cultural characteristics of motorcycle sport, national federations, training possibilities and venues for competitions, economic situation of the society and media visibility with sponsorship.

5.1 Cultural characteristics of (motorcycle) sport

This chapter describes the history and development of sport in six most successful motorcycle sport countries. Great Britain gets the largest attention since many of the modern sports were codified or first described there and then transferred to other European countries.

Sport has spread all over the world to different cultures from ancient Greeks to American Indians (Simon 1985, 2). Although competitive sport has an influence of western value system, different cultures and countries have modified and adapted it (Maguire et al. 2002, 12). Consequently, the environment impacts the competitive sport greatly. In western culture people are achievement-orientated and being the best is important whereas in some other countries values like co-operation and participation are more important. (Clarkson 1999, 76.) Patriotism is one aspect of sport. Both the participants and spectators can be really patriotic towards their countries feeling identification with their countries and being concerned about the sporting success (Tännsjö & Tamburrini 2000, 74). Different countries and different nations prefer and cheer for different sports. Sport has become an enormous industry and business but it is also something that helps people forming personal and social identities and express their values (Brummett 2009, 9, 11, 14). Children do not come up with a new sport or hobby themselves. They need role models, friends who do the same sport or possibilities to try a sport. (Brown 2001, 73.) Therefore, the role of the society is relatively significant when a child chooses a sport. All in all the sport, one way or another, reflects society (Allison 2000, 54).

Figure 13. shows beside how many components influence on the sport system but also how big impact the cultural, social and political issues have. Factors such as traditions, economy, political climate, law and role of the state varies a lot between countries. Also ideology, language, religion, geography, ethnology, gender and operations do matter. (Koski 2000.)

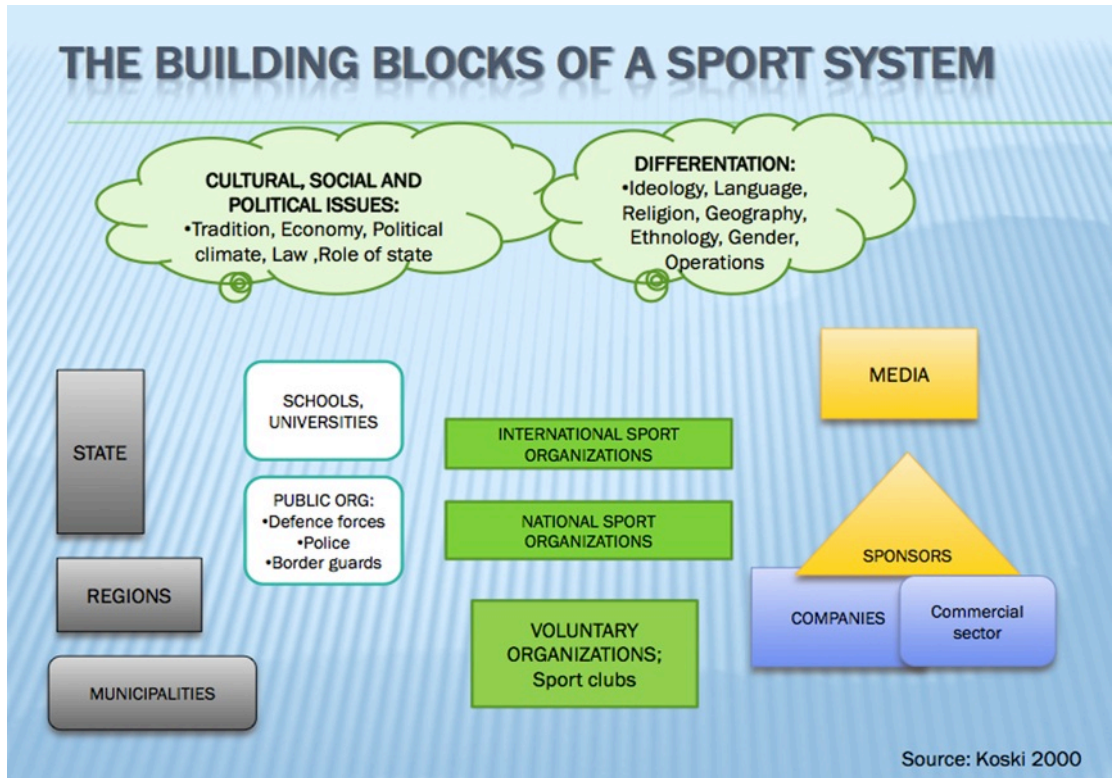


Figure 13. The building blocks of a sport system (Koski 2000)

Figure 14. demonstrates how big difference there is of people participating in sports between the countries in just the area of the European Union (Scheerder 2010).

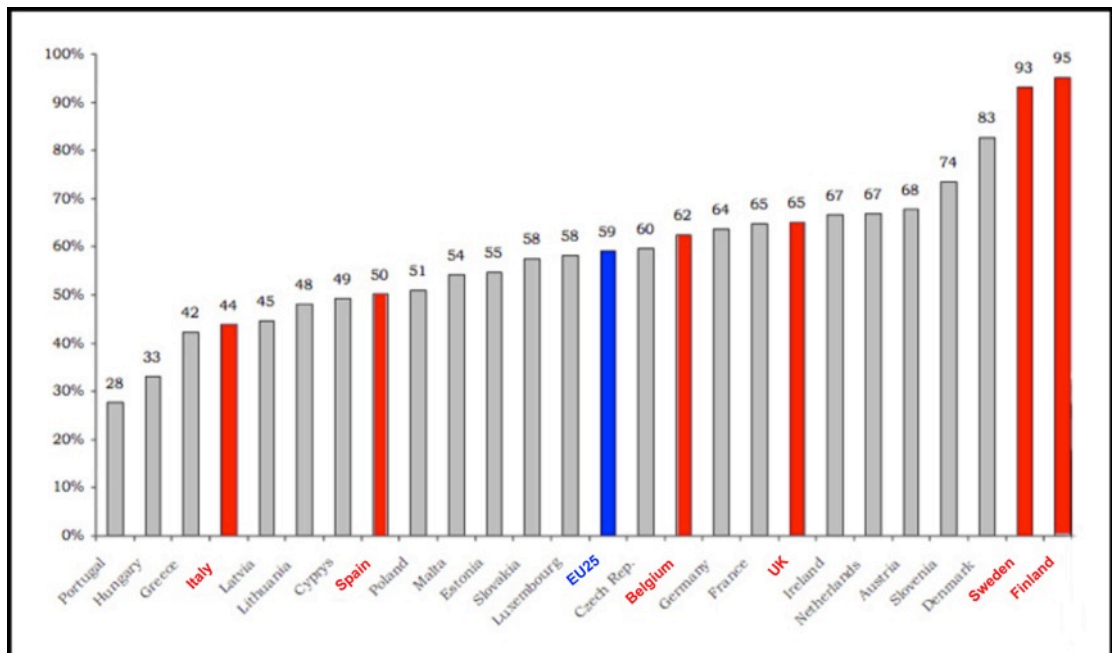


Figure 14. Sport Participation in the member states of the EU25 in 2004, % of total population (Scheerder 2010)

Also, the history of sport varies greatly between the countries. Great Britain has a long history within the sport in general. It is said to be a country where the sport organization developed first and the country that invented many of the sport disciplines. They also allowed sport to function as a specialized unit within distinct structures. (Vasara 1989, 31; Ibrahim 1976, 107.) It is therefore justified to say that also motorsport was able to develop in a society Great Britain offered for sports.

Many consider that the industrialization was the reason why sport developed first in Great Britain. However, Norbert Elias, as cited in Sironen (1995, 64), has pointed out that the key aspect was the parliament because in 1700s the status of parliament was stabilized and free time got more influence on sport. The modern sport in Great Britain started to develop in the nineteenth century when physical education and activity were introduced to the public schools. Also, through schools girls were more involved in physical activities and the development of female sport started to progress even though for women sport was more about social experiences rather than competition.

The rapid industrialization also affected the British sport and soon the country had a number of different sporting activities. Especially rugby and football became popular sports. In the beginning of 1900s, the wide railway network enabled people to participate in more sport events. However, the professional sport was still at a really early stage in Britain before the Great War (1914-1918). After the war the sport got a commercial approach. The war affected the British sport a lot and sport was linked with the masculine pride of the nation. (Riordan & Krüger 2003, 6-10.) War also created a boom in motorcycling since motorcycles were used a lot during the war years and the national federation the ACU got many new members during the peace time. The inter-war time with many motorcycling events is considered to be the golden era of British motorcycling. (ACU 2011.)

The changing economic situation and the global economic depression between 1929-1933 caused the unemployment to increase but many people still participated in football and cricket matches. Also, more spectators were following motorsport. (Riordan & Krüger 2003, 10.) In 1935, the funding from the Ministry of Education enabled the establishment of the Central Council for Recreative Physical Training

that later became the Central Council of Physical Recreation, CCPR, an umbrella organisation for the governing and representative bodies of sport and recreation in Great Britain. Today, the organization's new name is The Sport and Recreation Alliance (Riordan & Krüger 2003, 12; The Sport and Recreation Alliance 2011.)

The worst time for British motorcycling was the World War Two period (1938-1945) when the amount of members was reduced significantly. However, the professional sport started to grow after the war era in the mid 1900s and also ACU got new members. The professionalism was seen especially in boxing, cricket, cycling, golf, horse racing and football but also British motorcycling competitors were succeeding on an international stage and the Olympic Games of London in 1948 increased the profile of sport. (ACU 2011; Riordan & Krüger 2003, 12-13.) After the war period sport was more influenced by the British politics and people's welfare became more important. Sport still had a strong image of voluntarism but it became more professional when the governing bodies of sport united under the umbrella of the CCPR. The creation of the Sport Council in the 1970s had a significant meaning for British sport. It took some responsibilities from the CCPR and it also had the power to allocate funds to sport. The council was responsible for promoting and improving the general sport but it also concentrated on developing and improving the performance of elite athletes at international events. (Riordan & Krüger 2003, 14-17.) Also, growth of television coverage and sponsoring have enabled elite level sport to develop further in Great Britain with more financial resources (Riordan & Krüger 2003, 19).

Today soccer, rugby, and cricket are the most popular spectator sports in 62 million inhabitants Great Britain. There are more than 45 000 soccer clubs catering to all ages and both sexes. Also horseracing, show jumping, and motor sports, which includes Formula One, rallying, and Speedway are popular spectator sports. The sports people of Great Britain hold world titles in a variety of sports such as boxing, rowing, snooker, squash, track and field and motor sports. (Putzi 2009, 391.)

The Italian sport history dates back to the gladiatorial games held in ancient Rome (Putzi 2009, 197). The sport started to develop from the Kingdom of Sardinia in the 1830s when the gymnastics were presented to the military. During World War One

the country was introduced to the English sport. At the same time cycling became the most popular sport in Italy and the country tried to use sport as a method of preparation for the war. (Riordan & Krüger 2003, 139-140.)

Women's sport had the possibility to develop in Italy at a relatively early stage and at the time of the World War One many women were involved in sports. Italy, similar to Britain, was also one of the founding members of the International Women's Sport Federation in Paris in 1921. Still women's sport faced many obstacles and only from the 1950s onwards women started to gain more equal status in sport.

During the 1920s the football phenomenon was born and cycling was left behind but also motor car racing with the victorious reputation of Alfa Romeo of Milan gained national enthusiasm. At the same time the overall professionalism in sport increased and Italy succeeded well in the Olympic Games. In the 1930s, it was important for Italy to succeed in international competitions in order to create a positive image of Fascism and Italy. The country invested heavily in sports and by 1935 Italy was one of the most advanced countries in European sport. The years prior to World War Two were the best time of the Italian sport with an enormous success in Olympic Games. (Riordan & Krüger 2003, 143-145, 149.)

In Italy the welfare policies, the third sector and sport in general developed separately until the 1980s when the international development encouraged these three aspects to work together more closely (Borgogni 2010). The organization of sport and support of the elite level athletes have been productive and Italy has had constant success in international sport events. Hero worship is one part of the Italian sport culture including the victories of Ferrari in Formula One and Giacomo Agostini in Road Racing. Even recently both Formula One and motorcycling along with skiing, and cycling have been the most successful sports in Italy. (Riordan & Krüger 2003, 148.) For a country with over 60 million inhabitants of which eight million people own a motorcycle themselves, motorcycle sport is very important. The image has also improved over the last 20 years. Especially during the last 10 years Valentino Rossi has been able to make the image significantly better. (Rinaldelli 24.12.2010.)

Political issues and social changes have always affected and been linked with the Spanish sport. However, after the ancient regime, the Civil War and General Franco's dictatorship, Spanish sport has developed positively and is today an important part of international sport. Especially the influence of the modern English sport movement at the end of the 19th century brought sport clubs and federations to the country. (Riordan & Krüger 2003, 123.) One of them being a sport club for motor racing that was established in Barcelona in 1897. Football was introduced to the schools in 1882 and became the most popular sport in Spain. Also basketball, motor racing and bullfighting became popular sport attractions in the 1960s. One of the most important times in the history of Spanish sport was in 1977 when Franco's autocratic National Sports Delegation was converted into the democratic Council of Sport. After the Socialist Party had won the local election in several communities, the local sport became more important and started to develop. Spain became a part of the international elite sport after the 1992 Olympics at which the country was able to gain 22 medals. The success affected the expansion and development of all the sport disciplines including motorsport positively. (Riordan & Krüger 2003, 125, 130, 132-134.) Over the years the political situation has affected the Spanish sport enormously and occasionally there still has been an impact of Franco's time. However, the sport has developed to be more professional and it has gained more economic importance. (Riordan & Krüger 2003, 136.) Today soccer is like a religion for Spanish people and cycling is still as important as it was in 1940s but there are also new sports such as golf, tennis, basketball and skiing, that have become popular in the recent years (Putzi 2009, 345.) Motor racing is important for Spanish people and it is popular especially in Barcelona and in Cadiz (Putzi 2009, 345). Today the image of motorcycle sport in 46 million inhabitants Spain is good. For example in Barcelona there are many people riding a motorcycle. Also, the Spanish weather enables people to ride them all year round. The year 2010 was special for Spain since the country gained three titles in Road Racing (Jorge Lorenzo, Toni Elias and Marc Marquez). The success has affected especially to the children who are dreaming of having an own motorcycle. (Verneda 24.10.2010, Somolimos 2.2.2011.)

The figure 15. below shows how the success of Spanish motorcycle sport has increased during the past six years.

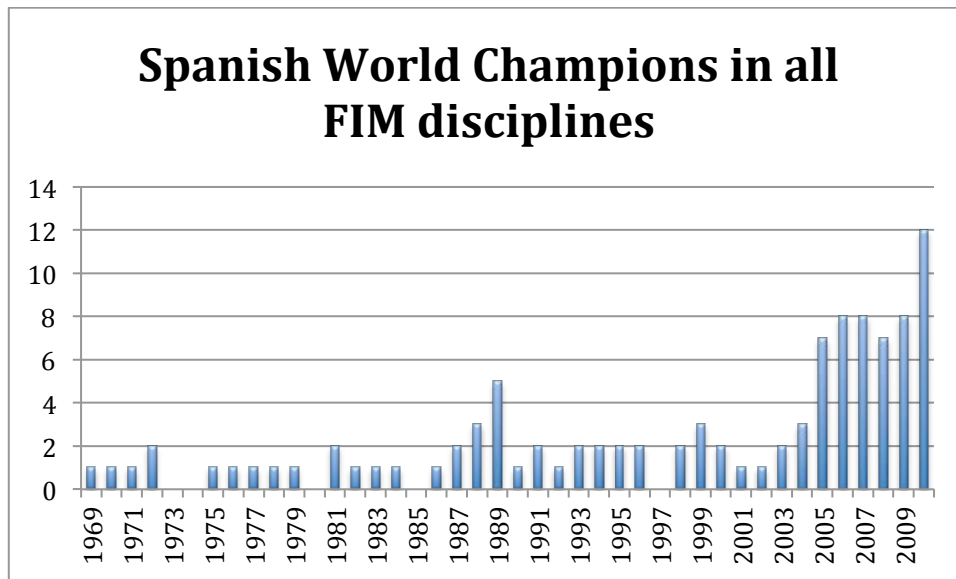


Figure 15. The amount of Spanish motorcycle World Champions 1969-2010 (RFME 2010)

For Belgians sport and especially football and cycling have been very important (Hilvoorde et al. 2010, 231). Even though the majority of the 10.8 million Belgian people do not practice any sport the country has many different types of sport to offer and people are known as passionate sport fans. The location of Belgium in the middle of Europe has brought different influences to the country's sport. Beside the football and cycling people like to practice sports such as tennis and jogging. Also, archery, pétanque and in some specific areas pelote, which is a combination of tennis and handball, are practiced. During the recent years more Belgian people have begun to practice physical activity in order to stay fit. Various forms of motor sports are widely practiced during the summer time. (World Trade Press 2010, 18, Rentmeesters 9.6.2011.) The motorsport has indeed a long history in Belgium. The motorcycle sport was carried out already before the establishment of the Fédération Motocycliste de Belgique in 1912. (FMB 2010.) However, in contrary to other sports, motorsport has not received much of financial support from the government (Rentmeesters 9.6.2011).

The elite level sport is also really important to the Belgians and the country has been able to produce many successful athletes for different disciplines and performed well at the Olympics gaining 140 medals from summer and winter Olympics before 2011.

According to the Belgium Society and Culture Complete Report the reasons behind the sport success include factors such as *“a strong network of professional sports clubs, easy availability of high quality training facilities, and support from the government”*. The most famous and most successful motorsport person in Belgium is the Motocross rider Stefan Everts who has won ten World Championships and has also been nominated five times as the Belgian Sportsman of the Year (2001-2004 and 2006). (World Trade Press 2010, 19-20.)

Sweden, a country of 9,3 million inhabitants, is passionate sporting nation that is transforming itself into one of the world's best athletic nations (Putzi 2009, 356). Sweden has succeeded in sport very well already for quite some time. It has performed well in winter sports such as ice hockey and cross-country skiing but it has also been top in tennis and golf. (Breivik 2010, 206.) Swedish sports federations such as Swedish Sports Confederation and the Swedish Olympic Committee have organized many sporting events for years. The country has produced numerous champions and its athletes have won more than 550 Olympic medals. (Putzi 2009, 356.) Breivik (2010, 206) points out few issues in the history of Sweden that may have affected its sport culture: it has had a vertical social ordering accepting an upper class and nobility, it has stayed neutral during the world wars and has been influenced by Germany and France. Partly because of these factors *“Sweden is a world leader in skiing, tennis, swimming, ice hockey, handball, table tennis, golf, motorcycle riding, canoeing, orienteering, and sports for the disabled”* (Putzi 2009, 356). In motorcycle sport Sweden has been most successful in Enduro and Motocross (FIM 2010, Wikipedia 2010). Motorcycle sport has always had a quite “macho” image in Sweden. It was greatly related to the army in the beginning and today in many ways to “extreme sport”. (Westling 21.3.2011.)

Also for the other Nordic country, Finland, the elite-level sport is an important aspect of the country's sport culture and Finland has had many internationally successful athletes over the decades (Müller et al. 1999, 66). Today 77 % of the Finnish adults consider international sport success important (SLU 2011). Finland with its 5,3 million inhabitants is famous for “sisu” which can be described as competitive spirit and drive meaning that Finnish people do not give up easily. Finland has gained success in many winter sports such as ski jumping, cross country skiing and ice

hockey but also in summer sports. Finland is especially known for its many successful motorsport racers in Formula 1 and the World Rally Championship. (Breivik 2010, 207-208.) Finland has over 1 000 professional athletes and 1 200 coaches. Sport events are the most watched programs on TV with 56 percent of television viewing. Also sport magazines and newspapers are avidly read. (Putzi 2009, 139.)

Finland had its first motorcycle-type event in 1899. The bike had three wheels and it reminded more of a bicycle than an actual motorcycle but the history of Finnish motorcycle sport is considered to have started from that year. When coming to the 20th century the motorcycle competitions were more common than car competitions in Finland. Also, there were more than 20 different motorcycle brands that had been imported to Finland before the First World War. The worst time of the Finnish motorcycle sport was after the war due to the lack of gasoline. But in 1918 the development of motorcycle sport started to grow again. The establishment of the Finnish Motorcycling Federation in 1922 had also major impact to the sport since its main missions were to distribute motorcycle sport all over the country and to increase motorcycle events. (Korhonen 2005, 6.) Especially in the 1930s the development of motorcycling, motorcycle competitions and the establishment of motorcycle tracks was extremely powerful (Katajamäki 2008, 15). Also, approximately the same time the Finnish sponsors started to understand the importance of motorcycle sport and about 20 years later the Finnish competitors started taking part in motorcycle events held abroad. In 1963, motorcycle sport was accepted as part of the official sport organization when the Finnish Motorcycling Federation became a member of the Finnish Sports Federation. (Korhonen 2005, 6.)

5.2 National federations

As stated in the previous chapter all the most successful motorcycle sport countries have a long history of sports and they have succeeded in various types of sports. However, the question is, why some countries produce so many World Champions? One common factor between successful motorcycle sport countries is that all of their federations have long history. Italian federation, Federazione Motociclistica Italiana, was established in 1911. It became member of FIM on the following year. Great

Britain has even older federation, founded in 1903 Auto-cycle Union is the third oldest federation and is one of the founding members of FIM. Spain's federation Real Federacion Motociclista Espanola was founded in 1921 and it affiliated to FIM in 1923. Fédération Motocycliste de Belgique was founded in Belgium in 1912 and it became a member of FIM two years later. Finnish Federation, Suomen Moottoriliitto ry, was founded and affiliated to FIM in 1922. (FIM 2010.) Sweden's federation Svenska Motorcykel och Snöskoterförbundet did the same in 1935 although there had been a joint federation of motorcycles and cars already since 1905 (Westling 21.3.2011).

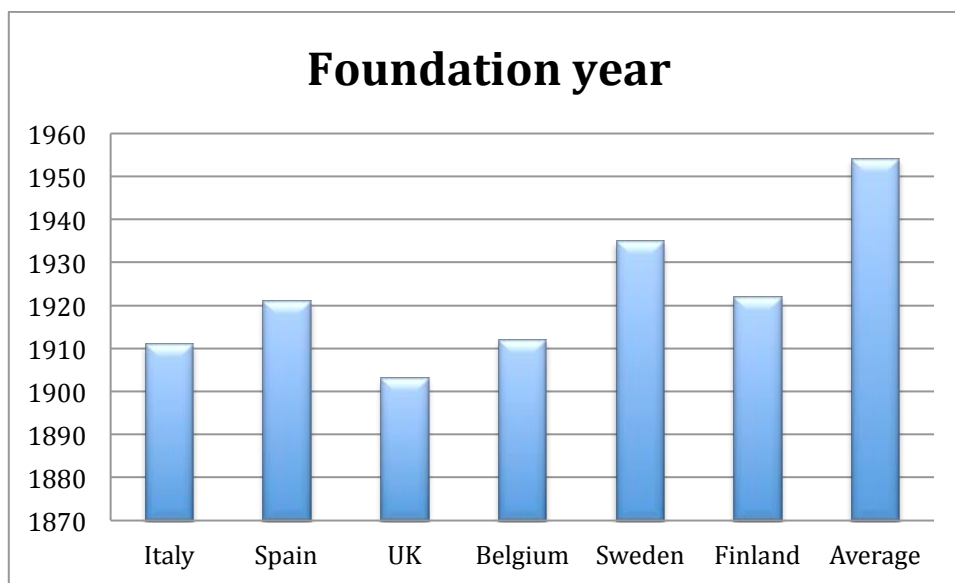


Figure 16. The foundation year of national federations having most World Championships compared to the average foundation year of all the national federations (FIM 2011)

When comparing all the FIM's affiliated federations the average year when they were founded was 1954. So all the countries that have succeeded have a benefit of few extra decades compared to the average countries. However, the long federation history does not automatically mean that the country would succeed in motorcycle sport. For example the two oldest federations, Austria (Oesterreichischer Automobil-Motorrad- u.Touring Club / OSK, 1896) and Ireland (Motor Cycle Union of Ireland, 1902) have not gained success in World Championship level. Ireland has no World Champions in any of the five disciplines, Road Racing World Championship Grand

Prix, Motocross, Trial, Enduro or Speedway. Austria has only three World Championships, two in Motocross and one in Road Racing World Championship Grand Prix. (FIM 2010, Wikipedia 2010.) So federations' long history and commitment to the motorcycle sport usually improves the situation of the riders but it is not the only aspect that affects to the riders' success. Moreover almost every World Champion that took part into this thesis considered role of the national federations really small or insignificant for their careers or success.

As the size of the country does not seem to have significant meaning to the success neither does the size of the federation. In 2010 Belgian federation had 111 member clubs and 1 738 members in total (Rentmeesters, 28.2.2011.) whereas Italian federation had 2 234 member clubs and 160 000 members (Rinaldelli 24.12.2010).

Table 2. Number of clubs and members in six most successful motorcycle countries.

Federation	Italy	Spain	GB	Belgium	Sweden	Finland
Nr of clubs	2 234	1 000	496	111	575	261
Nr of members	160 000		21 758	2 738	140 000	35 257

Therefore, the reasons for riders' success can be seen to come more from the practical work and investment into factors such as training than the actual size or long history of the national federation.

Italian Federation has 2 234 clubs and 160 000 members in total. The country has won 165 Individual World Championship including for example 81 championships from Road Racing, 61 from Enduro, 12 from Motocross, two from Motorally. All together Italy has achieved 33 Team World Championships that include for example 25 championships from Enduro, two from Motocross and two from Supermoto.

25 000 Italian riders have a sport licence (Road Racing: 2 734, Motocross: 4 745, Enduro: 4 611, Trial: 751, Speedway: 38). The cost of the licence depends of the discipline and the age of the rider: the licence cost starts from 100 euros per year for young people to 350 euros per year for senior road riders. About half of the amount is insurance costs. But the cost for riders is not only the cost of licence. There are

also other costs such as for inscription. To participate at an Italian championship a person must have at least 25 000 euro per year which is paid by the rider's own club. (Rinaldelli 24.12.2010.)

Spanish Federation has a bit more than 1 000 clubs. Spain has gained totally 102 World Championships in all the motorcycle disciplines. The most successful discipline has been Trial with 49 World Championship but the country has also succeeded in Road Racing World Championship Grand Prix achieving 35 World Championship titles. The cost of the sport licence varies. For some disciplines such as for Trial and Enduro the national federation is trying to offer very inexpensive licence but the insurance costs are about 70 % of the licence. (Verneda 24.10.2010, Somolinos 2.2.2011.)

Spain's most successful riders have been Angel Nieto in Road Racing with 13 World Championships, Antoni Bau with eight, Jordi Tarres with seven and Adam Raga with six personal Trial World Championships. All together Spain has 42 different World Champions in all the motorcycle disciplines. (Real Federación Motociclista Espanola 2010.)

The federation of Great Britain has 496 clubs and 21 758 members. The total number of World Championships won by ACU riders is 143. The most successful discipline is Trials followed by Track Racing. The federation has 6 275 sport licences in Road Racing, 4 312 in Motocross, 2 336 in Enduro, 7 726 in Trial and 1 109 in Speedway. The licence costs 43 pounds (about 50€) per year. (Gregory 10.11.2010.)

The Belgian federation has all together 111 clubs and 1 538 members in sport activities and 1 200 in leisure activities (Rentmeesters, 28.2.2011). The Federation became a member of Belgian Olympic Committee and is also a founding member of the Motorcycle Council that is a national association of different motorcycle organizations. The Belgian Federation is composed of two regional federations, VMBB (flemish) & FMWB (French). VMBB has 43 motorcycling clubs, 23 clubs specialized in sporting activities, 15 clubs specialized in leisure activities and four clubs specialized in both activities. The federation has 550 riders with a competition licence, 350 riders with a leisure licence and 331 affiliated members. FMWB has 68

motorcycling clubs, 33 clubs specialized in sporting activities, 18 clubs specialized in leisure activities and 14 clubs specialized in both activities. The federation has 750 riders with a competition licence and 950 riders with a leisure licence. The federation has sporting activity in seven different disciplines subdivided in more than 45 classes. (FMB 2010.) The most successful discipline in Belgium is Motocross. There are 458 riders who has the licence in Road Racing, 478 in Motocross (in Motocross discipline there are some amateur federations so there is not an exact figures about their number of licences. But the total of MX licences in Belgium can be estimated to be 2 500), 278 in Enduro, 73 in Trial and five in Speedway. The licence costs between 150 euros (Trial, Enduro) and 350 euros (Motocross, Road Racing, Supermoto). (Rentmeesters, 28.2.2011.)

Sweden's federation SVEMO has 575 member clubs and 140 000 members in total. The country has altogether 145 World Championships. Throughout the years the most successful disciplines have been Motocross, Enduro and Speedway. At the moment Sweden is overall best in Europe in Drag racing and in Snowmobile it is at the very top of the world. The amount of riders with licence in Road Racing is 600, in Motocross 5 200, in Enduro 4 000, in Trial 300 and in Speedway 120. Rider's licence costs from 100 to 350 euros depending on the level, basic level being naturally the cheapest one. (Westling 21.3.2011.)

Finnish Federation has 261 clubs and 35 257 members. The country has 18 different World Champions and 63 World Championships. The most successful discipline is Enduro. There are many riders who use one-time licences so therefore there is no exact figures of the licences but Motocross events and licences in Finland represent 33 % of the total amount, Enduro 29 %, Road Racing 17 %, Snowcross 8 %, Trial 4 %, Supermoto 3 %, Speedway 3 %, Track racing 1 % and Ice-Speedway 1 %. The licence costs 130 euros for young people, the licence for the disciplines with less risk is 196 euros and with bigger risk 442 euros. The actual cost of the licence is for young people 50 euros and for adults 100 euros and the rest is insurance costs. (Ljungqvist 23.12.2010.)

5.3 Training possibilities and venues for competitions

In every country the leisure and sport possibilities one chooses is dependent on the geographical circumstances of the country (Kosiewicz & Obodynski 2004, 13). Environment, climate, topography and soil differ from country to country and they affect especially the seasonal sports (Ibrahim 1976, 51). In order to succeed in motorcycle sport the training possibilities are vital. Statistics clearly show how the sport one chooses is comparable to the training possibilities offered in his or her country. Italy with many Road Racing tracks produces many Road Racing champions. Finland with lot of forests and areas suitable for Enduro has dominated Enduro World Championship events for long. (FIM 2011.)

All the six most successful countries offer good practicing possibilities for their most strongest motorcycle sports. Italy has a total of 228 permanent circuits and 50 temporary circuits. Four most famous circuits have fairly long history. The Road Racing competitions were held at the streets of Mugello already at 1920s, Monza track was opened in 1922, Imola in 1950s and Misano track in 1972. (Rinaldelli 24.12.2010; Wikipedia 2010.)

In Spain there are at the moment 20 Road Racing circuits, five with FIM homologation, three Off-Road areas, more than 35 Motocross circuits and ten permanent Trial areas. Spain is good example of a country building new tracks frequently. The most well known tracks are Circuito del Jarama in Madrid built in 1967, Circuito de Jerez opened in 1985, Circuit de Catalunya in Barcelona opened in 1991 and Circuit Ricardo Tormo in Valencia opened in 1999. (Somolinos 2.2.2011; Wikipedia 2010.)

Great Britain offers many tracks for all disciplines, although land for Enduro and Trial practice is not easy to find (Gregory 10.11.2010). Altogether there are 26 tracks, four street circuits and six inactive circuits in Britain. Its two most well known tracks have hosted motorsport events for decades. Donington Park was opened already in 1931 and Silverstone was first used for motorsport in 1947. (Wikipedia 2010.).

Belgium has at the moment six Motocross tracks, one Enduro-Trial circuit and three

Road Racing circuits (Rentmeesters 28.2.2011) main one, Spa-Francorchamps being the most famous one. It hosted its first event in 1922 and still is one of the most famous tracks considered both by racers and audience. (Wikipedia 2010.) A few decades ago people were able to practice Motocross in several places since there were much more tracks and also riding in forests was easier without strict rules, today many Belgian riders have to go to Netherlands to practice. When a certain hobby starts to require more time and more money from the whole family it is clear that the interest decreases. Also, while there are only few big tracks open, the young beginners have to practice on same tracks as the riders competing in a World Championship level and it might give too much pressure to start the hobby. (MX Large, 2010.)

In Sweden there are ten Road Racing circuits, 200 Motocross tracks and 25 Speedway tracks, all of them are permanent tracks. There are also a lot of temporary tracks. (Westling 21.3.2010.) The amount of permanent tracks is quite different in Finland compared to other successful motorcycle countries. Country has only six permanent tracks and there is a need for more tarmac tracks. But since both of these Nordic countries are sparsely populated they have a lot of forests and during wintertime frozen lakes, which offer good training possibilities. It is said that the Finnish speed races started in deed from the frozen lakes and seas that offered ideal circumstances for that purpose (Katajamäki 2008, 19). According to Pauli Vuolle there are three sociologically interesting factors that determine which sport a Finnish person chooses in relation to the general premises: large uninhabited areas with diversifies terrains, concentration of the population and urbanization (Kosiewicz & Obodynski 2004, 13). Especially the first factor creates clear link to the fact that many people in Finland choose Offroad sport such as Enduro and Motocross instead of for example Road Racing. Finland's population's average density is only 16/sq.km and the country is the most sparsely populated one in the European Union (Kosiewicz & Obodynski 2004, 13; Wikipedia 2010). That gives great areas for practice Offroad sport. Also the fact that most successful Offroad motorcyclists come from the urban areas and not from the big cities show that the area has indeed significant meaning to the success. Sweden has also a low population density of 21 inhabitants per square kilometre (54 /sq mi) (Wikipedia 2010). However, the Ice Road Racing and Ice Speedway tracks have all the time been dependent on the

weather circumstances (Katajamäki 2008, 17).

The training is really important aspect of successful career. Italian federation has special sector for training. It works with young riders age of 12-14 years. At the moment there are 10 riders for Motocross and Enduro and a bit more for Road Racing. The federation also offers beginners financial support and technical help and free courses for all disciplines. But FMI has not been able to use the help of previous World Champions for training because usually the champions do not have time and they are not interested in technical activity. (Rinaldelli 24.10.2010.)

In Spain the federation takes the main responsibility of training young riders but also some clubs offer training. The country also offers training possibilities for female riders, which has shown good results. Spanish federation started with ladies Trial programme in 2000 with few riders. Now there are many young girls practicing Trial and in Spanish championship series there are about 16 girls per event. (Verneda 24.10.2010.) Federation gets help from the previous World Champions in some disciplines such as Enduro, Motocross and Trial. In Road Racing it is more difficult to engage the champions. (Somolinos 2.2.2011.)

In Great Britain the clubs have training days, and the country has a number of tracks dedicated to training only. The ACU operates an Academy System for training, which provides professional advice for riders in respect of diet, fitness and lifestyle in addition to rider training. There is also a small budget to support riders' development by riding in European events. The country has a number of ex World Champions who support younger riders and run training schools. Most of the beginners fund their own practicing, although dealers occasionally assist with the costs for promising riders. (Gregory 10.11.2010.)

In Belgium the national and regional federations have several youth coaches who have raced themselves: Yves Devlaminck, Joël Smets, David Cools, Patrick Caps and Didier Ghaye. Five times World Champion Joël Smets has also established a motorsport future school of Joël Smets that is supported by the federation and the government. The federation supports the beginners to start their racing careers. They have hired a national coach for 85 cc and MX2 riders in order to prepare them for the

European and World Championship junior events. The French federation (FMWB) gains financial support from the government to help young talented riders and top riders. The Belgian beginners usually finance their practicing by themselves or with local sponsorship. (Rentmeesters 28.2.2011.)

In Sweden the training is not sufficient concerning educated trainers and organized training programs. For a long time there has been “I can do it myself” attitude. This is however changing now. SVEMO started few years ago a training programme, Top & Talent (Topp & Talang), and they are developing this work to include organization systems and trainers education. For the federation this work is very important and they hope to see the first results in a few years. SVEMO supports child beginners to start to race by giving them and their parents an obligatory three steps education, which is compulsory. Federation visits at schools to inform about the sport and invites beginners for testing days at the local tracks. For teenage newcomers they offer for example a cheaper license system, testing days and information days. The federation will put more effort for this area in the coming years. In Sweden there are only few companies who are willing to sponsor riders when they are starting their careers. Therefore, a rider needs to have either rich parents or a good salary. SVEMO has found it quite difficult to get training help from previous World Champions. But they have few of them who are deeply involved after an agreement with the federation. An example is Anders Eriksson seven times Enduro World Champion who is now working with some of the most talented junior riders in Enduro in a project run by SVEMO. (Westling 21.3.2011.)

Today the Finnish federation concentrates a lot to the training of young riders and the training is well organized. The federation arranges regularly events for different disciplines where beginners are able to try the sport. The national youth organization gives financial support for the federation. SML also receives help from many World Champions who are used as trainers in the racing camps. The beginners also are able to contact the champions directly in order to get support and training help. However, the development of training has been weak in the club-level. (Ljungqvist, 23.12.2010.)

While it is acknowledged that in any sport where a person wishes to achieve success

one should start with practice as early stage as possible, in motorsport there occur some governmental regulations that affect to the stage when children can legally do the sport.

5.4 Civil society

Sport can be an important component of civil society. Allison (2000, 59) has stated that “*a strong sense of the reality of civil society is the key to understanding how countries differ*”. However, there are many opinions and multiple definitions of civil society. Oxford Dictionary of Sociology describes the key attributes of civil society as something that refers to public life rather than private or household-based activities. Civil society is closely related to the family and the state; and it exists within the framework of the rule of law. (Enotes 2011.)

For example sports clubs are an example of institutions that occupy the social space between the market and the state. The character of sports clubs is private and not part of the governmental apparatus. Its purpose is to serve some public or community purpose rather than generate profits for those involved in. When people act in sports clubs they have a commitment to freedom and the right to act on their own authority to improve the quality of their own or others' lives. Also, there is an emphasis on solidarity, meaning that people have responsibilities not only to themselves but also to the communities of which they are a part. (Salamon et al. 2003, 1.)

Even if there are many opinions on how the sport affects civil society and vice versa especially in voluntarism sense sport has clear affects on civil society. Particularly in many European countries the base of sport is created with voluntarism. Sport has actually become the largest category of voluntary organizations in many European countries (Seippel 2007, 69). In many parts of Europe it has been understood that clubs do not have the need to make profit but rather to give benefit for community i.e. to give sport opportunities for people. (Nagel 2009.) Consequently the sense of civil society can be understood as a non-profit making society that serves the public and is concerned of their wellbeing (Wijkstro◻m 2004, 14).

The figure 17. demonstrates Wijkstro m's (2004) model of society and how the non-profit sector is important part of civil society.

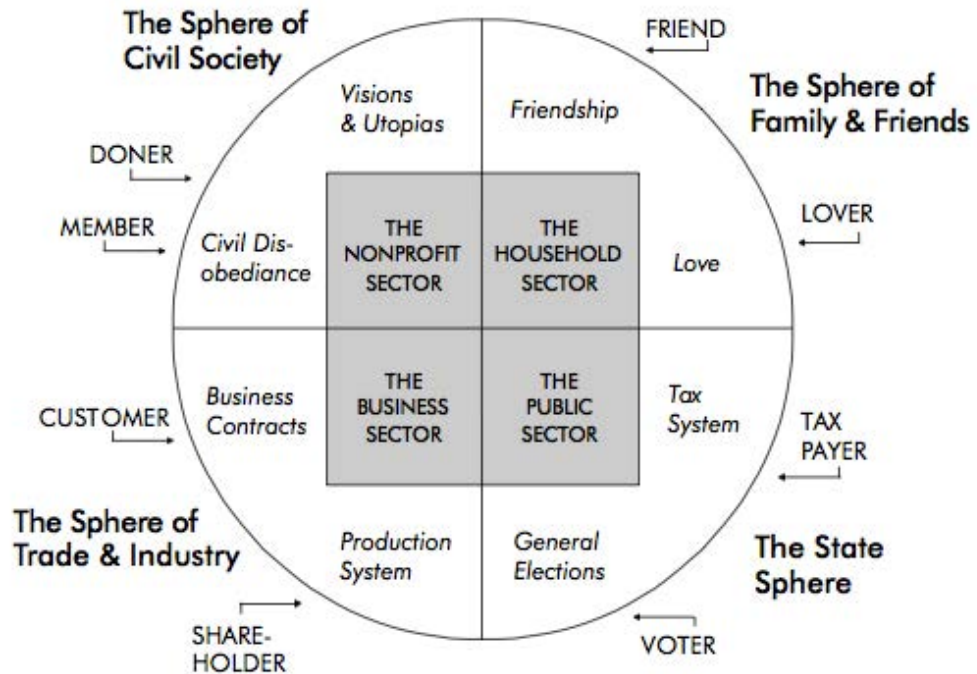


Figure 17. A conceptual model of society (Wijkstro m 2004)

Civil society sector and non-profit institutions have grown all over the world enormously in recent years (Salamon et al. 2003, 1-2). According to Coleman (1990) and Putnam (1993) as cited in Salomon et al. (2003, 2) the civil society organizations are important part of societies for example because these organizations “*contribute importantly to the production of “social capital,” those bonds of trust and reciprocity that have been found to be critical preconditions for democracy and economic growth.*”

Table 3. The work force composition in six most successful motorcycle sport countries (The Johns Hopkins Comparative Nonprofit Sector Project/ Wijkström 2004, 17).

Country	Voluntary share
Italy (1991)	40 %
Spain (1995)	33 %
GB (1995)	50 %
Belgium (1995)	20 %
Sweden (1992)	76 %
Finland (1996)	49 %

Even if the amounts of volunteers vary a lot between the sectors, and especially in sport they tend to be much higher than in other sectors, the Table 4, that shows the variation in different work-force compositions in the non-profit sector for a six most successful motorcycle sport countries, gives an idea of the voluntarism spirit in each of these countries.

Table 4. Voluntarism in most successful motorcycle sport countries (European Volunteer Centre 2011, Nagel 2009).

	Italy	Spain	GB	Belgium	Sweden	Finland
Voluntaris	Legal framework supportive but quite weak.	Steady increase but still weak.	Strong impact with long tradition.	High density of participation. Lack of volunteers in organizing clubs.	Vital and widespread involvement. Common in sport.	Very strong, vital contribution to sport.

The voluntary work between the most successful motorcycle sport countries differs a lot. In Great Britain voluntary work is very organized and it has a long history whereas in Italy and in Spain the amount of voluntarism is significantly smaller. In Spain one reason for the lack of voluntarism is that young people rebel against institutions and institutionalised programmes. (European Volunteer Centre 2011.) Especially in Sweden and in Finland volunteering is vital for sport. According to

Lämsä (2010) sport and physical activity in Finnish corporations represents 300 million euros whereas Finnish voluntary work is estimated to be worth of 2 000 million euros. In Sweden most of the volunteers are members of an organization they are volunteering for (Wijkstroöm 2004, 16). Also in Belgium the voluntary work is highly appreciated. However, for Belgium as for many other countries, the main problem at the moment is the lack of volunteers within the organizing clubs. It is getting more difficult to recruit young volunteers and therefore most of the remaining volunteers are older people. Previously, many Belgian riders continued working as volunteers within their clubs when they stopped racing. Nowadays, riders want to have more time with their families, and their jobs are more demanding. Therefore, often there is not time left for volunteer work. (Rentmeesters 9.6.2011.)

The Table 5. shows the share of employment, volunteers, expenditures as well as revenue from government, philanthropy and fees of the sector culture and recreation that includes culture and arts, sports and other recreation and social clubs of six most successful motorcycle sport countries. (The Johns Hopkins Comparative Nonprofit Sector Project)

Table 5. The civil society at a glance. (Adapted from Lester M. Salamon, S. Wojciech Sokolowski, and Associates, Global Civil Society: Dimensions of the Nonprofit Sector, Volume Two (Bloomfield, CT: Kumarian Press, 2004) as cited in The Johns Hopkins Comparative Nonprofit Sector Project.)

Culture and recreation	Employment	Volunteers	Expenditures	Revenue from:		
				Government	Philanthropy	Fees
Italy (1999)	12 %	37 %	17 %	25 %	2 %	73 %
Spain (1995)	12 %	22 %	17 %	24 %	35 %	41 %
GB (1995)	24 %	21 %	14 %	14 %	2 %	84 %
Belgium (1995)	5 %	33 %	8 %	41 %	12 %	47 %
Sweden (1992)	27 %	51 %	25 %	25 %	12 %	63 %
Finland (1995)	13 %	47 %	15 %	23 %	7 %	70 %

5.5 Economic situation of the society

Sport is not just sport but it is – such as any other form of culture - dependent on wider social aspects. One key factor is that sport requires financial support such as patrons or sponsors. (Horne 2006, 83.) In order to do any hobby one should have free time i.e. time which one can spend according to his or her own choice after all the necessary issues such as eating, sleeping, work and school requirements are fulfilled (Brightbill 1960, 4). However, it should be noticed that different societies, social classes and people tend to define leisure different ways (Parker 1983, 3, 41). With a hobby that requires equipment there is a need to make choices beside between time and income but also resources (Leeds, Von Allmen 2005, 14).

Economic situation plays even more significant role in women's motorcycle sport when deciding whether a person will start practicing motorcycle sport or not. According to the study made in 2008 (Bousigue et al.) the socioeconomic factors represent more than one third of the obstacles that prevent women from participating in motorcycling.

According to Ibrahim (1976, 108) there has been a clear link between countries economic situation and people's competitive ability. For example countries that took part in the first five modern Olympic games (1896-1912) were mainly from European-North-American belt and British colonies. Also Vasara (1989, 31) says that it was clearly noticed that the most successful countries in the Olympic games in the beginning of 1900s were indeed the ones that were wealthiest. Spain is also a good example of how economic investments have impacted to the sport success. During the time when General Franco was dictating Spain (1939-1975) the country got only one gold medal, two silver and two bronzes from the six Olympic Games it participated due to the fact that Franco did not allocate any financial support for the sport (Riordan & Kruger 2003, 128-129). When the country invested generously to the sport in order to succeed in Olympic Games Spain got 22 medals from the 1992 Olympics in Barcelona (Riordan & Kruger 2003, 133). However, Ilmarinen says that economic size and level of development are not sufficient measures when comparing the success in Olympic games. Yet the social mobilisation is more relevant factor since it creates attention and potential to promote competitive sports. So economic resources can help to succeed in competitive sport and they are said to be one of the

most important aspects of sport success in western countries but Ilmarinen sees that since for example for third world countries the national-building is the priority and athletes are therefore more goal-conscious, economic resources cannot be sufficient explanation of succeeding in sport. (Ilmarinen 1984, 69.)

Nevertheless, the economic resources needed in motorcycle sport are not comparable to the economic resources needed in sports of Olympic Games. In many sports that require equipment an athlete cannot become the best if he or she does not have the right equipment. But when starting a hobby that requires such a big instrument like motorcycle the financial aspects have more significant meaning. Also, many other hobbies do not have big maintenance and operating costs such as in motorcycling. Therefore, the best athletes - whether in skiing or in motorcycling - from the most technologically advanced countries have the best equipment most of the times and thus have a clear competitive advance compared to others (Tännsjö & Tamburrini 2000, 152-153).

Figure 18. demonstrates how big influence the households have on the funding of sport.

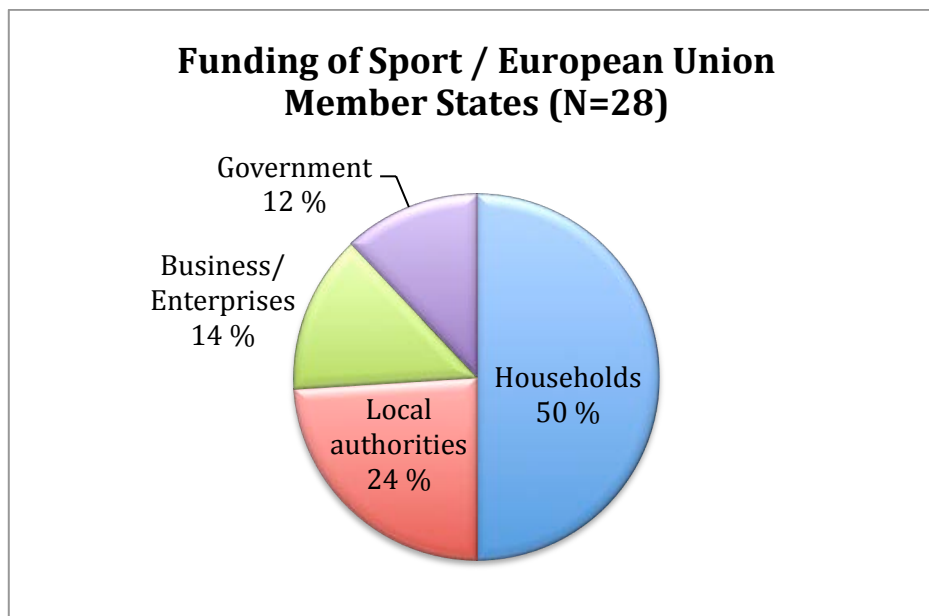


Figure 18. Funding of sport in European Union member states (Andreff 2000)

Industrialization has had a significant influence on the sport and especially on the motorsport (Ibrahim 1976, 141-143). Many of the most successful motorcycle sport countries have had relatively large motorcycle industry. Since many factories prefer to hire their own countrymen to test and develop the motorcycles because of the language factor, the riders of that country will have significant advantage compared to others (Ljungqvist 11.06.2011).

In the beginning of 1900s there existed a prosperous motorcycle industry in Belgium. However, at the moment there is no construction industry (FMB-BMB 2010; Rentmeesters 28.2.2011). Great Britain was the most industrialised nation in the world in 1870s (Riordan & Krüger 2000, 5). From leading the world as a motorcycle industrialized country in the mid 1960's Great Britain now have only Triumph as a manufacturer (Gregory 10.11.2010). Also Spain used to have a lot of motorcycle industry. At the moment there are seven-eight manufacturers including Spanish Derby and Montesa and Japanese brands such as Honda, Yamaha and Suzuki. (Verneda 24.10.2010.) The industrialization had a big impact on the Italian sport since the cycling was so popular in the early years of sport development in the country. Nevertheless the industry of cycling, automobilism and motorcycling mainly affected only big cities such as Milan and Turin (Riordan & Krüger 2000, 142). Even today Italy has a lot of motorcycle industry (Rinaldelli 24.12.2010). Sweden has had motorcycle industry but now most of it is owned from abroad. A lot of motorcycles are still built in Sweden by private people. Some of the technical industry still works with parts and development. (Westling 21.3.2011.) However, not every successful motorcycling country has had motorcycle industry. For example Finland does not have any motorcycle vehicle industries, only few small accessory manufacturers (Ljngqvist 23.12.2010). Yet, the country has benefited from the close commercial link with its neighbour country Sweden (Ljngqvist 11.06.2011).

5.6 Media visibility and sponsorship

Media has been an essential part of elite sport already from mid 1800s in a form of telegraph (Ibrahim 1976, 133). Through media, such as TV, radio, newspapers and internet, people are able to follow the sport news and the information given to the world always goes through the media. Media has a clear role as a communicator,

interaction tool and as an editor of opinions. It has the power to control and to forward information and it can filter and choose what it shows and tells to the people. Consequently media is responsible of how sport is seen and what is told. (Lapchick 1996, 209; Itkonen et al. 2008.) One of the greatest sentences describing the power of media is: “*Media makes or breaks people, events, anything.*” Media has enormous power and it literally can make people famous. (Ezine Articles 2010).

The sport has become global mainly thanks to the media and especially TV which has affected the sport enormously. The media also enables the sport to become more professional. Without media’s capacity the sport would be nothing it is today. (Miller et al. 2001, 82; Ibrahim 1976, 133.) Through media sponsors are able to get attention and without sponsor’s money sport events would not be organized. Therefore, it is obvious that media has lot of power in sport but does it make better sports people?

Through media athletes get attention; they can become famous people, idols and role models. Media has the power to choose which athletes it concentrates (Lapchick 1996, 210). Also some sports are more media attractive than others (Maguire et al. 2002, 48). When the value in publicity is greater sports people get more sponsors, which means more money. Financial security enables people to concentrate more on sport and training, which naturally means better results. If a person is good in sport but his or her character does not fascinate spectators he/she will not get that much media attention. It is obvious that newspapers write about aspects readers want to read. Hence, a person who is not necessarily a great talent in sport but is able to get a lot of media attention due to his or her personality or personal life will get more attention and if the publicity is positive, more sponsors as well.

Sports sponsorship means that a company or organization gives financial help to a sports person or a team in return for publicity. In recent years the increasing popularity of sport has given rise to higher standards of performance and in order to achieve these higher standards, additional money is needed. At the same time while the interest of sport has increased, the business world has realized how sponsorship is a way for companies to reach a large number of people. The sport sponsoring is carried out in order for companies to increase their business. Sponsorship is an investment and the company expects to get something back in return. That is why it

is extremely important to sponsor the appropriate sports person in order to create a link between him or her and the product. (The Coseley School 2010; Alaja 2001.)

Companies usually sponsor the most famous sports people because their visibility in media is greatest. But sponsorship can also help the up and coming sports people by enabling them to buy the best equipment, helping with training, competition and travelling costs. Sponsorship money enables top amateurs to concentrate on sports career and to give up other work. (The Coseley School 2010.)

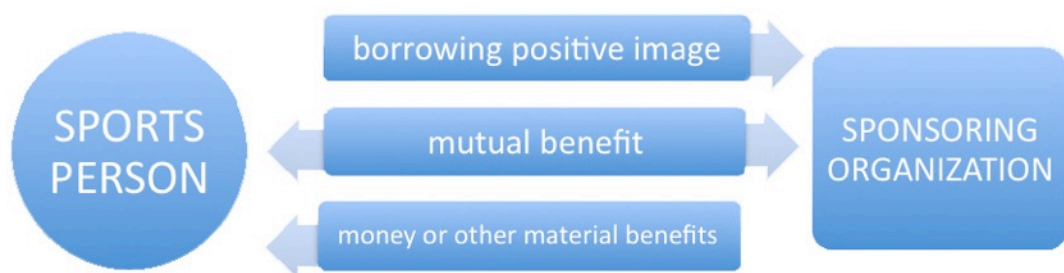


Figure 19. The key elements of sponsorship co-operation (Alaja 2001)

Even if sports people and sport journalists have different opinions about sport journalism both parties admit that there would not be elite sport without media coverage and other way around. Sport needs media and media needs sport. (Vierumäkeläinen 2009.) It is stated that especially with female athletes' media's role is significant. Media can play a role in the way women are oppressed, marginalized or disenfranchised by the current sport system but they disagree on the nature of the oppression and how to eliminate it. (Creedon 1994.)

Motorcycle sport has the privilege of being seen on TV by millions of viewers and covered by hundreds of media worldwide. The most broadcasted and visible motorcycle sport is the Road Racing World Championship Grand Prix. The two key ingredients, which make Road Racing World Championship Grand Prix one of the most popular sports in the world, are the riders' courage and talent admired by the fans. (FIM 2010.) There are more than 200 countries and territories receiving live or same-day-delayed broadcasts of the Road Racing World Championship Grand Prix

events with the coverage delivered to more than 337 million households worldwide. There are a total of more than 13 000 media personnel attending Grands Prix throughout the season. (MotoGP 2010.) Especially in southern part of Europe the motorcycle sport has gained a major visibility in media. In Spain the attention is remarkable. All the Spanish TV-channels and general newspapers are talking about the motorcycle sport. When Jorge Lorenzo won the World Championship he was practically in the first page of every sport magazine. (Verneda 24.10.2010.)

In Italy the motorcycle sport is also shown well in the media. It has almost same visibility as Formula 1 but the main attention comes from the Road Racing World Championship Grand Prix. For example with Motocross the situation is not that good and it has less people to follow the sport. (Rinaldelli 24.12.2010.) The sport press impacts greatly to the Italian sport and it also is a big financial supporter of the sport. For example in 1997 the three national sport newspapers sold on average 677 830 copies per day, the amount is 13,6 % of all printed daily newspapers. It is estimated that average of six million Italian people reads sport papers daily. (Riordan & Krüger 2000, 151-152.) However, usually in most of the countries motorcycle sport is only recognized by the general media at World Championship level like the situation is in Great Britain (Gregory 10.11.2010).

In Belgium several motorcycle events have had television coverage. The main coverage in 2009 were MX1/MX Grand Prix hold in Lommel, Superbiker Mettet, six rounds of Belgian Motocross Championships with addition of several international events. (FMB 2010.) However, now the interest is decreasing. Since 2010 the national TV stopped broadcasting direct coverage of the FIM Motocross World Championship. In 2011 due to some sponsor deals the federation has managed to have some delayed TV coverage of the Belgian Championship. (Rentmeesters 28.2.2011.)

In northern part of Europe it is more challenging to get media's attention towards motorcycle sport. In Finland the mainstream media usually only writes or shows really famous riders which at the moment means only Road Racing rider Mika Kallio. Hence even if there are many multiple Finnish World Champions in Enduro they are more famous in southern Europe than in their home country due to the lack

of media interest. Also, the motorsport gets more easily a significant media attention compared to the motorcycle sport (Ljungqvist 23.12.2010).

In Sweden there are about 50 motorcycle sport articles in media every day, this includes local papers and local radio and TV. In national TV there are reports every week of at least one motorcycle discipline. There is a TV agreement of permanent matches of Speedway at national TV stations. Sweden has also a lot of viewers at Eurosport and other channels showing motorcycle sport. (Westling 21.3.2011.)

At the moment the economic crises have had a major impact on sport sponsorship all over the world. In Italy the situation is a bit twisted. The sponsors do give money for motorcycle sport but when the biggest amounts go to the two most successful riders Valentino Rossi and Max Biaggi there is not that much left to the others. Therefore, a big champion such as Rossi will give a big interest to the sport but at the same time will eat major part of the sponsorship money. For the Italian federation it is really difficult to find sponsors at the moment because of the economic crisis in the country. The federation gets about 500 000 € every year from sponsors but the most important aspect is to find sponsor for organizers and riders. (Rinaldelli 24.12.2010.)

Also Spain struggles with the difficulty of getting sponsors. The federation sees that in the end the sponsors do not take the real value of the champions they sponsor (Verneda 24.10.2010). In Great Britain at the moment it is possible to get sponsor money for the very top level events, but a socio-economic assessment of the spectator profile means that the average spectator is not seen by potential sponsors as "big spenders" (Gregory 10.11.2010).

In Belgium it is also more difficult to get sponsors because of the negative image held by general public. The main sponsors have been brewery, lottery, energy drinks, car constructors, oil and telephone companies. (Rentmeesters 28.2.2011.)

Sport sponsorship in Finland has changed significantly over the last decades. In 1970s sponsoring grew a lot and it was relatively easy to get sponsorship money especially from the banks and insurance companies. In 1980s sponsoring changed from financial support to co-operation and during the next generation it became a

marketing tool for many companies and sponsoring got more professional aspects. During the new millennium there has been a competition of both good sponsors and good athletes. (Alaja 2001, 20.) In motorcycle sport it is quite easy to get sponsors inside the field but really difficult to engage them outside (Ljungqvist 23.12.2010). Also other difficulties occur with motorcycle sponsoring. There are many small Finnish towns but only few companies that might help beginners to start their sport careers. If a town has its own ice hockey league the companies usually target their sponsoring money for that and therefore the motorcycle athletes will suffer. (Champion number 27). Usually beginners fund their practicing themselves and many of them are entrepreneurs (Ljungqvist 23.12.2010).

In Sweden the general attitude for motorcycle sport is that it is too dangerous and not environmentally friendly. The environmental attitude is now slowly changing due to a lot of work the federation has done. SVEMO also proposes to do something on the risky side in order to attract sponsors, but that will be more difficult because media always shows the crashes. (Westling 21.3.2011.)

The environmental issues have impacted the image of motorcycle sport a lot. For example in Great Britain in the 1950's when motorcycles were used as "go to work" - transport motorcycle sport was well supported by the general public. However now, except for the very top-level events, motorcycle sport is not held in high regard by society and is seen as "dirty and noisy". (Gregory 10.11.2010.) Also in Finland the attitude towards motorcycling has clearly worsened from the 1980s onwards because the environment activists use the motorsport negatively in order to highlight their own interests in the media. Nevertheless the society still has a relatively positive attitude towards Finnish motorcycle sport. (Ljungqvist 23.23.2010.) In Sweden there has been a quite broad interest towards motorcycle sport as well as all motorsport. Although now it is partly questioned due to an increasing interest for environmental issues for a major part of the population. (Westling 21.3.2011.) In Belgium motorcycle sport had a positive image in the past due to the many champions and the popularity of the Motocross discipline but the image has become more negative due to the environmental impact and intolerance of the general public that has been caused for example by noise problems. (Rentmeesters 28.2.2011.) Also, many of the races in Belgium are on unpaved roads or off-road tracks near villages and therefore

can create discomfort for the population. Because of that the Belgian federation FMB, like many other federations, is working towards an environmental friendly behaviour and has established environmental directives for organizers, riders and the public. (FMB 2010.)

The respect of environment has come an essential part of the FIM and national federations. Furthermore the legislations are limiting the use of motorized vehicles. (FIM 2010.) The FIM has created the Environment Commission to enforce the environmental policy and its first Environmental Code was created already in 1994 and the last version was adopted at the beginning of 2009. The code is an essential tool for national affiliates and other organisers of FIM events. In 2006 a Memorandum of Cooperation between the FIM and the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) was created. The document provides a framework in which to cooperate in favour of the reduction of the environmental impact of motorcycle events. FIM's Alternative Energy Working Group's mission is to make motorcycle racing greener by integrating the latest technological developments in the field of alternative energy in FIM's competitions and to prepare the future of motorcycling. The group focuses on vehicles running with electric power or using biofuels when they do not compete with food production. (FIM 2010.)

Even if the image of motorcycle sport has become worse due to the environmental issues the sport is actually helping to develop greener solution to the public transport. Robert Rasor, FIM Vice-President and AEWG Chairman has mentioned the following:

“The science and technology of alternative energy sources is changing and advancing at an ever increasing rate. Increasingly policy makers and the public will be looking to motorsport, and motorcycling specifically, as a testing ground for this technology. Motorcycles provide an easily adapted platform of modestly simple design that lends itself well to utilizing many different forms of alternative energy. The use of bio fuels, hybrids, electric and hydrogen is coming faster than

most of us believe and it will come to motorcycling first! The FIM, its member federations, officials and volunteers must begin now to receive and accept these technologies in both sport and leisure.” (FIM 2010.)

However, motorcycle sport or motorsport are not the only sports that should concentrate on the environmental aspects. Every sport does destroy the ecosystem one way or another whether it is a big sport event where people come by cars or airplanes or just a regular activity like cycling or walking that can cause erosion. Today the green values have even come an advantage in elite sport field. For example Sydney won the bid to host the 2000 Olympics mostly because its commitment to environmental issues. (Maguire et al. 2002, 86-89.)

6 RESULTS

The aim of this thesis was to investigate whether there are clear personal or societal factors that influence the success of motorcycle rider and what are the main factors World Champions themselves think made them the best riders in the world. The results show that there are relatively many similarities between the interviewees and since over 50 World Champions were interviewed also some assumptions can be made of certain factors. In this section the results are divided into three parts: physical factors, mental factors and structural and cultural factors.

6.1 Physical factors

Different motorcycle disciplines require different talents and physical abilities. The physical differences in different disciplines were clear when counting the average height and weight of the male World Champions. In Road Racing in which the small size is advantage the average weight of the World Champions was 64 kg and the average height 170 cm. Enduro requires muscle power and the average weight of the World Champions was 80 kg and average height 178 cm. In Motocross the average weight was 76 kg and height 176 cm. Trial World Champions' average weight was 75 kg and height 177 cm. The average weight between the Speedway World Champions was 67 kg and height 175 cm. The average weight of the female World Champions in Motocross and Trial was 67 kg and average height 174 cm.

Table 6. The average weight and height of the World Champions in main disciplines.

RR		Motocross		Enduro		Trial		Speedway	
Weight	Height	Weight	Height	Weight	Height	Weight	Height	Weight	Height
64 kg	170 cm	76 kg	176 cm	80 kg	178 cm	75 kg	177 cm	67 kg	175 cm

Women riders apparently want to have similar physical challenges with male competitors. They do not consider that they have physical disadvantage when it comes to the strength and size of a body. Instead they prefer having similar race routes with men.

6.1.1 Age

As already mentioned in this thesis a child might be talented at a certain age but not after few years. Consequently in terms of sport-specific training a person does not necessarily have to start practicing sport at an early stage in order to be successful later on. (Brown 2001, 8.) According to this thesis it is important to start practicing the motorcycling as early stage as possibly but a person can succeed even if he or she starts the hobby at a bit older age. The average age when the champions have tried motorcycle (or moped) for the first time was 9 years. Most of them were four years old when they ride for the first time but quite many were only three years old, one was two years old and one was one year old when he was on a bike. Three of the women were four years old and one was seven when trying the motorcycle for the first time. Typically the younger champions had tried motorcycle at earlier stage than the champions from 1960s and 1970s who proved that at that time it was possible to achieve championship even if one tried a motorcycle for the first time at the age of 17 or even 19. However, the level has come higher these days and more riders start practicing at really early age in order to be able to handle the motorcycle properly.

The average age when World Champions had their first competition was 13,5 years old. However, countries have different age requirements for when a rider can participate in a competition and that can have significant impact on the development and success. For example before 2006 the age limit for Finnish national Road Racing 125 cc competitions was 15 years old - that is the same age at which Jorge Lorenzo had already achieved his first Road Racing 125 cc Grand Prix victory. (Ljungqvist 11.6.2011; jorgelorenzo.com 2011.) Also, some of the interviewees mentioned that they would have wanted to participate competitions earlier.

Compared to the other countries British World Champions were relatively old when they tried the bike for the first time (12,5 years) and when they had their first competition (15,5 years). Spanish and Finnish riders were youngest when they had tried motorcycle or moped for the first time. There were only two Spanish World Champions interviewed but they both have tried motorcycle or moped at really early stage, the other champion was two years nine months old and the other one was four years old. The average age when the Finns had tried a motorcycle was 7,5 years.

Likewise the average age when the Spanish participated their first competition was low, they both were six years old.

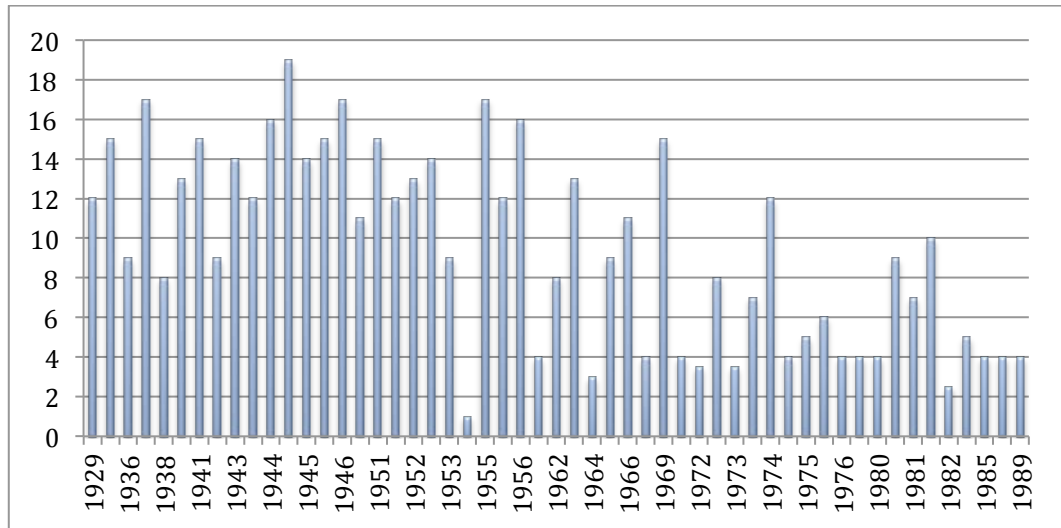


Figure 20. Year of birth and age when champions tried motorcycle or moped for the first time

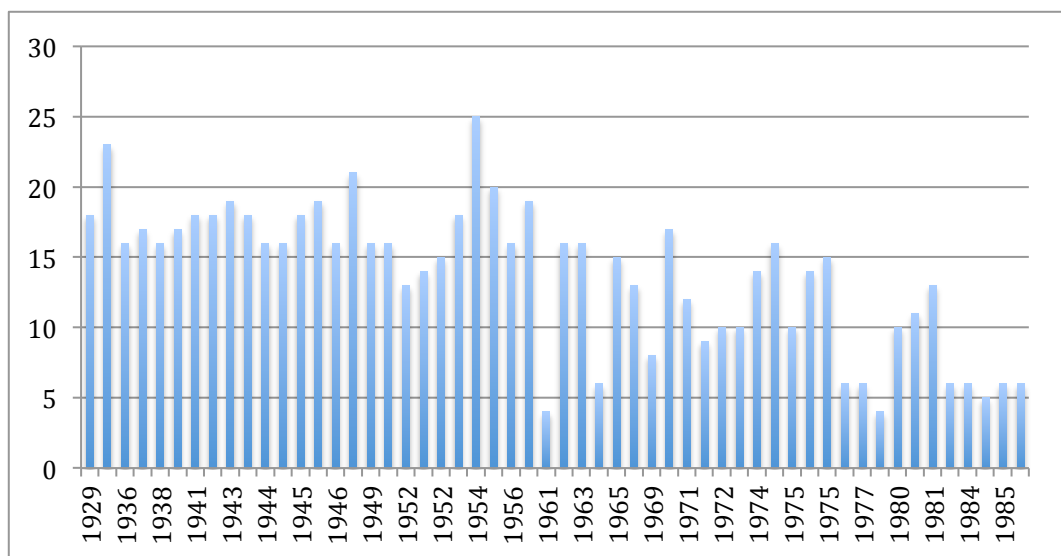


Figure 21. Year of birth and age when champions had their first competition

It was also researched whether the date of birth affected to the person so that he or she started to practice motorcycling and eventually became a world champion. The Figure 22. below shows how the similarities with birth months are so minor that it almost certainly has no influence.

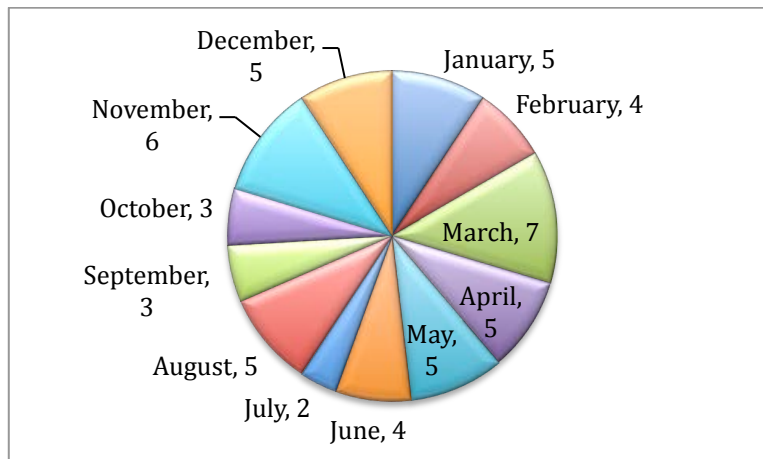


Figure 22. Birth month of the champions

Genetic has most likely influence on the athlete's talents (Clarkson 1999, 74-75). In this thesis fathers of 16 champions had raced themselves. However, even if some physical qualities can be inherited from parents the societal factors most likely have more significant impact than genetic talent. The most significant national difference was that even if quite many champion's fathers had raced none of the seven Italian champions fathers had.

6.1.2 Blood group

During the pre work process it appeared that many of the World Champions have a blood group A so therefore it was decided to find out whether this statement was accurate. The most common blood type in the world is 0+ with 36,44 % of population having it, 28,27 % of the population has A+ blood type and 20,59 % belong to the B+ blood group. 5,06 % of the population has AB+ blood type, 4,33 % have 0-, 3,52 % have A-, 1,39 % have B- and 0,45 % of the population has AB-. (Wikipedia 2011.) 47 % of the World Champions interviewed have A+ blood type and 8 % have A- blood type. All the Finnish World Champions who knew their blood type (five champions) belonged to A+ group. 26 % have 0+ and 8 % have 0- blood type. About 5 % of the champions have B+ blood type.

Consequently this thesis supports the fact that most of the champions have A -blood type when 55,26 % of them belong to the A-group and 46,71 % of the champions represent all the other six blood groups. The finding was so obvious that it might be

also unexpectedly relevant. In a study conducted by Dr. Peter D'Adamo in 1999 people who had A blood type most often described themselves in ways related to the following characteristics: sensitive to the needs of others, good listeners, detail oriented, analytical, creative and inventive (Dadamo 2011). Even if these qualities can be seen in many World Champions doctor Monica Lazzarotti highlights that the blood group theory of D'Adamo has no scientific bases and also there is no scientific evidence of correlation between blood group and performance. (Lazzarotti 5.7.2011.)

Table 7. Average blood types of the population and World Champions' blood types.

	O+	A+	B+	AB+	O-	A-	B-	AB-
Average	36,44 %	28,27 %	20,59 %	5,06 %	4,33 %	3,52 %	1,39 %	0,45 %
Champions	26,32 %	47,37 %	5,26 %	5,26 %	7,89 %	7,89 %	0,00 %	0,00 %

6.1.3 Natural talent and physique

37 of the World Champions considered they were natural talents 13 did not. Some considered that the natural talent is really important factor as Champion number 24 stated: *"Every motorcycle champion is some kind of a freak of nature, an untalented person cannot win championships!"* However, there is not a clear clarification of natural talent as Champion number 54 pointed out: *"It is hard to define what is natural talent; is it learning ability, dedication, physical ability, mental ability? Desire?"*

36 of the interviewees said that they practiced a lot. There was a clear difference between older champions who admitted that they did not spend much time with practicing and today's riders who practice and train constantly. Seven riders who became champions in 1960s and 1970s said that they did not do any physical training beside the racing but for all the others physical training included aspects such as gym, running or skiing.

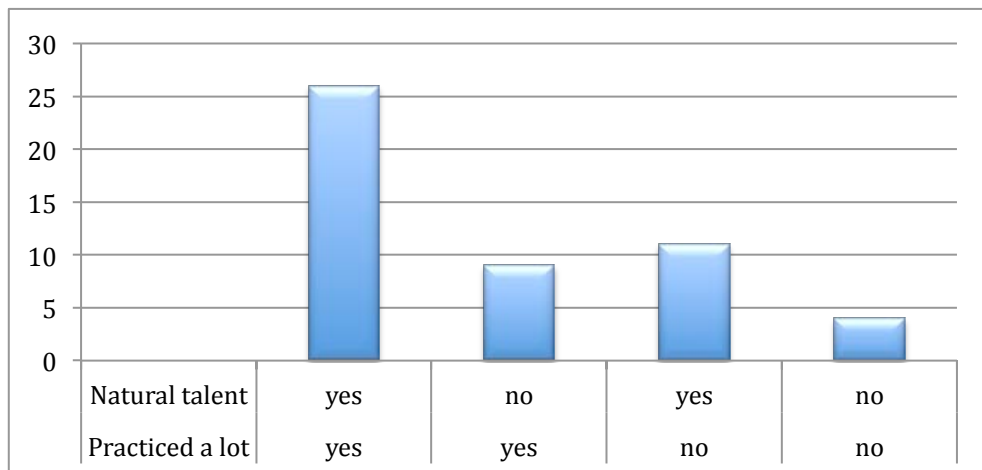


Figure 23. Most of the champions considered themselves as natural talents

When asked if the champions had used extra nutrition or drugs during their careers only four answered that they had sometimes used a little extra nutrition. No one admitted that they had used drugs but the answers most likely are true since those riders who have tried doping (not interviewed for this thesis) did not see significant benefit in it for motorcycle racing.

Balance is an important feature of many disciplines and all but four champions answered that they had a good balance, few of them said that they had average balance and few highlighted that they had excellent balance. Also only two champions said that it was not easy for them to control their muscles. Learning new things seemed to be easy for the World Champions. 38 answered that they found the learning easy and one said that learning new things was easy as long as it was not in a book. Only two found the learning process hard, two were average learners, for two it depends of the subject and two answered the following way: *“Not easy but good training makes it easier”* and *“Maybe not the best but I did not leave the track until I could do it very good!”*

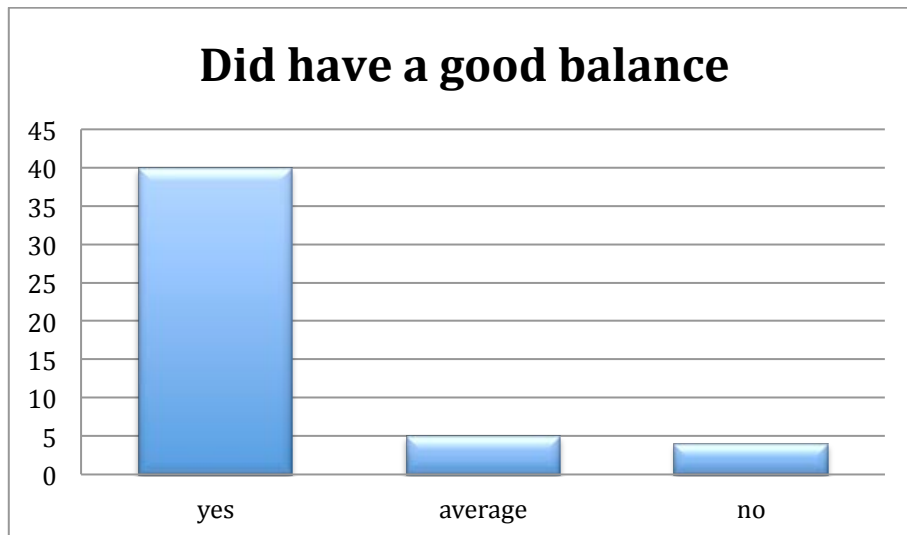


Figure 24. Most of the World Champions had good balance

Even if the different disciplines require different talents the main physical factors needed in every discipline can be narrowed down into five main factors: mobility (a rider can easily move on the bike and with the bike), good balance (a rider will not fall or crash easily), strength (a rider has enough strength to handle the bike), reaction (a rider can have a good start or can quickly react to the different situations during the race) and over all good physique being in the centre.

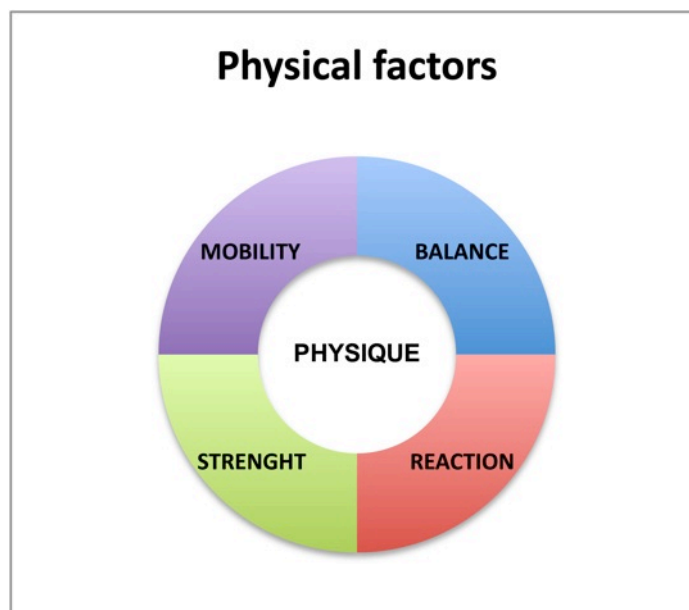


Figure 25. The key physical factors of successful motorcycle rider

6.2 Mental factors

According to Brown (2001, 29-35) the most important mental and emotional skills that a successful athlete should have are drive, passion, stability, mental toughness, positive attitude, realism, focus, effort, persistence and competitiveness. Most of these factors were clearly seen in the World Champions that were interviewed.

6.2.1 Drive

One of the most obvious factors that the World Champions had in common was indeed the drive towards motorcycling. Most of them had started executing motorcycling at really early stage but there were also many who were teenagers when they had tried the motorcycle for the first time. Nevertheless, as Brown (2001, 29) has said a child can have drive at really early stage but it is also something that can develop later. Many World Champions had so enormous drive towards motorcycling that they found the way to practice the sport despite the financial problems or any other obstacles.

6.2.2 Passion

Also, the passion seems to play a vital role when it comes to success. 92 percent of the World Champions said that motorcycling is passion for them. Champion number 54 stated: *"It felt good just to ride a bike and racing made it many times better. Nothing I did ever felt as good and intense."* When asked what riders thought affected their success most, Champion number 21 answered: *"Passion, definitely. Without passion, you won't succeed."*

29 of the interviewees said that they were addicted to motorsport, 20 said they were not but few wanted to point out that even if they were not addicted they really liked it or that motorcycling was richness for their lives. 33 answered that they were addicted to adrenaline and 20 answered they were not. Champion number 5 answered: *"Now at 81 not that much as before."*

Also, when asked what they would do on their dream day most of the champions would do motorcycle related activity. Many of the champions that had retired

answered the way as Champion number 10 did: *“Race again”*. Also the active riders dream day includes often motorcycling as the Champion number 27 stated: *“This year it would be a race where I take the World Championship for myself.”* Many of the riders that have quit their racing careers are still involved with the motorcycling and are passionate about it as Champion number 34 said: *“When racing my dream day was to wake up, train, race, win and celebrate with everyone involved. Now my dream is to wake up, make a difference in life for the next generation and to go to sleep happy that I was part of it”*. In fact, there might be a risk that when motorcycling is such a big passion and so one-dimensional interest the champion defines him- or herself via motorcycling (Brown 2001, 30).

6.2.3 Personality and flair

Naturally all of the World Champions, since they are involved in motorcycle sport, belong to the first level of sensation seeking category, Thrill and Adventure Seeking (TAS), which measures the willingness to take part in sport or other activities that include speed and danger (Zuckerman 1983, 286). People doing motorsport tend to be sensational seeking and have fast-paced hobbies. Those who had time to have some other hobbies besides motorcycle racing had mainly quite typical hobbies for sensational seeking personalities such as down hill skiing, ice-hockey and BMX biking. Quite many also played tennis, golf and football. However, there occurred some national differences. Whereas Italian riders had many sports related hobbies most of the riders from Great Britain did not have any sport hobbies.

About half of the champions belonged to the Experience Seeking (ES) category, which measures the willingness for new experiences and unconventional life style (Zuckerman 1983, 286). 48 percent of the champions clearly enjoyed getting into new situations where they could not predict how things will turn out. 43 percent said they did not enjoy it and for 10 percent it dependent on the situation. 43 percent said that they spend much time on the details of planning ahead and 50 percent said they did not. Seven percent of the champions answered that they spent average time or it dependent on the situation.

The apparent finding was that most of the World Champions did not belong to the

Disinhibition (Dis) category that foresees willingness for social and sexual incontinent, which includes lifestyle of partying, drinking, and several sex partners (Zuckerman 1983, 286). Only three said that they did quite much partying or used alcohol during their professional years, seven answered sometimes and 44 of the interviewees said that they did not use a lot of alcohol and did not do much of partying. Neither did the World Champions have several sex partners. All but three of the champions were in a relationship during their professional years. A bit more than half of the champions had a child already during their professional years. Personal life has a great impact on the rider's career and success, since it takes so much time and attention from the rider. Therefore, his or hers partner has to be understanding and supportive towards the rider's career.

It was difficult to make any conclusion regarding the fourth level Boredom Susceptibility (BS), which measures the aversion towards continual experiences, routines and boring people (Zuckerman 1983, 286). 21 of the World Champions admitted that they did get bored easily and 31 answered that they did not but it is not relevant to make any assumptions of this statement since many of the interviewees who said they did not get bored easily answered that they needed new experiences often and since their lifestyle usually involves many interesting matters they do not feel bored. Also, few mentioned that they did not get easily bored because they always found themselves something interesting to do or that they did not get bored with the things they were interested in. All together 33 champions said that they need or like to have new experiences often, three need them sometimes, 13 answered that they do not need new experiences often. 60 % of the champions said that they do not like routines and 64 % of the champions admitted that they are impulsive. All the British riders answered that they do get bored easily whereas for example all but one of the Italian riders answered they did not get bored easily. However, none of the Italians liked routines. 29 champions answered that they do like taking risks but some pointed out that they like to take calculated risks. Like stated above motorsport is a sport where a person must love the high speed, fast reactions, and thrills but also he or she needs to handle the danger (Müller et al. 1999, 150). Hence, a successful rider needs to know when the risk is worth taking.

As it was previously stated extroverts usually prefer exciting and fast paced sports such as motorsport. This thesis mainly supports the statement. 23 of the interviewees said that they are extroverts, fourteen were in the middle or their behaviour was dependent on the situation. Nine said that they were introverts. 26 of the riders get easily along with other people but 17 mentioned that they are shy or really shy. Also the reaction speed of the champions supports the fact that extroverts could suit better to perform in motorsport since they seem to be able to react quickly. The reaction speed has been measured only from thirteen of the champions but all of them said that it was fast or very fast. Also three said that even if their reaction speed was never measured it must have been very fast.

27 of the interviewees said that they did not have aggressive mentality but 20 admitted they had, some of them said that the aggressiveness only occurred when racing and three has aggressive mentality only sometimes. Most of the champions were never afraid when racing like Champion number 2 said: *"No, never. I was always focused on winning, not on dying"*, but 18 admitted they were afraid sometimes, usually they had had accidents or were racing their last races before retirement. One admitted that he was always afraid.

According to Brown talented athletes tend to be emotionally stable and can handle the stress (Brown 2001, 31). The results of this thesis supported the statements since only 23 % of the champions said that they do get stressed easily and all but two said that they have been emotionally in good balance. *"One has to be mentally stable if he wants to win"* (Champion number 16).

One of the most obvious similarities between the World Champions was the fact that almost all of them said yes when asking if they were sensitive. According to professor Matti Urrila (4.6.2011) sensitiveness is important factor of top athlete because it enables a person to pay attention and to focus on all the specific details so that the result will be perfect. Therefore, a sensitive mind can be seen as an important factor when it comes to working with the final details on the way to the success.

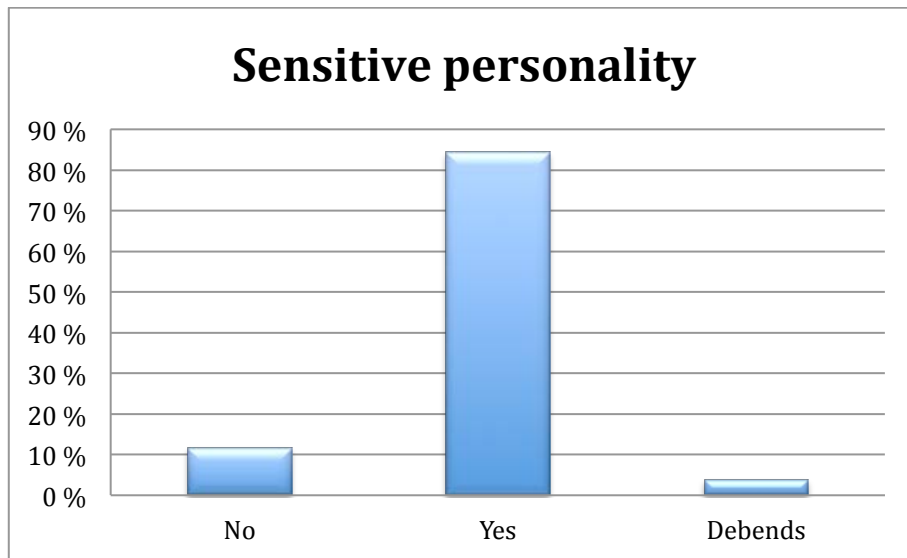


Figure 26. 84 % of the World Champions said that they are sensitive

Also during the interview process it became clear that all of the champions are really humble and they have extremely good hearts. So despite their success, the attention and fame that they have gained, they have been able to stay down to earth. When a person is humble he or she understands that he/she is not perfect and is accordingly willing to develop and improve him- or herself. Consequently, despite many presumptions the motorcycle World Champions are not proud party men who have several sex partners and do not care about anything else than their careers but they are sensitive people who are devoted to their partners and families.

6.2.4 Determination

Determination is a really important quality in order to succeed. One of the champions had decided that he will be a World Champion at really early stage: *“I was very confident about that. Already at school I told people that I don’t need this, I will be a professional racer and I will win World Championships. I knew that already before I started to race.”* (Champion number 50.) Also many champions mentioned determination when asked why they think they became World Champions.

The champions paid much attention to their careers. Also, when they had days off during their professional years they usually spent it resting or preparing for the competitions. The typical answers included working with bike or relaxing as Champion number 11 described his normal day off: *“Prepared my bike. When longer*

period free, went to the sea or to the mountains to ski".

The riders tend to appreciate physical training significantly more than mental training as Champion number 15 made it clear: *"They tried, but I told the shrink to fly a kite."* 37 of the champions had not done mental training. 14 of the champions had practiced it. However, riders considered mental training many different ways, for some it was proper training with a supervisor whereas for some it was a process where they concentrated or did thinking by themselves. Two had tried mental training but did not find it useful for themselves.

A talented athlete shuts all the distractions from his mind and can keep concentration level high for long period (Brown 2001, 33). Almost every one of the champions said that they were able to keep the concentration 100 % all the way through the race and it was easy to shut all the distractions from their mind when racing. Only few mentioned that they might lose the concentration if they were leading the race or if the race was boring. Also, some had races that lasted several hours like Champion number 43 pointed out when asked whether he was able to keep the concentration 100 % all the way through the race: *"Can anyone? My longest race was eight hours long."* Champion number 54 had made an interesting observation about keeping the maximum concentration: *"Most of the time yes but I figured out that it depended also on my fitness level."*

All but eight said that they prepared themselves 100 % before the race meaning for example that they planned in advance the places where to pass the other competitors. However, riders can not always fully prepare in advance as Champion number 21 said: *"It's not always possible to predict how a race will develop so you have to form your plan while you are racing."*

45 of the champions said that they have strong opinions or strict personality. Four mentioned that they have strong opinions but they are not strict. Few also pointed out that even if they have strong opinions they do listen others. Also 43 required a lot from themselves and from their team. According to the champions they are really conscientious since only five answered that they were not.

Technical knowhow is really important quality of a rider since he or she has to advise the mechanics what kind of settings should be done to the bike in order to improve the performance. For example in Road Racing World Championship Grand Prix events the rider decides many factors such as the suspension, the angle of the front fork, the hardness of tyre combination and the tyre pressure. In the modern bikes the setting work is extremely challenging since one minor change can affect to so many other factors. Also, a successful rider can bring the technical information from his/her previous team with him/her when joining a new team. Therefore, a rider can have major advantage if he/she knows the technical factors and how to improve the bike. Most of the interviewees (38) were fascinated by the technical issues and 29 of them did fix the bikes themselves in the beginning of their careers. However, sixteen of the interviewees were not keen on technical matters at all. Some of the previous champions are worried about this trend as Champion number 24 stated: *"I was interested in technical stuff but these days things are different. Daddies work while boys just race."* Ten of the champions had their fathers as a mechanic, two worked with the bike together with their fathers and one's brother did fix the bike. Seven of the interviewees had a mechanic already in the beginning of their careers.

6.2.5 Competitive spirit

Among other things sport gives ways to defend the pride, self-esteem or to satisfy the need to prove oneself (Clarkson 1999, 85). World champions are famous figures and do get a lot of attention. Only seven of the interviewees answered that they did not like attention and naturally appreciation was quite important or important to all of them. 42 of the champions felt that they had a good self-confidence. Obviously the self-confidence of many increased when the rider was winning a lot or sometimes just when they were on a bike as Champion number 53 said: *"When I sit on the bike yes, when I am of the bike then I need often a kick in the ass."* Three thought they had average self-confidence and four felt that they did not have a good self-confidence.

Even though winning is the criteria of success (Simon 1985, 30) in motorcycle sport it is often more important to have good positions along the season in order to win the championship in the end as Champion number 24 mentioned: *"My goal was to win*

every race but I grew to be a quite good tactician and then I was thinking the overall situation.” 42 of the interviewees had a goal or plan to win a World Championship but also almost everyone had a goal to win every race they participated. Surprisingly 15 times World Champion Giacomo Agostini had not really planned to win World Championship. For eight champions the plan arose only just before it was realistic to win the World Championship. However, for some achieving the title was purely positive surprise like Champion number 43 said: *”Never imagined, first World Championship was a surprise”*.

There was one question for which all but one of the champions gave same answer. They said that they were really competitive. The one who said he was not competitive mentioned that many people have been wondering how a World Champion and a professional rider did not have that quality. Consequently, regarding the personal qualities, this can be the most important outcome of this thesis. Without competitive fire a person will never get the right drive to overcome the obstacles, to win the barriers and to beat the rivals.

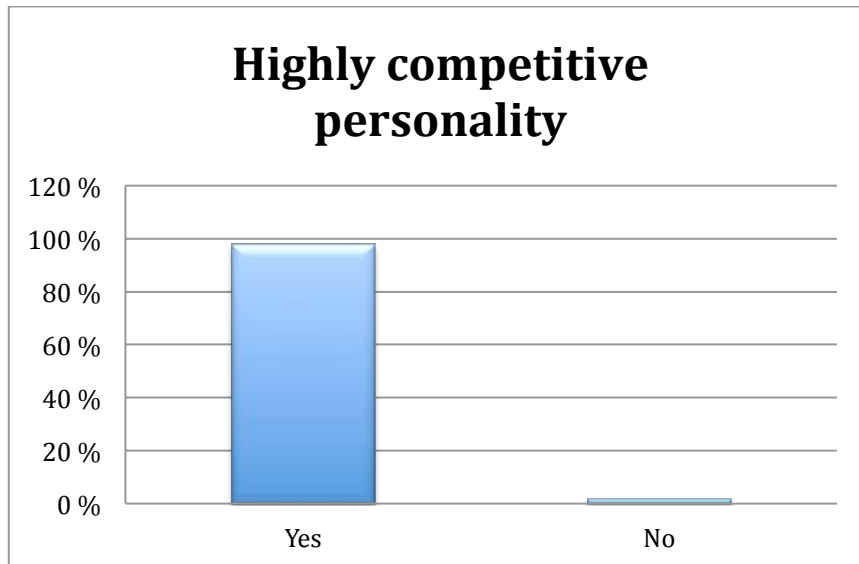


Figure 27. All but one of the World Champions answered that they are really competitive

According to Brown the key issues for successful athlete to reach the best of him- or herself are ability, opportunity and drive (Brown 2001, 277). The results of this thesis do not differ a lot. Perhaps the mental key aspects of successful motorcycle

rider can be narrowed down into five main factors: determination (a rider has decided that he will succeed), passion (a rider genuinely wants to race and enjoys it), drive (a rider has motivation and is eager to race), flair (a rider has natural talent or ability towards motorcycling and has enough sensitiveness for the details) and the most important factor competitive spirit being in the centre.



Figure 28. The key mental factors of successful motorcycle rider according to this thesis

6.3 Structural and Cultural factors

The Table 8 of world's most successful motorcycle riders below demonstrates how the success is not often dependent on just personal factors but indeed the nationality. All the eight riders who have most World Championships in all the main disciplines, except Speedway, come from the six most successful motorcycle countries. Also in Speedway the battle of championships has not been between several countries but only New Zealand, Sweden and Denmark have been clearly the strongest ones. (FIM 2011.) Consequently it is obvious that the country of origin matters more than it is acknowledged.

Table 8. The riders with most World Championships in FIM's main disciplines. Name of the rider, number of World Championships and nationality. (FIM 2011.)

MOTOGP			MX		
1. Giacomo Agostini	15	IT	1. Stefan Everts	10	BE
2. Angel Nieto	13	ES	2. Joël Robert	5	BE
3. Valentino Rossi	9	IT	3. Roger de Coster	5	BE
4. Mike Hailwood	9	UK	4. Eric Geboers	5	BE
5. Carlo Ubbiali	9	IT	5. Georges Jobé	5	BE
6. John Surtees	7	UK	6. Joël Smets	5	BE
7. Phil Read	7	UK	7. Antonio Cairoli	4	IT
8. Geoff Duke	6	UK	8. Harry Everts	4	BE

ENDURO			TRIAL			SPEEDWAY		
1. Juha Salminen	7	FI	1. Dougie Lampkin	12	UK	1. Ivan Mauger	6	NZ
2. Kari Tiainen	7	FI	2. Toni Bou	9	ES	2. Tony Rickardsson	6	SE
3. Anders Eriksson	5	SE	3. Jordi Tarres	7	ES	3. Ove Fundin	5	SE
4. Giovanni Sala	6	IT	4. Adam Raga	6	ES	4. Barry Briggs	4	NZ
5. Samuli Aro	5	FI	5. Marc Colomer	4	ES	5. Ole Olsen	3	DK
6. Mika Ahola	4	FI	6. Don Smith	3	UK	6. Erik Gundersen	3	DK
7. Ivan Cervantes	4	ES	7. Yrjö Vesterinen	3	FI	7. Hans Nielsen	3	DK
8. Petteri Silvan	4	FI	8. Eddy Lejeune	3	BE	8. Nicki Pedersen	3	DK

These countries have managed to provide riders an environment that has been able to improve their talents and success first in family level and then in national level. This means that often the parents have supported their children towards racing either mentally or also financially and society has provided possibilities for racing with positive attitude and offering concrete factors such as training and practicing possibilities.

It is also significant to understand that usually all the most successful countries belong to the western elite sport system. According to Lämsä (2010) the similarities of the system require first of all a clear understanding about the role of the different agencies involved as well as an effective communication network which maintains the system. Also, the administration through common sporting and political boundaries should be simple enough. An effective system for the statistical identification and monitoring of the progress of talented and elite athletes is needed. There should be a formal and informal interaction in order to have a provision of sports services to create an excellence culture. Well-structured competitive programs

with on-going international exposure give athletes important experiences and opportunities. Well-developed and specific facilities with priority access for elite athletes are also important factors. Lämsä also highlights the targeting of resources on a relatively small number of sports through identifying those that have a real chance of success at world level. Each sports require comprehensive planning and it is extremely important to take the funding into account recognizing that excellence costs. Additionally, lifestyle support and preparation for life after sport should be taken into consideration. (Lämsä 2010.)

Many of the factors mentioned can be seen on the structure and the organization system of the most successful national federations and therefore can be said that these features have significant impact on the success in motorcycle sport as well.

6.3.1 Family background

The riders' success story starts already at early childhood. It is extremely important that parents support their children towards hobbies children themselves are interested in but they should not give them too much pressure (Brown 2001, 36). According to Brown (2001, 96) most of the top-level sports people have indeed supportive parents who do not interfere. Also, most of the interviewees did have supportive parents and in motorcycle sport the parents do play important role because the expenses to start the hobby are so high. *"Without them the whole thing would never have been possible. It also required a lot from the brothers when their little brother took everything."* (Champion number 24.) However in 16 cases parents did not support their child to start the racing career. All but four of the parents who were supportive towards their child's racing were also able to give financial support and three parents who were not keen about their child's decision also helped financially. There were not major cultural differences whether parents supported their children towards racing or not. All the other nationalities included both supportive and non-supportive parents but all the Spanish riders parents supported them. In all but one case the parents supported their children towards racing if the father had also raced. For some the success of their father gave concrete benefit: *"We had advantage that my name was still popular in the industry and got a lot of sponsors"* (Champion number 32).

The most common reason why the champions started to race were family related as Champion number 15, Champion number 50 and Champion number 44 mentioned: *"Grew with that world, seemed fun, I liked to ride", "Because dad raced and I was surrounded by that all. I wanted to race a bike at really early stage", "I spent every weekend with my parents in the practice area, I got a little Yamaha PW 50 to ride around and I loved it. So from playing around with the bike I started to practice with my dad."* Also often the reason was just simple fact of enjoyment: *"I liked it"* (Champion number 26), *"Liked motorcycles, challenge to ride to the limit"* (Champion number 8).

Often the inspiration for racing came at really early stage like happened with Champion number 7:

"The reason I began racing motorcycles was, after twice reading the report of the 1946 the Manx GP, the first major event after the war, I reflected on it and thought "I would like to go there one day" and an unsettling buzz rushed up my spine. I was ten years old. I never thought I would be good enough or that I could afford to go, but I did. I never but never ever thought I could be a World Champion but the opportunity arose, and driven by an exceedingly strong sense of history I took it and with a sense of commitment, that I had not previously been aware of, I succeeded in joining, via historic records, the heroes of my youth. Money was never a motivator. This is the very short version of how it came about, the long version is some 400 pages." (Champion number 7.)

Also Champion number 49 and Champion number 45 were keen on the sport at early stage: *"Since I was one year old I was interested in motorcycles and suddenly I was involved", "Liked it a lot and when 4 years old there was race for children in my town"*.

According to their answers quite often the inspiration to the racing comes indeed at

childhood and usually from the family. Also idols have impact. Only 14 of the champions did not have an idol and 40 of them had. For some the idol was the main reason why they became World Champions. Champion number 30 said: *“My biggest idol was in the same Moto club as me and this is maybe one of the biggest reasons for my success since I wanted to be as him!”*

Also, the impact of other people around the riders is important. All together 29 of the champions knew someone from the motorcycling field who helped them to start their career. It seems that the riders do appreciate managers a bit higher than coaches. 38 of the champions have never had a coach. 14 had a coach at least part of their professional years and three of the champions had their father as a coach. 27 did not have a manager, 25 had a manager and two of the champions had their father as a manager. Whereas most of the Italians, all but one of the British and all of the Swedish did not have a manager during their careers most of the Belgians and Finnish did have.

41 of the World Champions had many friends when they were children or teenagers. But like Brown (2001, 88) has mentioned the athletes may spend so much time within their sport that they become isolated from their friends who are not involved within the same sport and that has been also the case with some interviewees. Especially the women World Champions have had troubles having a lot of friends after they have started to practice motorcycle sport since there are not that many women involved with the sport and especially not from the same geographical areas. The other reason for having troubles with keeping many friends is the fact that professional riders travel most of the time so it is harder to be in closer touch with other people.

“When I was a child I had many friends, but after I started racing I have had just some few friends left, because nobody in my area was doing the same and the most friends I have had are from the national competitions. Even now I don't have a lot of friends at home because 70 % of the year I am travelling around and my

friends live all over Europe but not a lot of them in my country.” (Champion number 44.)

Since the motorcycle racing had been a dream for most of the champions already when they were children, regardless the nationality they did not pay much attention to the studying. Only some of the World Champions had continued studying after the compulsory school. 24 of the champions had only done basic studies, two even mentioned that they hated school. Those who had studied beside basic courses had quite motorsport-related studies such as mechanics, engineering, technics and sport. Many of the champions had spent last school years waiting to be able to fully concentrate on motorcycle sport. Also Anna Nizioł from Institute of Physical and Health Education University of Rzeszów points out that academic students only have little time for their leisure time activities due to the work load of studies (Kosiewicz & Obodynski 2004, 47).

6.3.2 Economic situation

A poor economic situation of a person can affect why one starts or is not able to start practicing the sport. According to Pierre Bourdieu as cited in Vehmas (2009) certain life style and a class status can be achieved through aspects such as work and education but also through sport. Hence sport itself can function as a field of social capital but a top athlete has also a possibility to gain remarkable earnings from sport. Most of the interviewees had started motorcycling just out of passion and fun. Financial aspects had no impact in it as Champion number 26 stated:

“I never during my professional career or before it, thought to race because of money. I only wanted to be the best in a sport that I liked and only during the last few years racing felt too much of a work and perhaps partly because of that I quitted my racing career. Of course it was great to have payment of the hobby that was so precious.”

Also Champion number 27 described the financial aspect the following way:

“The possible incomes from racing did not affect because a rider will get incomes from the racing only when he is on the world’s top and in order to get there one has to go extremely hard and long way. And you do not even know if you will ever get there.”

Since many of the champions had started to practice motorcycle sport at so early stage financial factors were not relevant for them. For example Champion number 9 mentioned:

“Since I started racing at four years old probably not! But it was nice that I could buy my own car when I was old enough to drive. But racing for me was never about the money! I’ve always believed that when it gets down to the time that you have to reach inside and get that extra effort to win its not about the money! I think and believe at the very elite level any sport the elite athlete is driven to succeed by qualities that can’t be bought!”

Also, for some there was no benefit of for example sponsor’s money: *“Sponsors did not exist my time”* (Champion number 5). But for two the opportunity to get better incomes compared to for example school degree was a motivational factor and played a big role when starting the motorcycling career.

Although the riders themselves did not start racing in order to get better incomes the economic situation of the family or the country has significant meaning. Even if there are many rich families in poor countries and vice versa the fact is that welfare states do have more families that can afford to finance their children’s expensive hobbies. When coming from a society where the economic situation of the country is low, starting a motorcycle sport is extremely challenging. It is thus significant to see

that the six most successful motorcycle sport countries are all welfare states (FIM 2010).

According to International Monetary Fund's gross domestic product (GDP) listing the market value of all final goods and services from a nation in 2010 the six most successful motorcycle sport countries are all in top 36 out of 181. Great Britain is sixth (2,247,455 US dollars), Italy is eight (2,055,114 US dollars), Spain is 12th (1,409,946 US dollars), Belgium is 21st (465,676 US dollars), Sweden 22nd (455,848 US dollars) and Finland is 36th (239,232 US dollars). (International Monetary Fund 2011.)

When counting the GDP from purchasing power parity per capita the six most successful countries are all in top 28 out of 183 countries. Sweden is 14th with the GDP per capita of 38,031 US dollars. Belgium is 18th (36,100 US dollars), Great Britain 21st (34,920 US dollars), Finland 22nd (34,585 US dollars), Spain 26th (29,742 million US dollars) and Italy 28th (29,392 US dollars). (International Monetary Fund 2011.)

Table 9. The economic development of most successful motorcycle sport countries from 1980 to 2010 (International Monetary Fund, 2011) (grey colour: estimation)

Country	Subject Descriptor	Units	Scale	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010
Belgium	GDP based on (PPP) valuation of country	\$	Billions	96,198	130,452	178,149	221,985	277,695	337,398	394,346
Belgium	BDP based on (PPP) per capita GDP	\$	Units	9,759.477	13,219.917	17,856.057	21,885.525	27,057.831	32,099.518	36,100.225
Belgium	Inflation, average consumer prices	index		47,908	67,311	74,716	83,755	90,673	99,999	111,367
Belgium	Export volume of goods and services	% change		1,3	0,228	4,579	5,524	12,046	4,995	10,489
Belgium	Unemployment rate	% of total labor force		8,3	10,1	6,6	9,7	6,9	8,5	8,364
Belgium	Population	Persons	Millions	9,857	9,868	9,977	10,143	10,263	10,511	10,924
Finland	GDP based on (PPP) valuation of country	\$	Billions	41,166	60,797	84,147	92,11	126,636	159,956	185,979
Finland	BDP based on (PPP) per capita GDP	\$	Units	8,598.208	12,380.601	16,834.444	18,001.318	24,441.8862	30,435.552	34,585.453
Finland	Inflation, average consumer prices	index		40,828	61,345	77,263	86,372	93,408	100,002	110,488
Finland	Export volume of goods and services	% change		8,098	0,637	1,653	8,531	17,257	7,017	5,062
Finland	Unemployment rate	% of total labor force		4,634	5,027	3,2	15,397	9,811	8,359	8,383
Finland	Population	Persons	Millions	4,788	4,911	4,998	5,117	5,181	5,256	5,377
Italy	GDP based on (PPP) valuation of country	\$	Billions	507,157	710,504	972.140	1,169.414	1,396.947	1,633.676	1,773.547
Italy	BDP based on (PPP) per capita GDP	\$	Units	8,993.982	12,555.666	17,147.018	20,571.659	24,540.767	27,944.059	29,392.403
Italy	Inflation, average consumer prices	index		24,241	46,816	61,475	78,658	88,625	100	110,558
Italy	Export volume of goods and services	% change		1,786	3,637	11,104	14,747	11,021	1,363	12,103
Italy	Unemployment rate	% of total labor force		7,37	8,167	8,875	11,15	10,1	7,683	8,492
Italy	Population	Persons	Millions	56,389	56,588	56,694	56,846	56,924	58,462	60,34
Spain	GDP based on (PPP) valuation of country	\$	Billions	272,201	374,509	551,215	676,8	899,845	1,183.923	1,368.642
Spain	BDP based on (PPP) per capita GDP	\$	Units	7,280.837	9,750.801	14,193.394	17,183.325	22,349.063	27,508.771	29,741.726
Spain	Inflation, average consumer prices	index		23,738	42,258	57,814	75,216	85,468	100	112,902
Spain	Export volume of goods and services	% change		0,789	0,669	4,694	8,31	10,244	2,543	10,279
Spain	Unemployment rate	% of total labor force		11,011	21,305	16,238	22,9	13,873	9,16	20,065
Spain	Population	Persons	Millions	37,386	38,408	38,836	39,387	40,263	43,038	46,018
Sweden	GDP based on (PPP) valuation of country	\$	Billions	83,588	118,089	157,054	182,303	235,64	299,609	354,716
Sweden	BDP based on (PPP) per capita GDP	\$	Units	10,047.492	14,128.277	18,331.290	20,632.259	26,533.440	33,146.183	38,031.484
Sweden	Inflation, average consumer prices	index		39,292	56,879	74,091	86,619	91,673	99,998	110,795
Sweden	Export volume of goods and services	% change		n/a	1,468	1,795	13,471	12,766	6,824	10,712
Sweden	Unemployment rate	% of total labor force		2,033	2,883	1,725	8,8	5,608	7,633	8,367
Sweden	Population	Persons	Millions	8,319	8,358	8,568	8,836	8,881	9,039	9,327
UK	GDP based on (PPP) valuation of country	\$	Billions	484,516	696,019	960,966	1,177.244	1,515.524	1,932.659	2,172.768
UK	BDP based on (PPP) per capita GDP	\$	Units	8,601.376	12,307.155	16,789.250	20,288.565	25,736.583	32,083.715	34,919.511
UK	Inflation, average consumer prices	index		40,016	56,288	71,5	86	93,1	100	114,5
UK	Export volume of goods and services	% change		-0,3	5,853	5,281	9,445	9,144	7,897	5,273
UK	Unemployment rate	% of total labor force		6,491	11,402	7,04	8,703	5,532	4,792	7,841
UK	Population	Persons	Millions	56,33	56,55456	57,237	58,025	58,886	60,238	62,222

Also, all the most successful motorcycle sport countries have had relatively good economic development. For example the Great Britain has changed from a "manufacturing nation" in the mid 1950's to a "service nation", but the level of the economy has been retained (Gregory 10.11.2010). Sport is a major part of British economy. Already in 1999 it was estimated that the value of the sport for British economy was over 10 billion pounds. Also almost 500 000 people worked in sport-related jobs. (Riordan & Krüger 2000, 19.)

There are periods when country has gained many World Championships but often there is only one man behind the success. For example Dougie Lampkin gained 12 World Championships for Great Britain during 1997-2003. But there are occasions when country has been able to produce several World Champions like Great Britain did in Road Racing World Championship Grand Prix during 1950s, 1960s and in the beginning of 1970s. But after mid 70s there have not been any British Road Racing World Champions. Similarly country succeeded well in Speedway in 1950s and had five different champions in Trial during 1967-1975 but after that there were no significant success periods. (FIM 2011.) One reason is that for example in Speedway and in Trial the events were first organised in Great Britain and their countrymen had a clear benefit compared to the other nationalities (Gregory 10.11.2010). However, also economic reasons do have major impact. The figure below illustrates United Kingdom's annual percentage growth rate of GDP at market prices based on constant local currency. United Kingdom's GDP and the success in Road Racing and in Trial decreased at the same time in middle 1970s.

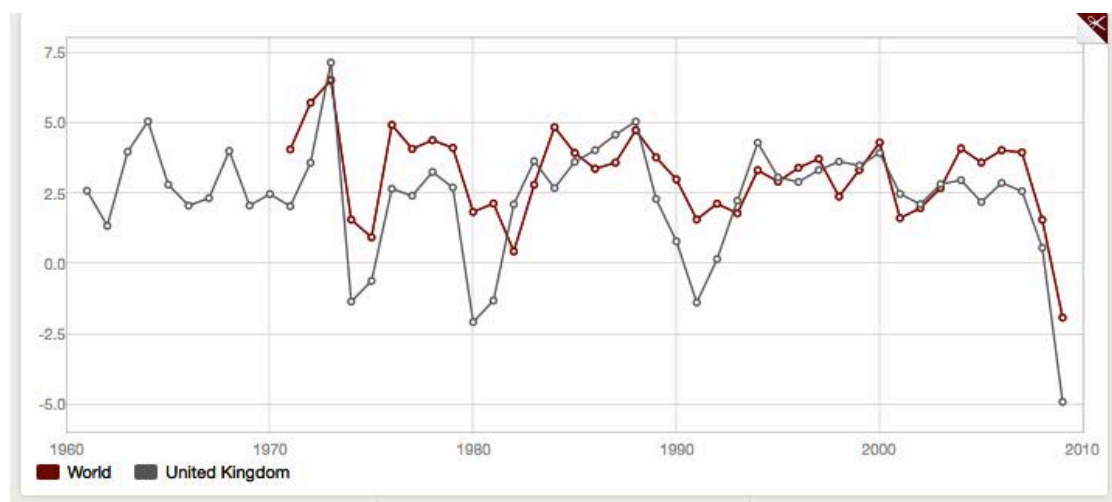


Figure 29. The GDP growth (annual %) in Great Britain and in the world (World

Bank 2011)

The relation between GDP and motorcycle success in Sweden is even clearer. For example when the GDP was at its highest, Sweden had most World Championships (during 1960-1965 ten World Championships in Speedway and in Motocross and during 1994-1999 ten World Championships in Speedway, Motocross and Enduro). But when the GDP decreased below zero in 1977, 1981 and in 2008-2010 Sweden did not gain any World Championships. However, in 1992-1993 during the worst economic crisis in Sweden since the 1930s country gained two World Championships, one in Speedway and one in Motocross. The link between motorcycle success and GDP growth is really remarkable before the establishment of Enduro World Championship series in 1990. Even after that the success statistics follow the GDP statistics but not so concretely as previously also because usually now days the sponsors and teams are from other countries than the rider him/herself. (World Bank 2011.)

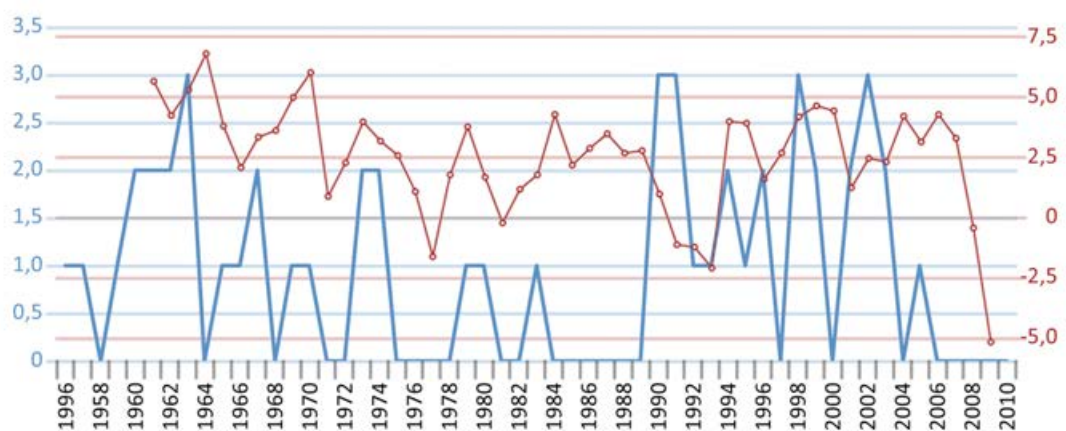


Figure 30. The GDP growth (annual %) in Sweden and the number of World Championships won by Swedish riders (World Bank 2011)

However, the economic situation of the riders' country does not necessarily affect to him or her if he or she for example is competing with a team that is from other country or is having a foreign sponsors. The economic crises tend to affect more to the beginners starting their careers and therefore the consequences are not seen straight away but in a long run. Even though the economic crises usually affect by a

little delay and it is difficult to see clear relations between the economic situation and success in motorcycle sport, the success of certain countries is not coincidence. There often is a clear link between financial investments and sport success. For example after the Franco's time Spain allocated more funds to the sport but the economic and political crises in 1993-1996 forced the country to save money and the investments in sport were reduced. However, during the 21st century the economic situation improved and sport has been able to develop and expand. (Riordan & Krüger 2000, 136.)

Competitive sport in Italy is highly appreciated and 25,2 % of the CONI's (The Italian National Olympic Committee) annual budget is allocated to the talent selection and the improvement of sporting talent. In 1997 CONI got about 500 000 000 euros from the lottery (Totocalcio and Totogol). Also the sponsors have a great importance for the Italian sport, for example in 1997 sponsors brought 1,75 billion euros to the sport. (Riordan & Krüger 2000, 151.) Italy's economy has been developing greatly for the last ten years but it was stopped by the economic crisis (Rinaldelli 24.12.2010). Also, in Belgium the economic situation affected so that the number of motorcycles sold decreased but the business started to grow again in 2011 (Rentmeesters 28.2.2011, 7.6.2011). In Finland the recession did not affect the motorcycling or to the number of amateur motorcyclists. It is seen that people do not give up on their hobbies that easily. (Ljungqvist 23.12.2010.) However, in Finland the recession will not affect the motorcycle sport as strongly as for example in Italy, since there are no track costs in Offroad sport. In Italy the track costs have to be paid even during the recession time. In Finland, the riders will simply postpone buying new equipment. Therefore, the actual riding time will not usually decrease during times of economic crises. (Ljungqvist 11.06.2011.)

In Sweden the economic development is good at the moment. In per-capita terms Sweden is among the wealthiest countries in the world. (Wijkström 2004, 7; Westling 21.3.2011.) The country is also a good example of democratic welfare state and civil society that had benefit of the industrialization. Sweden has always had natural resources such as iron ore, timber and water energy and it has had the capacity to process them instead of exporting them as raw material. Because of this the country's earlier situation changed during the industrialization period. Sweden

managed to develop from an agrarian to an industrial economy in fairly short time and under peaceful conditions. Today Sweden has developed into a small but rather successful industrial, and underway also trading, nation that is also a strong welfare state with extensive civil rights and what is often understood as a highly developed democracy. (Wijkström 2004, 7.) The economic crises in Sweden few years back was very quickly passed and currently everything is growing more rapidly than ever. However, an economic implication as the one few years back always effects the willingness to buy new motorcycles, this means that the manufactures market is still very low and it has been low for the last two years. Westling sees this quite worrying considering that the market for snowmobiles and outboard engines is growing fast again. (Westling 21.3.2011.)

The industrialization and importers have had significant influence on the motorcycling success in many countries. For example Italy has many factories that use their countrymen in the product development. The process also produces successful riders. Husqvarna in Sweden has improved the success of many national riders but also Finnish riders as coming from the neighbour country were able to benefit from the commercial link between Finland and Sweden. Finnish riders also got a significant help from the Yamaha's importer Arwidson in 1970s and that helped many riders to succeed at the international level. In 1970s and 1980s Honda and Suzuki amongst others moved their factories' head offices to Belgium and it was natural that the companies selected talented riders from Belgium since the employees were Belgians. Hence, even if the support from the factories and importers does not guarantee the success, it creates possibilities for success. (Ljungqvist, 11.06.2011.)

Financial matters are one of the major ones in motorcycle sport. Also, the economic situation affected the champions so that usually only after getting a factory contract they knew that they are able to be professional riders. The average age when the champions knew that they will be professional riders was 19 years. That is when most of them were offered a factory contract. Usually that had happened after the rider had made good results in international competitions or had won the national championship. One rider did not get a contract until after winning the second World Championship in 1960s. The youngest rider who signed an official contract was 13 years old in 1990s and oldest was 30 years old in 1970s. Few of the champions never

were professional riders but some riders knew that they will be professional already when they were children. *“I decided it when I was 4-5 years old, but knew it when got the contract.”* Champion number 26.

6.3.3 National differences

Like in the Olympic Games also in motorcycling the success in sport has focused on specific areas. It is also noticed that the success of some countries has focused on certain disciplines (Häyrinen & Laine 1989, 328). There are number of cultural and structural variables that have an influence on the sport such as climate, topography, technical know-how, facilities and also the values of the society (Ibrahim 1976, 108). In motorcycle sport the statistics clearly show that some nationalities are more successful in certain disciplines than others. For example Belgian riders have dominated Motocross since its first World Championship event in 1952. Italy has been really strong in Road Racing and Enduro throughout the time the disciplines have had World Championship status. Finland and Sweden have also succeeded well in Enduro, Finland starting to dominate it after 1999. Spain has gained success in both indoor and outdoor Trial. (FIM 2010.)

Some countries have certain periods in which they produced successful riders. Great Britain was really strong in Speedway before the 1960s; it dominated 350 cc and 500 cc classes in Road Racing from 1949 to 1960 and was strong in all of the Road Racing classes until the beginning of the 1970s. Spanish riders have been successful in smaller classes of Road Racing in the 1970s, 1980s and the 2000s. The USA had a clear period of success in Road Racing from 1978-1993 but had not really succeeded before or after that. (FIM 2010.)

When counting all the World Championships of the FIM's main discipline Road Racing World Championship Grand Prix, Motocross, Enduro, Trial and Speedway together the most successful countries in motorcycle sport are Italy (106 championships), Great Britain (81 championships), Spain (67 championships), Belgium (55 championships), Sweden (51 championships) and Finland (40 championships) (FIM 2010).

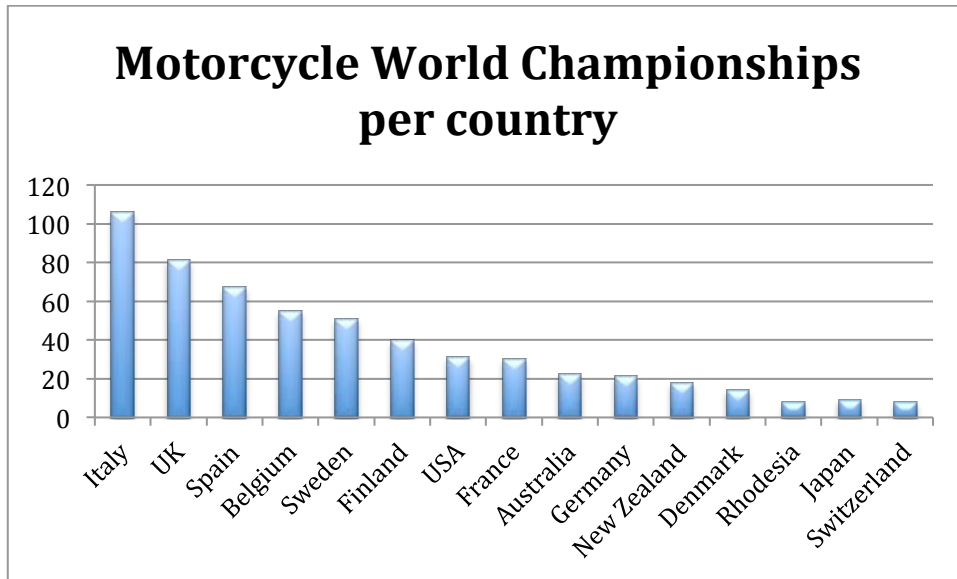


Figure 31. Number of World Champions in Road Racing World Championship Grand Prix, Motocross, Enduro, Trials and Speedway per country (FIM 2011)

When comparing the amount of championships to the population of the countries the most successful countries are Finland (5 374 781 inhabitants, proportion number 7,4), Sweden (9 354 462 inhabitants, proportion number 5,5) and Belgium (10 827 519 inhabitants, proportion number 5,1) (FIM 2010, Wikipedia 2010).

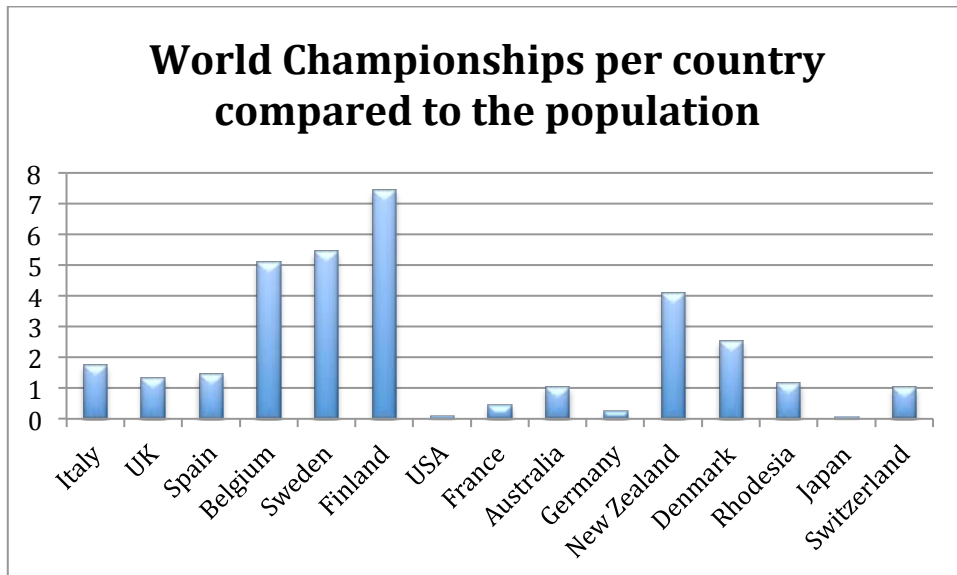


Figure 32. Proportion number of World Championships in Road Racing World Championship Grand Prix, Motocross, Enduro, Trials and Speedway compared to the population (FIM 2011, Wikipedia 2010)

Sweden (proportion number 2,4) has most riders who have achieved World Championship when comparing the amount of World Champions to the population of the countries. Finland (proportion number 2,2) has second most and New Zealand (4 393 500 inhabitants, proportion number 1,4) is third leaving Belgium just behind (proportion number 1,1). (FIM 2010, Wikipedia 2010.)

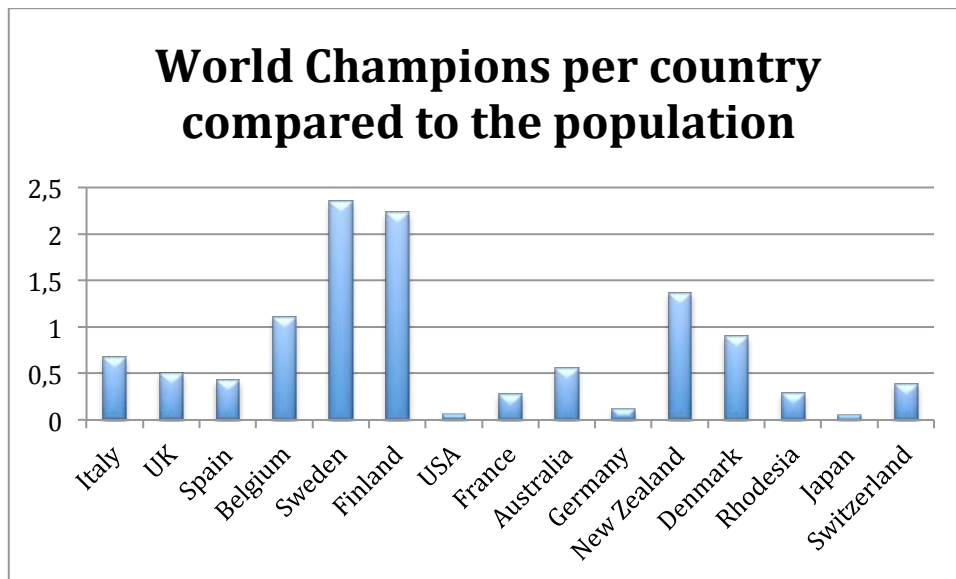


Figure 33. Proportion number of World Champions in Road Racing World Championship Grand Prix, Motocross, Enduro, Trials and Speedway compared to the population (FIM 2011, Wikipedia 2010)

Sometimes nationality has had a positive impact on riders' careers if there previously have been many successful riders from his or her country. For example after the World Championships of Kari Tiainen, Petteri Silvan and Juha Salminen Finnish riders gained a good reputation and teams were eager to have them because of their talents but also because of their mentality. However, in the end the only thing that matters is the speed no matter from which country one comes from. (Champion number 27.)

In any sports there are significant differences between countries. It seems that if people are over all physically active or do actively sports they tend to succeed in elite level sport including motorcycle sport as well. For example even if Finland and

Sweden are small countries they have, in addition to motorcycle sport, succeeded well in many sports. According to the study made by van Tuyckom et al. (2010) 74.2 % of over 18 year old Finnish and 71,9 % of over 18 year old Swedish were physically active on a regular bases. The less active people came from East European countries (Hungary 13,4 %, Latvia 19,6 %, Lithuania 20,1 %) and from Portugal (16,6 %). None of these countries have gained considerable success in motorcycle sport.

Naturally the big population offers more possible champions but that does not seem to be very significant factor in motorcycle sport. According to Mäkinen (2010) the common thing between the countries that got most of the medals in Beijing Olympics is that those are countries of big population. The other thing is economical welfare. Those two variables, that belong to macro level which is not easily influenced by sport policy, explain 50 % of the success. Whereas Meso-level, which includes policies and politics, is easily influenced by sports policies and it explains 10-20 % of the national success. Hence it seems that the economical welfare, sport policies and politics are more vital when it comes to motorcycle sport.

In most of the countries motor sport was considered positively by the society when the champions interviewed started to practice. If a country had many champions or famous riders the attitude towards motorcycle sport was much better (for example Italy and Great Britain) than in those countries where the sport was more unfamiliar (for example Road Racing in USA in 1970s-1980s). Most of the countries where the interviewees came from had many successful riders. Therefore, it can be seen that success creates success.

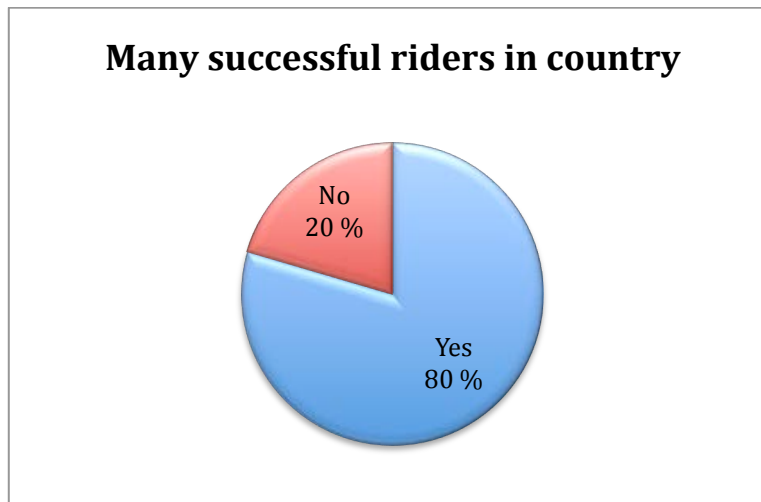


Figure 34. Most of the countries where World Champions came from had many successful riders at that time when World Champions succeeded

Italians felt that motorsport was considered positively by the society and especially Road Racing had a good image. Also Spanish and Belgian champions felt that motorsport was considered positively and it had good image in their countries. British champions felt that the society considered motorsport well at least around 1970s but today there has occurred some problems for example with the noise. The British riders had different opinions about the image of motorsport but the main view was that it is relatively positive. The Finnish riders mainly considered that the motorsport was considered positively by the society but the attitude and image were significantly better when a rider was succeeding well.

As many of the champions were born into the motorcycle world they were unable to see the realistic image of motorcycle sport as Champion number 29 pointed out: *“I don’t remember because all my world was made around motorcycle. My grandfather was my trainer, my uncle was my model and my family was my assistance. But I think it was seen like a sport fun but risky.”*

Riders had really different answers when asked if they thought their nationality helped them to succeed compared to other nationalities. Belgian champions after the success of Roger de Coster considered that it was beneficial for them to come from Belgium due to the fact that there were many Motocross champions. Also Finnish

Enduro champions after Kari Tiainen's time felt that their nationality helped them pretty much because there were many successful Finnish riders and the image of them became good. Whereas in some other disciplines it was harmful to come from a small country such as Finland because then it was more difficult to get for example sponsors. Also the Finnish summer period is shorter to practice and race. When it usually is favourable to come from the major country of certain discipline it might be some times negative as Champion number 45 mentioned: *"In Spain there are too many champions and not so many sponsors for all"*. All together 36 of the champions felt that their nationality did not help or even harmed their careers. There was also a contradiction when many of the champions mentioned that it would have been beneficial for them to come from the major motorcycle country such as Italy or Spain, all but one of the Italian World Champions answered that being Italian did not help them compared to other nationalities. Two said that only the Italian character might have had positive impact and one even answered that being Italian did "absolutely not" help. Also Spanish riders felt that their nationality did not help them compared to others one reason being what Champion number 45 mentioned above.

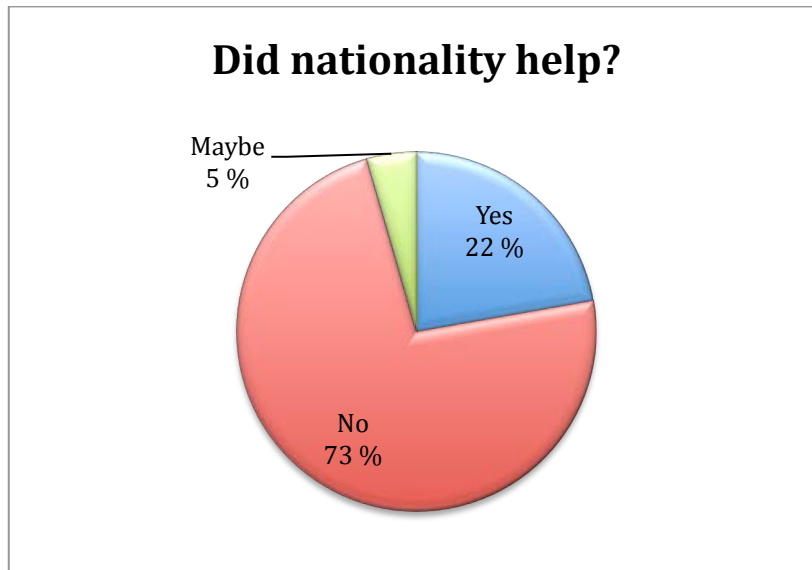


Figure 35. 73 % of all the interviewees considered that their nationality did not help them to succeed

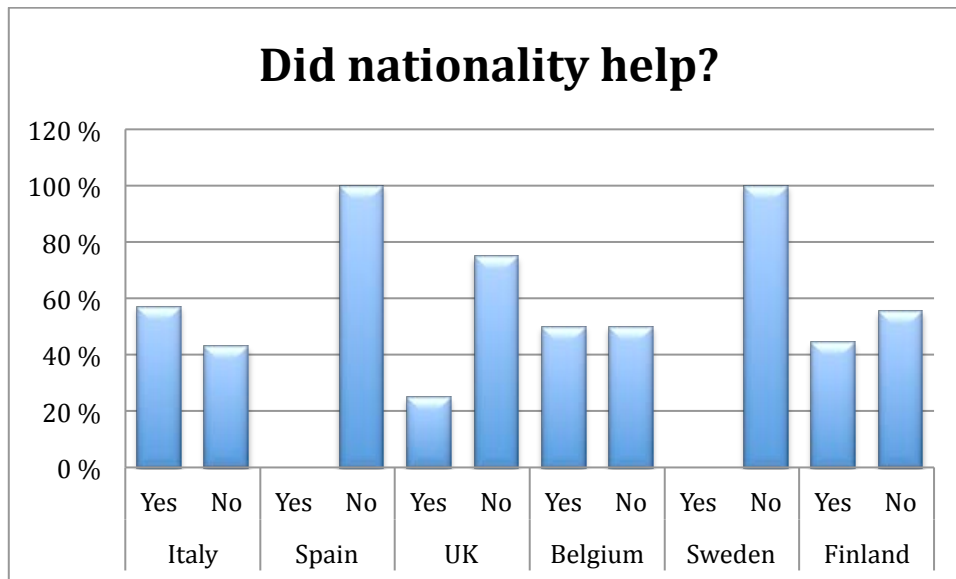


Figure 36. Most of the riders considered their nationality did not help them to succeed

The factor that was obvious according to the champions was the fact that in order to succeed one needs to have proper training places. Only thirteen of the interviewees did not have a track or other training areas near them. Quite many had a possibility to practice motorcycling just near their homes. For some there were multiple places where to practice: *“We had five different places within 15 minutes from home and we also built some barriers on our back yard. We also had a chance to ride in the woods next to our home”* (Champion number 42).

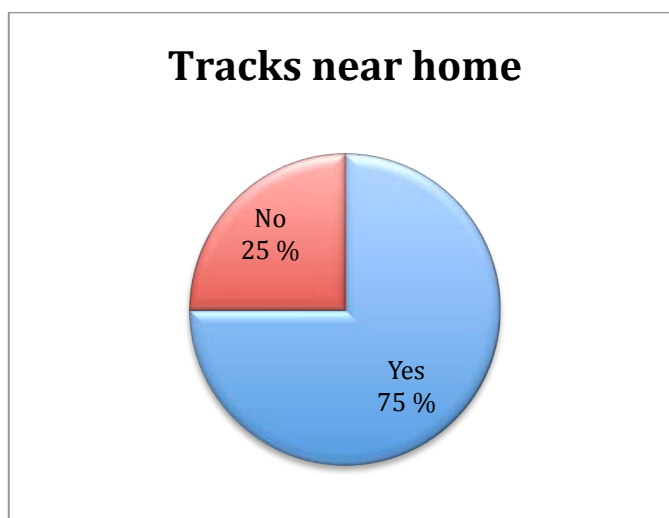


Figure 37. 75 % of all the interviewees had tracks near their home

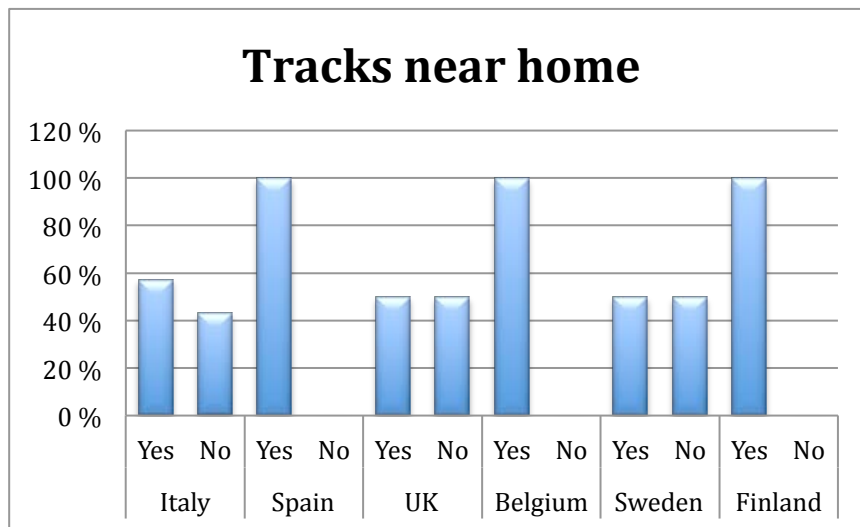


Figure 38. All the Spanish, Belgian and Finnish World Champions had tracks or practicing possibilities near their home.

Some disciplines such as Road Racing require proper circuits or tracks but especially Off-road can be practiced in the forests and other suitable areas so there is not necessary need for made tracks. Also, some of the interviewees had built own track on their parents' back yards. Therefore, the environment has an impact when it comes to executing off-road sport. If one lives in an urban area starting the hobby is more difficult than when living in a rural areas that offer a lot of practicing possibilities.

Table 10. The population distribution of most successful countries in 2010 (United Nations Statistics Division 2011).

Population distribution (%) 2010		
	Urban	Rural
Italy	68 %	32 %
Spain	77 %	23 %
GB	80 %	20 %
Belgium	97 %	3 %
Sweden	85 %	15 %
Finland	85 %	15 %

Also the weather conditions matter a lot. Spain and Italy have long summer periods that offer good training and practicing possibilities whereas Swedish and Finnish

riders suffer from short summers but gain a useful practice during the winter time on ice. Belgian and British riders have relatively mild conditions for riding when most of the time it is not too hot or too cold.

Table 11. The advantages and disadvantages of the climate in six most successful motorcycle sport countries. (Wordtravels, SouthTravels.com, Travelsignposts 2011)

	Italy	Spain	GB	Belgium	Sweden	Finland
Climate	Mainly temperate, varies slightly according to region. The north is warm in summer, with occasional rain, the central area of the country is very humid, the south is hot and dry.	Big regional differences of Mediterranean climate with hot, dry summers and mild winters, some parts being cooler in summer and very wet in winter, some temperate with cold winters.	A varied and temperate maritime. Mild with temperatures not much lower than 0°C in winter and not much higher than 30°C in summer. Damp and subject to frequent changes.	Temperate, maritime climate, warm summers, cool to cold winters. Rainfall evenly distributed throughout the year.	Big differences between south and north. Severe, cold winters, warm summers.	Big differences between south and north. Severe, cold winters, warm summers.
Advantages	Long summer periods for training, not much rains.	Long summer periods for training, not much rains.	Relatively mild conditions for practicing. Short winter time.	Mild weather for practicing almost all year round.	Ice and snow offer good practice for riding.	Ice and snow offer good practice for riding.
Disadvant.	No much variation, e.g. no possibilities to practice on ice.	No much variation, e.g. no possibilities to practice on ice.	No possibilities to practice on ice. Rains quite often.	No possibilities to practice on ice. Rains quite often.	Short summer periods for training.	Short summer periods for training.

When comparing the different countries where the champions come from there occurred few factors that differed between the nations and cultures.

When many of the other nationalities considered they were addicted to motorsport most of the Finnish riders thought they were not. However, for Finnish riders the most important factor that impacted their success was passion. For all the Italians the

motorcycling was passion however most of them did not think that it affected why they became World Champions. The main reason for success according to six of the Italians was a good bike or a team. The fact is that a person can be extremely talented but without a chance to show his/her abilities with good equipment he/she will never become a champion. Also five Italians considered that they were natural talents.

British riders felt that the factors that affected most into their success were mainly mental such as determination and commitment. For Spanish and Belgian riders the most important factor towards motorcycle success was passion and Belgian World Champions also valued determination and dedication high. All the Belgian and Finnish World Champions had had tracks or training possibilities near their home.

In the end of the questionnaire World Champions were asked what they think affected most why they became World Champions. They were given four examples: good preparation, good luck, passion, good bike/team and natural talent. It was possible to choose more than one factor. Most of the champions thought good bike and/or team had the most important meaning for their career. Second was passion and factors good preparation, natural talent and good luck got all approximately same amounts of answers. Champions also had opportunity to give their own ideas for their success. The answers were following: *“Determination”, “Better than others”, “Will to win”, “Will-power”, “Blood, sweat and cheers”, “History and wish to join my heroes via history”, “My abilities and work ethic is a direct result of my relationship with God”, “Concentration, always thinking for the race”, “Believing yourself”, “Complete concentration”, “Good people close to you”, “Determined”, “Mostly my determination, ambition, talent and passion but on a very high level”, “The willing to win and know that nobody can beat you. The desire to succeed, the urge to reach your full potential... these are the keys that will unlock the door to personal excellence”, “Determination”, “Hard work”, “Determination”, “Commitment”, “Dedication”.*

The charts below describe the factors World Champions from different countries considered were most important reasons why they became World Champions. Since the number of champions per country differs from two to nine and champions were able to give more than one answer the answers are not completely comparable but

the national differences can be seen.

Figure 39. demonstrates how good bike/team was most important factor for Italians when asked what they think made them World Champions. Something else included mental qualities such as “Concentration”, “The will to win”, “The desire to succeed and the urge to reach the full potential”.

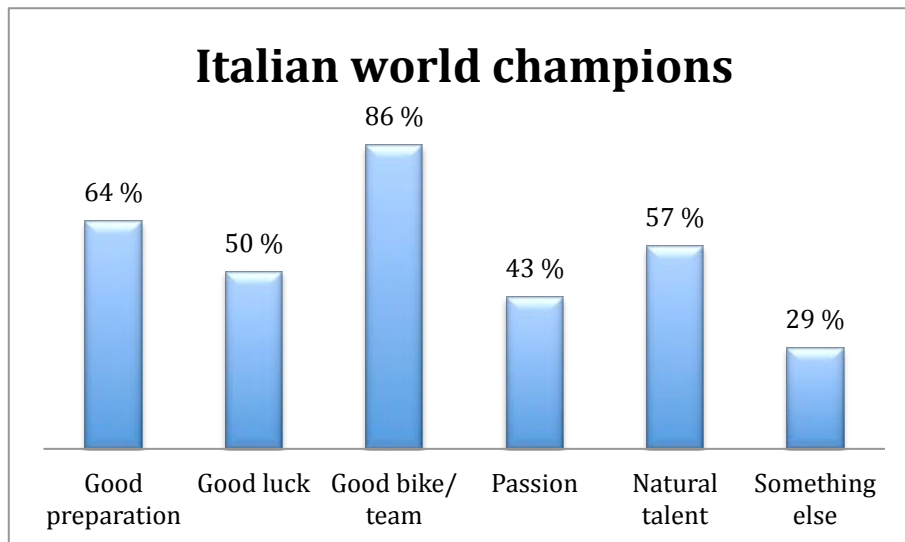


Figure 39. The factors influencing to the success of Italian World Champions

One Spanish World Champion considered that all the factors mentioned affected why he became a World Champion. One answered good bike/team was the reason for the success.



Figure 40. The factors influencing to the success of Spanish World Champions

British World Champions mentioned factors such as "*Better than others*", "*Blood, sweat and cheers*", "*Determent, didn't want to loose, hated to be second*" and "*Commitment*" that had affected their success.

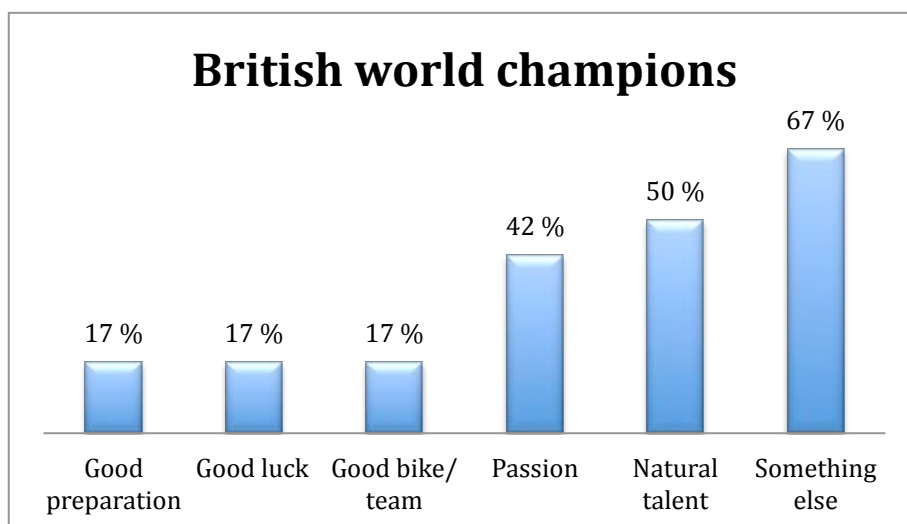


Figure 41. The factors influencing to the success of British World Champions

Belgian World Champions considered passion most important in order to succeed. They also valued mental aspects high, two champions mentioned "determination", one "being realistic" and one "dedication".

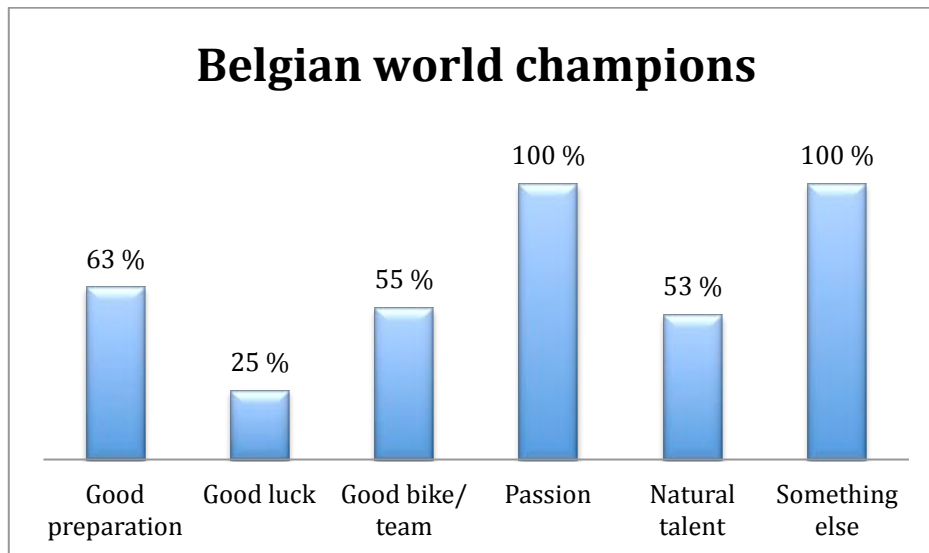


Figure 42. The factors influencing to the success of Belgian World Champions

Both Swedish World Champions mentioned determination for the reason why they became World Champion. The other champion also valued good preparation.

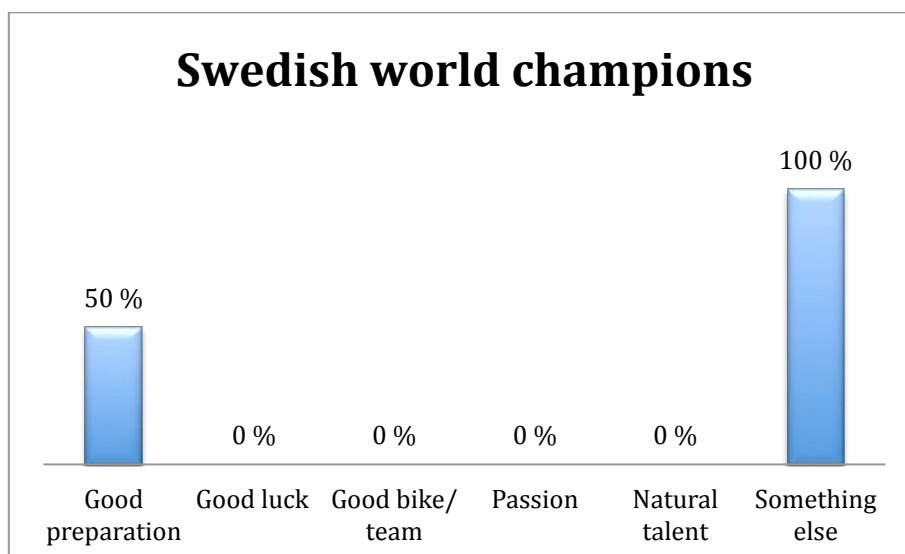


Figure 43. The factors influencing to the success of Swedish World Champions.

Five of the nine Finnish World Champions considered passion was important factor for their success. They also mentioned factors such as “Believing yourself” and “Complete concentration”.



Figure 44. The factors influencing to the success of Finnish World Champions

Also the representatives of most successful countries had quite different opinions why their countries have been able to produce so many World Champions in motorcycle sport.

Peter Gregory from Auto-Cycle Union Ltd considers that Great Britain is successful motorcycle country mainly because it has had many activities and leader riders who showed the way to the success. Speedway, Motocross and Trial events were first organised in Great Britain, so the riders had a head start on other nationalities. Over the years other nations have caught up, and British riders no longer dominate. In the case of Trials, Great Britain had a number of riders who reached the highest level since Dougie Lampkin was so successful and the riders he competed against in Great Britain had to raise their own level to stay with him. (Gregory 10.11.2010.)

Alberto Rinaldelli the Segretario Generale of Italian federation assumes that the success in their country comes not from the hard work but because motorcycle is so much loved and appreciated in Italy. Motorcycle sport is in the blood of Italian people similar to football. Also the Italian mentality suits for motorcycle sport. (Rinaldelli 24.12.2010.)

FIM's Sports Director Ignacio Verneda and Andres Somolinos Jr. the Coordinador Deportivo of Real Federacion Motociclista Española consider that in Spain the

matters that affect the success are mainly the manufacturers tradition and suitable weather for motorcycle sport. In 1985 the federation started the programme of national teams for all disciplines and the work has shown good results. The federation has also worked with promoters, sponsors and national federations in order to gain good results in motorcycle sport. (Verneda 24.10.2010; Somolimos 2.2.2011.)

Stijn Rentmeesters the Secrétaire Général of Fédération Motocycliste de Belgique thinks that the main reason Belgium has been able to produce so many World Champions are the popularity of the sport in the 1950s and 1960s created by famous riders such as Joel Robert, René Baeten and Roger De Coster, a lot of national and international events in 1960s and 1970s and the simple fact of hard work and a lot of training. In Belgium there were also quite many champion fathers who helped their sons to become champions such as Harry and Stefan Everts and the Geboers family. (Rentmeesters 28.2.2011.)

Per Westling the Secretary General of SVEMO, Svenska Motorcykel - och Snöskoterförbundet believes that the secret for Swedish riders success might be a combination of few aspects: Swedish people can afford the bikes, they have an attitude of "I can", the climate is ideal for their motorcycle sports, the big "uncivilized forests" offer good training places and also an old technical industry and an old democratic sports federation opening for all have influenced. (Westling 21.3.2011.)

Kurt Ljungqvist the CEO of Finnish federation Suomen Moottoriliitto considers that the matters which have affected most for the success of the motorcycle riders come from the riders themselves and their determination, commitment, goal-orientated minds, familiarizing with things and taking these factors seriously and bringing them to a conclusion. Also the multiple champions are often versatile talents. When it comes to Finland he thinks that the country has many champions because people live in bare conditions where there is a need for sustainability and multiple "surviving talents". Dark winters, slippery grounds, small amount of people and long distances with the long traditions within motorcycling have most certainly had an impact on the success. Also, the good amount of amateur motorcyclists is beneficial but this has

not been the case with Road Racing anymore. (Ljungqvist 23.12.2010.) The previous Chief Coach of Finnish Federation Sauli Mäkelä thinks that the main factors why Finland has been able to produce most World Champions compared to the amount of inhabitants are the famous Finnish “sisu” and persistence. *“Finn does not want to be left second. For example Motocross riders Pekka Vehkonen and Mika Kouki mentioned once: the most important thing is not to win but to have a double victory.”* (Mäkelä 3.4.2011.)

Table 12. The main national factors affecting the success by federation’s representative’s.

Italy	Spain	GB	Belgium	Sweden	Finland
Love of the sport	Manufacturers	Leader riders	History	Economy	Riders attitude
Climate	Climate	History	Hard work	Right attitude	Rural areas
Mentality	Training		Training	Climate	Climate
				Rural areas	

This thesis proves that FIM and national federations are developing now to the right direction when they want to be at closer stage with the riders. For many of the champions their national federations had no impact towards their careers. Five of the riders had an ok –opinion when asked how they would consider the influence or work of their national federation and seven had positive attitude. For eleven there was no impact of the national federation and 21 had negative experiences of their federations. Especially women felt that the federations did not help female riders. Most satisfied riders came from the Italian and Great Britain’s federations however none of the federation got really good feedback. Only 14 champions were offered training possibilities by their federations but almost all of them got the offer when they already had a professional career.

When asked did the rider get help or support from FIM during his or her career or did FIM have any influence, all but three answered no. For one rider the image of FIM gave motivation and two were happy that FIM created women’s World Championship class. But when asked if the rider would have wanted help from national federation or FIM most of the riders answered no. Fifteen would have

wanted help mainly for training and advices and assistance with starting their careers in the beginning like Champion number 34 said: *“I would have wanted help to understand the ropes on how to get to the pro level. Also I think that the FMN and FIM should help with travel expenses the most promising riders to start their pro career.”* Also some would have wanted help with the license costs as Champion number 53 mentioned: *“I would have wanted help from my national federation because I am one of the most successful and famous riders in my country and at least they could support with giving the expensive license for free.”*

7 CONCLUSIONS

This chapter gives an answer to the question “What Makes a Champion” and describes the new factors that were found during the research process that have impact on motorcycle sport success, the factors that were found which do not support the previous knowledge of motorcycle sport success and factors which support the information already known. Also, suggestions and restriction are included in the end of this part.

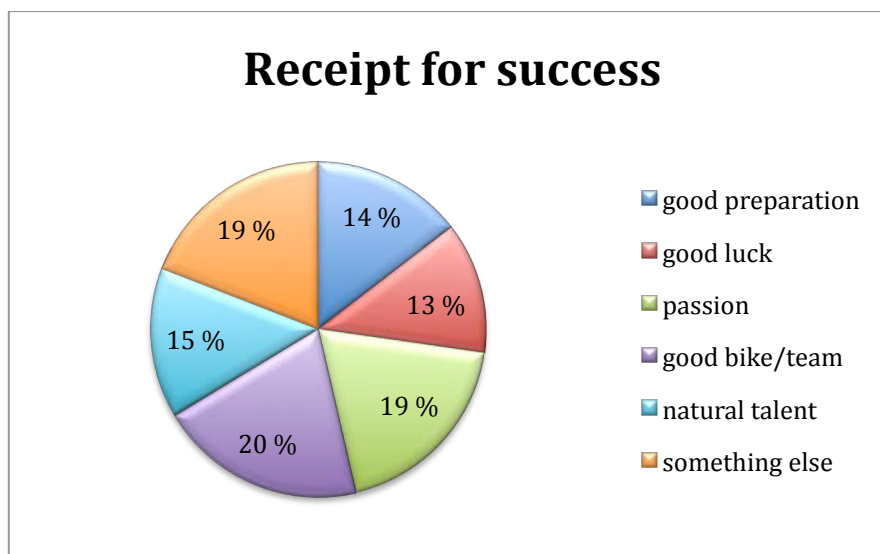


Figure 45. The main factors influencing the success according to the World Champions

According to this thesis the answer to the question What Makes a Champion is: Motivated and competitive rider who is determinate and sensitive, has true passion towards motorcycling, has practicing possibilities near his or her home place in order to start the hobby as early stage as possible, lives in a well fare state and in a society that encourages towards motorcycle racing and gets a possibility to race with a good equipment. Therefore, to start a motorcycle sport the first precondition is to have financial resources or to be born in a well fare state. The second precondition is to have the right mental abilities for racing and thirdly a rider has to develop his/her physical abilities. Consequently, according to this thesis athlete’s physical and mental factors alone do not explain the reasons for success but also structural and

cultural factors influence the success significantly. Even if a person has all the abilities needed in motorcycle racing his or her success is really hard to predict based on these qualities alone. A person can be really talented and motivated but if he or she does not have a supportive network and proper possibilities to practice the sport it is extremely hard to succeed. Therefore, the cultural structures that support the sport system do have great value.

Table 13. Key social, mental and physical factors influencing the success in motorcycle racing.

Social factors	Mental factors	Physical factors
Training possibilities	Competitive personality	Physique
History	Determination	Balance
Leader riders	Passion	Reaction
Climate	Flair with sensitiveness	Strength
Economy	Drive	Mobility

7.1 New Factors that were found

Most of the new factors that were found and are not previously known are mainly cultural and structural. The main reason is that there have not been many researches that include cultural and structural factors of motorcycle athlete.

Even though the rider's personal factors have important meaning whether he or she will succeed or not it seems that the society plays even more important role. The most important cultural and structural factors are the training places and the history of motorcycle racing success meaning that success in certain discipline creates positive attitude towards racing and other champions help new comers either concretely or by creating the image of good riders to the international field. Also, often several World Championships by certain country are not gained with good luck but with hard work and significant investments both in financially and professional sense.

The most significant new finding was the sensitive personality that enables a rider to concentrate on smaller details in order to achieve the perfect outcome. Also, the finding that type A is the most common blood type between the World Champions gave new and interesting information. However, in order to have more scientific value this statement should be researched with a larger sample of World Champions.

7.2 Factors that were found that do not support previous findings

Even if the motorcycle World Champions belong to the first level of sensation seeking category, Thrill and Adventure Seeking, which measures the willingness to take part in sport or other activities that include speed and danger, the findings of this thesis do not support the other three levels of sensation seeking. Most of the World Champions did not belong to the Disinhibition category that foresees willingness for social and sexual incontinent, which includes lifestyle of partying, drinking, and several sex partners. Also, only half of the champions belonged to the Experience Seeking category, which measures the willingness for new experiences and unconventional life style. Findings do not either support the fact that top athlete would belong to the Boredom Susceptibility level, which measures the aversion towards continual experiences, routines and boring people since results were relatively contradictory.

7.3 Factors that were found that support previous findings

This thesis supports the previous findings of typical characteristics of top athlete. The personal factors that impact most the success in motorcycle racing are passion, flair, drive and especially competitive personality. All of the World Champions belonged to the first level of sensation seeking category Thrill and Adventure Seeking (TAS) and to the Type A people who are goal and achievement orientated, eager to compete and enjoy rewards and appreciation.

Consequently, it seems that personal qualities such as determination and willingness to work hard are big advantages when a person wants to succeed. Therefore, it can be said that a person will not become a champion if he or she does not have passion and

motivation towards motorcycling. Also, a good balance is naturally important although it has not been highlighted much previously.

7.4 Validity and reliability of the research

There is no reason to make a research unless the results are reliable (Payne & Payne 2004, 196). Therefore, both the validity which is the truth-value of the research and reliability referring to consistency with which the research procedures deliver the results are important factors of the research (Seale 2004, 72).

There are some different meanings for validity. For some researchers it means an estimate of the field that the data measures what is intended to be measured, whereas others do not justify the links between design and truth value this way. Instead they prefer legitimation when relating to a broader notion of truth-value. (Newman & Benz 1998, 29.) However, validity in this thesis is referred to whether the questionnaire is measuring what was supposed to measure. According to Bryman (2004, 174) the validity of any measure will be affected by both “*whether the measure reflects the concept it has been designed to measure*” and also “*error that arises from the implementation of the measure in the research process*”.

In order to be able to generalize the outcomes of the interviews carried out for this thesis the interviewees must not be significantly different from all those who did not participate, in this case all the rest of the motorcycle World Champions (McIntyre 2005, 140). The idea was to have as many World Champions as possible in order to gain realistic information. Since the Road Racing has a long history with many different classes, it was natural that most of the World Champions are from that discipline and only few from Superbike. The purpose was also to get champions from the different decades and different countries. Even though the number of interviews (54) is relatively large for World Champions it is not enough to make large assumptions. Naturally, there are some clear answers that are almost in all cases similar between all the interviewees, which allowed making an assumption that the factor has a clear link to the success.

According to Patton (1990, 472) a research is only valid when the report includes

information of the researcher explaining his/her background in the field. Also, the main criteria in qualitative research is the trustworthiness of the researcher (Eskola & Suoranta 1998, 211). Therefore, the preface explains the experience, perspective and personal connections of the researcher.

Reliability refers to “*the degree to which a measure of a concept is stable*” (Bryman 2004, 543). For reliability it is important that all the participants understand the questions in the same way (Payne & Payne 2004, 196). The most significant challenge during the interview process was the language. Due to the fact that English is not the native language of the researcher and many successful riders are from countries where English is not commonly spoken and used it was sometimes difficult for the interviewee to understand the questions and sometimes some misunderstandings with the questions occurred. However, mostly the questions were explained the way that the interviewee finally understood the right intention behind the question. During the analysing process it was realized that some of the questions could have been understood in different ways. For example, when asking if the champion did mental training some understood it as a process when they concentrated on the race and some understood it as a proper mental training done for example with a supervisor. Also when asked if it was easy for the rider to learn new things some answered relating the answer to general life and some answered relating it just to motorcycling. But mainly the answers were comparable with each other.

Some of the interviewees did not answer all the questions, since not all of them were relevant for everyone. Also, after interviewing six World Champions the results obtained gave ideas about a few extra questions that were added to the questionnaire afterwards. Two of the champions who were already interviewed could not be reached afterwards and hence they did not answer them. Also, one champion who was interviewed at a quite late stage suggested a question that he thought was relevant to ask. Since it was not possible to reach all the interviewees at that point, the result of this question as well as some others in which the answers were not so clearly interpreted to yes or no, are marked with percentages instead of numbers. However, most of the World Champions answered all the questions and all of them answered the most important question: what do they think made them a World Champion.

The fact that the researcher has been involved in motorsport for so long is certainly a benefit but it also caused some challenges for this thesis. Naturally some presumptions occurred towards the factors that affect the success in motorcycle sport and consequently it was necessary to concentrate on being objective and open-minded towards new information. It is good to know the interviewees in order to have trustful interviewing process but when the relationship is really close there is a chance that the interviewee does not take the process that seriously and does not give all the basic information that might be useful since he/she assumes that the interviewer already knows them. Nevertheless, the most important issue for reliability is that the results should be the same if the data gathering was repeated (Payne & Payne 2004, 196-197) and within this thesis it can be assumed that the interviewees would give the same answers if they were asked the questions again after some time.

Several websites were used for this thesis due to the fact that there has been lack of information of motorcycle sport in printed media. The internet and the new technology have become important aspects of today's research process. However, it is important to know that it is not always known who has put the information to the web and if it really is reliable. (Payne & Payne 2004, 121-122.) During the data gathering process the researcher used a lot of caution towards internet sources. Only that kind of information was used which can be regarded as reliable. For example Wikipedia gave good and simple explanations to the each motorcycle discipline, which were noted to be accurate, and because of that were used in this thesis. Also the World Championship statistics gotten from Wikipedia were checked by FIM to be correct.

7.5 Restrictions and future researches

This thesis provided an overall picture of 54 World Champions. However, since they represented so many different decades of motorcycle sport it was difficult to directly compare some factors. Therefore, for the future studies it would be interesting to compare riders that have succeeded for example in 21st century.

Many of the national federations have been investing more in the training during the last years. Therefore, for the future researches it would be beneficial to investigate how big influence the federation's investment in training has to the riders' success. Most of the champions interviewed for this thesis did not gain help from their national federations and many of them represent the generation when there were not that many training and coaching possibilities. Hence, after five-ten years period the investments of national federation can be seen properly and it can be researched how big impact the training organized by the federations has.

7.6 Suggestions

This part provides suggestions and recommendations to a person who is planning to have a professional career in motorcycle sport, to his/her parents or other supporters, to national federations and to the FIM.

7.6.1 Suggestions to a person aiming to be a motorcycle World Champion

A person himself or herself is the only one who knows what he or she wants to do in his or her life. Without a passion towards motorcycle racing it is extremely hard to succeed. In order to become a successful rider today it is important to start riding a motorcycle as early stage as possible. This way a person will learn how to handle the motorcycle naturally. Practicing in different conditions like on an ice or wet surface is advisable. Beside racing it would be beneficial to have other hobbies so that the interest stays and other hobbies may improve other physical qualities which racing alone does not do. Today's rider needs to have good physical skills therefore, physical training is extremely important. One should also practice balance skills as early stage as possible.

Most of the World Champions do not have a proper school degree but at the same time they do retire earlier than average person. Also their career might be ended sooner than expected due to the accidents or lack of talents. Therefore, it would be worthwhile to think the after-career life already when starting the racing.

7.6.2 Suggestions to the parents

It is good to offer a child many different hobby possibilities to choose from so that he or she can find the ones that attract most. A child has to have his or her own desire for racing. It is worth to remember that girls should not be automatically guided towards feminine sport but to respect their desires.

As in any sport also on motorcycling a child should be encouraged to make long-term goals. In today's world it is more and more important that a child starts to practice racing as early stage as possible. It would be good to contact the local club or national federation in order to find out if they offer training possibilities. Racing requires financial resources and it is often really hard to find any sponsors at the beginning. Therefore, parents have to be prepared to give financial support if they are willing to help their children in racing. It is extremely important to realize that most of the riders will never be professional athletes.

7.6.3 Suggestions to the national federations

Training and practicing are extremely important factors for young riders. Luckily these days many national federations are putting more effort on the training. It is also worthwhile to encourage local clubs to organize as much training possibilities as possible for young riders.

National federations should organize as many high level competitions as possible in order that their riders get more experience in their home country and get used to compete in high level against top riders.

It seems that the typical rider needs new experiences often. He/she does not like routines or strict norms and therefore quite often he/she quits the school as soon as possible. Many of the champions did have active hobbies and did do physical training but the federations or parties organizing the training should notice that the training should be carried out the way that suits for the riders' personalities. Strict daily programs without proper variation most likely do not fascinate the riders as much as training that is carried out more freely and more enjoyable way.

There should be as many training places as possible so that beginners could have easy access to them without long travelling. However, due to the strict environmental restrictions there are less and less tracks and training places all the time. Therefore, federations should put more efforts for creating the image of motorcycling towards greener direction. Usually the reason why more and more practicing areas are lost and permits to build new tracks are not granted is due to the unawareness. People are not aware of what environmental efforts have been made in motorcycle racing industry and therefore just forbid the land use out of old habits.

In order to achieve more success in international level it might be good idea to invest in women since women's motorcycle sport is still at quite early stage at least in most of the disciplines. If a federation will now focus on training women and engaging them in motorcycle sport the effort may pay back soon with significant success. Studies have shown that special programmes or sports clubs for women have increased the participation of women in sport. Therefore, it would be worth to consider establishing a separate motorcycle sport programme for women only.

In many countries the status of national federations are considered to be too high level for the average people. Therefore, it would be important to create an approachable image so that people would feel comfortable to contact the federations regarding training, coaching or starting the racing career.

Like this thesis proved previous World Champions have major impact on the success of new comers. Federations should get advantage of World Champions as much as possible. They are good role models to use in training camps. Beginners are more willing to listen their idol who knows what he/she talks about than just the average trainer. However, it is not always necessary to use the champions concretely. People often get inspired by the athletes' achievements and they want to follow their footsteps. Usually the federations do not understand the brand value of their champions. Therefore, federations should use the image of the champions in order to create better image of the motorcycling. Better image means better attitude towards motorcycling, more people who are interested in motorcycling, more riders and eventually more champions.

Success creates success:

In national level:

Talented riders increase the level also in national competitions so that other riders need to improve their performance and consequently become more successful.

In international level:

Champions create positive image of their countrymen when succeeding and make teams to become interested in them.

Concretely:

Champions can concretely help their country riders with training and general advice.

Usually sport gets media visibility through the most talented athletes. Hence it would be beneficial for federations to create success stories and awareness of both the sport and the federation through their World Champions. For example Belgian Federation has used the image and conspicuousness of their champions at their website. Federations should appreciate the history in order to gain more success. Also when creating the federation's brand, it is easier to get sponsors interest.

Many federations have good ideas and good examples how to create success stories and how to improve their image, therefore it would be useful for federations to do bench marking between other federations and also to share their ideas.

Almost all of the World Champions had left school as soon as they were allowed. Therefore, they do not have a degree or a profession. Usually all they can think as a teenager is motorcycling but since the career does not last long it is important to advise them to have future plans for the life after the career. This could be taken into the consideration when federations offer training for the riders not necessarily in a concrete manner but at least advising riders towards planning in advance.

7.6.4 Suggestions to the FIM

FIM obviously is on the right track when creating the motorcycling towards greener future. The examples given from the six most successful federations show that environmental restrictions have had a great impact on practicing motorcycle racing and therefore it is really important to help improving the situation.

As a governing body of motorcycle sport FIM should be the main and official channel where to get the information of World Championship series. It would be useful to publish all the World Championship statistics on their website. At the moment there are only average of ten latest World Champions of every discipline but the past is really important and we should appreciate the great history of motorcycle racing by publishing the information on the website that today is the channel where people turn to in order to get the information.

So far FIM has been really distant to the riders, which can be seen from their answers. Consequently, the work FIM is now doing with improving its image and conspicuousness is certainly needed. FIM, like any other governing body, should focus on having the real experts of the sport. In motorcycle sport the development is extremely fast and therefore people making decisions and regulations should really be aware of the present situation in order to make appropriate regulations to the sport from the riders, teams and spectators point of view. The professionalism will also create appreciation amongst riders.

It might be appropriate to consider whether FIM should also somehow be involved with riders' after-career life. Perhaps the training and future plans of the riders are factors that could be included in the FIM Academy.

According to most of the riders they do not need direct help from FIM and indeed national federations are the party where they should turn to. But FIM should perhaps encourage national federations to work closely and at the same level with "the people on the field" instead of being alone in the top giving instructions. Two-way – communication and co-operation is needed both with riders and federations and with federations and FIM in order to improve the image of both national federations and FIM and most importantly to build more successful world of motorcycle sport.

Everyone involved in the field of motorcycle sport should remember the following:

Motorcycle racing is not just sport - it is life. But one should remember that there is also life after motorcycle racing. – Nita Korhonen

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Questionnaire / World Champions

Name

Date of Birth

Nationality

Blood Type

Left or right-handed?

Did father race?

Did parents support for racing?

Did you personally know anyone from the field in the beginning? Did they help you?

Why you started to race?

Did the possibility to have better incomes (compared to the studying) have any meaning when starting the racing career?

When tried bike first time?

Was/is there a track/practicing possibilities near your home place / in your country in general?

How was motor sport considered by the society when you started to practice?

What kind of image motor sport/motorcycle sport had in your country when started racing?

Were there many successful/famous motorcycle riders in your country that time?

How would you consider the influence/work of your national federation?

Did your national federation offer you training opportunities or other support?

What age when first competition?

Did you have an idol?

Did you fix bike yourself or had a mechanic in the beginning?

Were/are you fascinated by the technical issues?

Did parents help financially?

When got first sponsor?

Did/do you have any other hobbies?

Did you have a lot of friends when child/teenager?

What did you study at school?

Weight and height during pro years?

Did/do you practice a lot?

Do you think you were/are natural talent?

What kept/keeps you in shape? Did/do you do physical training?

Did/do you do mental training?

Do you think you have/had a good balance?

Was/is it easy for you to control your muscles?

Was/is it easy for you to learn new things?

Did/do you have a good selfconfidence? (when it was highest?)

When knew that will be a professional rider?

Did/do you have a coach, when?

Did/do you have a manager, when?

Do you think your nationality helped you to succeed compared to others? (i.e. team, sponsors etc.)

During your pro-years, have you gotten help/support from FIM? Or did/does it have any influence?

Did you want help from national federation or FIM? If yes at what point?

Did/do you have a girl friend/wife / a boyfriend/husband during professional years?

Did/do you have children during professional years?

During your pro years, when you had/have a day off – what did/do you do?

During pro years did/do you use a lot alcohol or did/do partying?

Did/do you use any extra nutrition/drugs?

Was/is motorcycling passion to you?

Was/is it your goal to win every race you participated?

Was/is it your goal/plan to win World Championship?

Was/is it easy for you to shut all the distractions from your mind when racing?

Were/are you able to keep your concentration 100% all the way through the race?

Did/do you prepare yourself 100% before the race (e.g. did think the overtaking spots in advance etc.)?

Were/are you ever afraid when racing?

Did/do you have aggressive mentality?

Are you extrovert or introvert?

Social skills: are/were you shy or get easily along with other people?

Did/do you enjoy attention?

Did/do you enjoy appreciation?

Did/do you get bored easily?

Did/do you like taking risks?

Did/do you get stressed easily?

Did/do you need new experiences often?

Did/do you like routines?

Did/do you spend much time on the details of planning ahead

Were/are you impulsive?

Did/do you enjoy getting into new situations where you can't predict how things will turn out?

Did/do you have strong opinions? Are you strict?

Did/do you require a lot from your self? From your team?

Were/are you really competitive?

Were/are you conscientious?

Do you think you were/are emotionally in good balance?

Are you sensitive person?

Do you think you were/are addicted to motorsport?

Do you think you were/are addicted to adrenaline?

Was your reaction speed ever measured? What was it?

Imagine the day of your dreams. What you would do?

What do you think made you a World Champion? What affected most:

- a) good preparation
- b) good luck
- c) passion
- d) good bike/team
- e) natural talent
- f) something else, what?

Appendix 2. Questionnaire / Federation representatives

Which year your federation was established?

How many clubs you have?

How many members totally?

Since when your federation has been member of FIM?

How many World Championships your country has?

What is your most successful discipline?

Are there many tracks/areas in your country which enables practicing/competing?

Is there a lot of motorcycle industry in your country?

What kind of attitude your society has had towards motorcycle sport? What kind of image motorcycle sport has had?

Has the attitude changed over the years?

How the motorcycle sport has been shown in the media in your country?

How the training has been organized in your country?

How the federation supports beginners starting their racing careers?

What is the amount of riders with licence in

Road Racing

Motocross

Enduro

Trial

Speedway

How much the rider's licence costs?

How the beginners usually finance their practicing?

How the sponsors usually consider motorcycle sport in your country?

What kind of economic development there has been in your country?

Do the successful ex-riders help/support beginners some how like taking part in the training etc.?

What do you think is the main reason your country has been able to produce so many World Champions?

Do you think society has had impact on the success?