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***Place-names containing occupational terms:  
a study based on data from two regions in Norway***

## **1. Introduction**

When dealing with the place-names of a region, it is striking to see the great variety of words and terms found in the material. Any natural or manmade feature so to speak, any field of human activity may be represented. Name researchers, historians, as well as other scholars interested in onomastics, have repeatedly highlighted place-names as a source for learning about the interaction between man and his surroundings. Among the large number of semantic categories represented in place-names, I will look into the one where the context is occupations (or occupational activities, including trades and professions), based on material from two Norwegian districts (see map below). Preliminary examples are *Munkerud* ‘the monk’s clearing’, cf. English *Monkton*, and *Prestedalen* ‘the priest’s valley’, cf. English *Priestcliffe* (GELLING 1984: 136). In most cases the occupational term stands as specific (first element) in compound place-names, whereas a topographical word makes out the generic (last element), for example *Lensmannsstølen*, from *lensmann* ‘sheriff’ and *støl* ‘summer farm’. The relationship between the profession in question and the generic is of various kinds, for instance performance of a particular occupation at a certain place, an individual’s proprietorship of that occupation, or an incident related to a person having that occupation. Further examples are *Skrivargarden* ‘the farmstead of the district court judge’, *Falkafangarnuten* ‘the hill where the falconer operates’.

In some names we find an aspect of irony, for instance in *Hovmannen*, from *hovmann* ‘clerk of the court’, ‘the king’s deputy’. This position as the king’s deputy was very unpopular among the rural population. In this case the name refers to a rock which the name givers have associated with a “hovmann”. By studying this group of names, we can find out more about the social status of the occupations in question.

## **2. Purpose**

Collecting and analyzing place-names may have a general interest as a part of the language and cultural history for a certain locale. Place-names are congealed linguistic documents from the past and as such they convey a range of information about various aspects of human life from the time when they were coined. One question which may be raised in reference to place-names regards



the context of specialized work that was performed by earlier generations. Even if this question to a great extent may be answered by historians, additional information will be found in place names. The fact that place-names are space-related linguistic signs gives them particular value as historical documents.

A number of professions which were common until the first half of the 20th century have in later decades been replaced by machines and automation. People in general have for instance little or no idea about the work of a cooper. As a result, the old techniques and the names of many of them are being forgotten. This topic has been addressed by several Norwegian name researchers, for instance ELI ELLINGSVE (1999). MARGIT HARSSON's study on vanished professions (2006) gives also many interesting examples (some of her findings are included in my material).

The present study aims at revealing various kinds of occupations represented in place-names, as well as their geographical distribution and frequency. It is also of interest to learn which topographical words are used in combination with the various occupational terms.

### 3. The terms *occupation/profession*

The terms *occupation* and *profession* may include a number of human activities. *The Oxford Living Dictionaries* defines *occupation* in the following way: 1. "A job or profession", whereas the definition of *profession* reads: 1. "A paid occupation, especially one that involves a prolonged training and a formal education". Thus, we see that the two terms denote activities that are pretty closely related to one another. One category of occupations especially relevant in the Middle Ages, which is the main timeframe for many of the names in my data, is the tradesman. Tradesmen like bakers and blacksmiths had often spent many years learning their trade. But professions are usually tied to academic training, and in our context, the only professions would be clerical or administrative and legal. Some military positions might also be considered professions. A term like 'monk' is difficult to classify, since the context of being a monk is a lifestyle, a calling from God, and a protest against living in the ordinary world of work. It involves being a member of a brotherhood and living under vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. But monks spent many hours in Bible study, and their positions were a part of the clerical hierarchy. A more obvious example of an occupation is that of NOR *budeie* 'milkmaid', referring to women working at summer farms. The same applies to NOR *husmann* 'cotter'. A common occupation like NOR *bonde* 'farmer' is strangely enough not found in my material. One reason may be that *bonde* was (and is) so commonly used that it did not work very well as a distinguishing term in place-names (although it may be used occasionally in other materials). A less

honourable occupation is that of a thief, for instance in *Tjuvaholet*, from NOR *tjuv* ‘thief’ and *hol* ‘hole’ (here rather ‘cave’). There is a tradition that some thieves used to hide in *Tjuvaholet*. In consideration of the many connotations of these activities, I use the two terms in a rather wide sense. In Norwegian *yrkeshnemning* (SCHMIDT 1983) would correspond to English occupational (and professional) terms.

A broader approach to the research would include all kinds of terms which refer to human roles. Some adjacent terms, but outside my scope, are for instance NOR *frue* ‘Madame, wife’, NOR *kjer(r)ing* ‘adult (elderly) female person, wife’, NOR *jomfru* ‘virgin’, NOR *brur* ‘bride’, all of them well known as place-name elements. In fact, a person can have multiple social roles through her or his lifetime and these may be reflected in place-names. Once a thief does not mean that a person is always a thief. And to be a bride is not a permanent role, although it may be repeated several times during a woman’s life. Or *brur* may imply that many brides do some activity. Interestingly enough, names containing NOR *brur* ‘bride’ are abundant as specific in Norwegian place-names. They may be explained in various ways; *brur* in *Bruravika* may for instance refer to an inlet where the bride and the wedding guests went ashore on the way to or from the church. The name *Brurabenken* ‘the bride’s bench’ is used several times about naturally shaped stone seats, suitable for a bride (or a bride and a groom).

In order to organize the findings, I will distinguish between the following four groups: 1) Agriculture and various work activities attached to the countryside; 2) Crafts and Trades; 3) Official secular positions; 4) Official clerical positions (see further below).

#### 4. Material

The study is based on material from a western inland district and an eastern mainly coastal district in Norway (see Figure 1). The results show significant differences between the two areas, which is partly due to the data selection. The material from the eastern district is excerpted from a list of some 39 000 names (including a number of name variants) of farmsteads and cotters’ farms (SCHMIDT 1994–2017). The material from the western district comprises names of all sorts of features and is excerpted from various inventories of local place-names, the most important one being an inventory of about 13 000 place-names covering the municipality of Ullensvang (TRONES 2016). The material published by HEGGSTAD (1949), RYNNING-NIELSEN (1958), and others as well as card files were also excerpted. Neither group in the material pretends to be exhaustive. Nor are the two groups quite commensurable as the eastern group does not comprise names of natural features. However, the material was



selected on the basis of available name lists. In spite of this difference I shall show that interesting results were achieved.

Altogether I have listed some 360 names based on about 80 occupational terms. A very rough estimation indicates that approximately one per cent of the name material contains an occupational term. As is shown on the table below, a great variety of terms is used in the material.



**Figure 1:** Map of Southern Norway showing the two areas of investigation. In the west the district of Hardanger (part of the County of Hordaland) is marked, and in the east the County of Østfold (© Mapping Authority of Norway)

## 5. Methodological considerations

The normal structure of Norwegian place-names is a specific followed by a generic, for example *Klokkargarden*, composed by NOR *klokkar* ‘sexton’ and *gard* ‘farm, smallholding’. The generic defines the feature in question whereas the specific defines or specifies certain qualities of the generic. However, the relationship between the specific and the generic is not always transparent. In many cases it is a question of ownership or rights of use, i.e. the named feature (in this case the farm) belongs (belonged) to or is (was) used by the person

mentioned in the specific. In *Klokkargarden* (Ullensvang) we know that *garden* ‘the farm’ used to belong to the *klokkar* ‘sexton’, but later it was taken over by private owners. In the case of *Prestegarden* the priest performs his job at the church, not in the house where he lives. However, in many contexts the name *Prestegarden* comprises the priest’s dwelling as well as the nearby surroundings. *Prestegarden* is by the way the most frequent name in my material and is found in most parishes as a part of the traditional clerical system. It may be considered as a technical term (cf. *bondegard* ‘farmer’s farm’).



**Figure 2:** A traditional Norwegian prestegard (to the left) next to the church.  
Historic picture from Rygge in Østfold  
(Lindman photo 1903)

However, most place-names are coined individually, for instance *Biskuskleiv*, composed by a vernacular form of *bisp* ‘bishop’ and *kleiv* ‘steep rocky part of a path’. According to a local tradition the name is considered as a remembrance of the bishop’s route. But the relationship between the word for *bishop* and the generic *kleiv* is unclear. Perhaps the bishop or his horse was exposed to an accident here. In that case the name does not tell anything about the bishop

himself. However, it does reveal that the term *bishop* and the bishop's role were well known in the region, and even more important, that the bishop had to travel around in the countryside.

Very often there will be more than one way of explaining the relationship between a particular occupation reflected in a place-name and the place to which the name refers. In some cases the oral tradition attached to a name may be secondary, based upon the name itself, and we do not always know if a tradition is reliable. In other cases local history books and genealogies may supply some facts. In the case of *Biskuskleiv* we know from historic sources that the bishop had to use the mountainous path where this name occurs. The name *Biskopsvarden* 'the bishop's cairn' on the Hardangervidda may be another linguistic trace of the bishop's travel, but it is uncertain if he really used to pass this cairn on his way. Another example is *Bakarbrekka*, composed of *bakar* 'baker' and *brekke* 'steep part of a road'. We don't know the exact background of the name, but to all appearances a baker must have been present in the imagination of the name givers for some reason or other. Perhaps a baker had been involved in an accident. Or his name was *Baker*. The most plausible explanation of such a name would be that a baker used to work nearby.

Other examples are *Klerkatjørn* and *Sutarebrekka* on the Hardangervidda. The first element in *Klerkatjørn* is NOR *klerk* 'clerk' and the last element is NOR *tjørn* 'pond, lake'. According to an oral tradition the name was given because a clerk who made his way across the Hardangervidda drowned in the Klerkatjørn. However, there is no contemporary documentation that such an incident occurred, so we have to view the truthfulness of this explanation with scepticism. In *Sutarebrekka*, which refers to a steep mountainous path, the first element reflects ON *sútari* 'shoemaker', cf. Latin *sūtor* 'shoemaker', a term which has been replaced by the Middle German loan word *skomakar* in current Norwegian. The last element is *brekke* 'steep part of a path or road'. *Sútari* is now obsolete in the local language and people do not understand the word. It is not probable that a shoemaker used to work in such a remote area. It is more likely that the name is motivated by an incident where a shoemaker was involved. But here, as is the case with many other place-names, a reliable explanation lies beyond our knowledge. Another occupation is reflected *Bøkkerhuset*, composed by NOR *bøkker* 'cooper' and NOR *hus* 'house'. In this case we have some documentation that barrel production formerly took place here. There is reason to believe that the connection between the occupation mentioned in the specific and the generic is performance of that profession, which again will include dwelling and ownership.



**Figure 3:** A cooper family at work. German drawing from 1880 (Wikimedia Commons [https://no.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fil:B%C3%B6ttcher\\_1880.jpg](https://no.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fil:B%C3%B6ttcher_1880.jpg))

## 6. Nomen agentis

One group of occupational terms which requires special attention is the words of the agent (*nomen agentis*) like *skriver* ~ *skriver* ‘district judge’, cf. ON *skrifa* ‘to copy’; both forms are represented in the material. (In Norwegian we find *skriver* with the *-er*-suffix as well as *skriver* with *-ar*-suffix, the former being Bokmål and the latter Nynorsk). When such terms are found in habitation names they mostly denote the occupation of one of the owners (or former owners) of the place in question. This formation type corresponds to Latin *notarius*, derived from Latin *notāre* ‘take notes’, which has many parallels in Indo-European languages, also in place-names. Another Norwegian example is the above mentioned *Sutarebrekka*, from ON *sútari* ‘cobbler, shoemaker’. A number of such formations are adopted as currant words in Norwegian whereas others are created ad hoc on the basis of a particular action (RYGH 1907: 247). In field names and names of natural features the *-ar*-formation in the first element rather expresses a certain quality of the place than of the agent (see PELLJEFF 1975). In the case of *Spelarhaugen* for example, composed of NOR *spelar* ‘fiddler, person who plays’ and NOR *haug* ‘hill’, *spelar* may refer to the action of *speling* ‘playing the fiddle’ there. Thus *Spelarhaugen* would be equivalent to an alternative form *\*Spelehaugen* where *Spele-* represents the infinitive form of the verb. The same applies to *Skitarberget*, from NOR *skitar*

‘one who shits’, cf. ON *skíta* ‘to shit’, and *berg* ‘rock’ (not part of my material). Around 30 of the terms in my material may be classified as *nomen agentis*.

## 7. Occupational terms used as personal names or bynames, nicknames

Norway, unlike Germany for instance, has no inherited tradition for creating surnames from occupations. However, we encounter numerous names like *Meyer*, *Miller*, *Smith* in Norway, also widely used in street names and to some extent in other place-names. This category of surnames was established in Norway through immigrants before most Norwegians adopted permanent surnames. Such names indicate that one of the forefathers of the family must have been a smith (but not that the actual name bearer is a smith). The cradle of such names is most often to be found abroad, in particular in Germany (further on this question see for instance TENGVIK 1938 and KOUSGÅRD SØRENSEN 1975).

Elliptical names like *Piparen*, from NOR *pipar* ‘flutist’, *Kornetta*, from *kornettpeljar* ‘cornet player’, and *Tamburen*, from NOR *tambur* ‘drummer’, seem to be used as bynames as well as names of the place, depending on the context. As a place-name it is an elliptical form of *\*Piparhuset* ‘the house (property) of the flutist’. Such musicians carried lower military ranks (cf. HARSSON 2006: 8)



**Figure 4:** Drummers, flutists and cornet players used to be military officers of lower rank (Illustration: <https://no.pinterest.com/pin/308426274462728564>)



It is not unusual that an occupational term is used as a nickname or byname for a Norwegian, for instance *Johan Smed*, or just *Smeden* ‘the blacksmith’, about someone who works or used to work as a smith. The name may be kept even if the activity ceased generations ago. The place where he lives may be called *Smedagarden* ‘the blacksmith’s farm’, or just *Smeda* which is an elliptic form of *Smedagarden* (cf. \**Piparhuset* above). *Smeda* is a genitive plural form of the Norwegian *smed*. By saying “visit *Smeda*”, you might mean visiting a person by that nickname or his house or family. Local language users would be familiar with the meaning.

Terms like *Kongen* ‘the King’ and *Presten* ‘the priest’ may be motivated in various ways as place-name elements. In some cases they may have been used ironically as nicknames and transferred to a topographical feature for some reason or other (see below). The same applies to *Keisarbrakka*, from NOR *keisar* ‘emperor’ and *brakke* ‘shed, simple building’, probably because this building was looked upon as the best one in that neighbourhood.

## 8. Occupational terms as metaphors

Metaphoric use of words for professions is found several times in the material, mostly in the western material, and then particularly in names of natural features. Many names of this category are noncompound, for instance *Presten* ‘the priest’ and *Klokkaren* ‘the sexton’, sometimes used about two neighbouring rocks. In some cases we find metaphoric names representing various social ranks given to natural formations close to each other, like *Kongen* ‘the king’ (the highest of three minor hills), *Dronningi* ‘the queen’ (the second highest hill), *Prinsen* ‘the prince’ (the smallest of the three hills). The same kind of social rank is expressed in the hill names *Presten* ‘the vicar’, *Prestkona* ‘the vicar’s wife’, and *Klokkaren* ‘the sexton’, the first one referring to the highest and the last one to the smallest hill. In such cases *Presten* is used about the bigger one and *Klokkaren* about the smaller one, thus reflecting the social status of the two positions. Between these two features another rock named *Prestkona* ‘the priest’s wife’ may occur. So the social status of a priest’s wife seems to lie between the priest and the sexton. A different example is *Kvitskriuprestan*, composed by *Kvitskria* ‘the white avalanche’ and *prestan*, definite plural form of NOR *prest* ‘priest’ (Figure 5). This particular area is protected by law because of its geomorphological character.



**Figure 5:** *Kvitskriuprestan* in Gudbrandsdalen. These characteristic earth and stone columns have been compared with priests  
(Wikimedia Commons <https://no.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kvitskriuprestan>)

*Kongen* ‘the king’ and *Prinsen* ‘the prince’ are also found as names of two neighbouring peaks. We see that the name givers have entertained themselves by using a contrasting principle, namely when one social role is represented in a name, another, often contrastive role is used in the proximity. The above mentioned peak name *Hovmannen* is often used about a rock or a big stone. Another example is *Futen*, from NOR *fut* ‘tax collector (in a rural district)’ who was a very unpopular official in the countryside. On the Hardangervidda a rock is called *Munken*, cf. NOR *munk* ‘monk’, apparently with reference to the shape of a monk’s head.

These names are also coined ironically. By giving and using such names people were able to express their respect and disrespect for the people in power in society. A closer look at the material reveals various social aspects, for instance the above mentioned names *Kjering*, *Stykmødrene* and *Tausakjelda* which reflect a kind of sex discrimination. Quite an opposite connotation is the case with *Ølkona* ‘the beer waitress’, the name of a well with good water, situated close to a mountain path. In this case the well has been metaphorically compared with a waitress. A positive connotation is also attached to the name *Gastgjevaren*, cf. NOR *gjestgjevar* ‘innkeeper’, likely referring to a well close to a path.

## 9. Chronology

It is well known that it is problematic to date place-names. Exceptions are names of streets, buildings and other artefacts which are “baptized” at certain dates. In the archives of towns and villages it is possible to trace the provenance of many names, also the date when they were given, with exception of very old names. Numerous street names refer to persons with occupational titles, and it is possible to get information on the background of the named persons. *Munk* ‘monk’ is a frequent term in the material, and some names of this type may go back to the Middle Ages, but most of them date from more recent centuries, and were given with reference to various qualities which were believed to be typical for monks, or comparison with a monk is implied. However, in most cases place-names result from naming over a long time and we do not know who gave the names or why.

## 10. Grouping

I have chosen to group the material into four divisions: 1) Agriculture, countryside, various work activities (30 terms), 2) Crafts and trades (24 terms); 3) Official professions/ secular (20 terms); 4) Official professions/ clerical (7 terms).

Some of the terms in group 1) may also fit into group 2, and vice versa. In group 1 we find typical terms like *husmann* ‘cotter’, e.g. *Husmannsåkeren*, compounded with NOR *åker* ‘field’. The cotter had to work in the fields belonging to the land owner, but was allocated a small field where he and his family could grow their own potatoes and other crops. On bigger farms an employee was responsible for overlooking the work with the cattle. He was called *sveiser* ‘foreman on a dairy farm’, a term which we find in *Sveiserhytta*, composed of NOR *hytte* ‘cottage, simple house’. Another specialist was responsible for gelding horses, an occupation which is reflected as the first element of *Jelkarhytta*. *Taus* is widely used about a maidservant and we find this term in *Tausakjelda* ‘well used by the maidservants’. The spring streamed out from under a vulva-shaped rock, and this circumstance is no doubt the main motivation for the name (and we can imagine that the name-givers were males).

In the material from Hardanger there are quite a few names containing NOR *budeie* ‘milkmaid’, especially around the summer farms and along the paths to the summer farms. We find several names like *Budeieklypet*, *Budeiesmyttet* and *Budeiesteinen*. The generics *klype* and *smytte* both mean ‘narrow passage’ and are used in place-names along the path. According to local tradition, the reason for giving such names was that the milkmaids had eaten too much cream and butter during the season so that they scarcely managed to get through those narrow passes. This was of course an exaggeration, but the names worked very



well as jokes, especially among male persons. Obviously, an element of irony or even discrimination lay behind such names. On the other hand, *budeie* is used in a more objective way in *Budeiesteinen*, where *stein* ‘stone, rock’, refers to a stone where the milkmaids used to rest or to look for the cattle.

### 11. Table of terms with distribution and number of names, plus name examples

1. Agriculture, countryside, various	Hord Number of names	Østf Number of names	Name examples + translation of the last element; noncompd = noncompound; ref. = referring to
Budeie – ‘milkmaid’	H-16		Budeiesmyttet – ‘narrow pass’
Falkafangar – ‘falcon capturer’	H-2		Falkafangarnuten – ‘mountain’
Fant – ‘vagabond’, ‘hobo’	H-2		Fantakroken – ‘corner’
Fisker – ‘fisherman’		Ø-3	Fiskertangen – ‘promontory’
Fløter – ‘log driver’		Ø-5	Fløterkroken – ‘corner’
Gartner – ‘gardener’		Ø-3	Gartnerhagen – ‘garden’
Gastgjevar – ‘host’, ‘innkeeper’	H-1		Gastgjevaren (noncompd) ref. a house
Giar (Jiar) – ‘fiddle player’	H-1		Giardalen – ‘valley’
Graver – ‘digger’	H-1	Ø-2	Graverstua – ‘small house’
Husmann – ‘crofter, cotter’	H-2		Husmannsåkeren – ‘field’
Jeger – ‘hunter’		Ø-1	Jegerhytta – ‘cabin’
Jelkar – ‘horse gelder’		Ø-1	Jelkarhytta – ‘cabin’
Kaptein – ‘captain’	H-1	Ø-1	Kapteinløkka – ‘small property’
Kremmar – ‘shopkeeper, salesman’	H-1	Ø-1	Kremmarbekken – ‘stream’
Mjølmar/møller – ‘miller’		Ø-20	Møllerhaugen – ‘hill’
Skavar – ‘bark stripper’	H-1		Skavarehelleren – ‘farmstead’
Skipper – ‘shipscaptain’		Ø-1	Skipperud – ‘clearing’
Skjelm – ‘scoundrel, deceiver’	H-1		Skjelmhaug – ‘hill’
Skysskaffer – ‘horse keeper (for transport)’		Ø-1	Skysskafferplassen – ‘crofter’s farm’
Skyttar – ‘shooter, hunter’	H-2		Skyttarfossen – ‘waterfall’
Spelar – ‘player, musician’	H-2	Ø-1	Spelarhaugen – ‘hill’
Spelemann – ‘player, musician’		Ø-2	Spelemannshaugen – ‘hill’
Sveiser – ‘foreman on a dairy farm’		Ø-3	Sveiserhytta – ‘cottage’
Tambur – ‘drummer’		Ø-4	Tamburen (noncompd) ref. a crofter’s farm
Taus – ‘maidservant’	H-2		Tausakjelda – ‘well’
Tjuv/tjov – ‘thief’	H-5	Ø-2	Tjuvahola – ‘cave’
Trøsker – ‘grain thresher’		Ø-1	Trøskerenden – ‘end (of something)’
Vaskar – ‘washer(woman)’	H-1	Ø-1	Vaskarbekken – ‘stream’
Viking – ‘viking’	H-2		Vikingnes – ‘promontory’
Ølkone – ‘woman who serves beer’	H-1		Ølkona (noncompd) ref. a well

2. Crafts and trade	H (Hord.) Number of names	Ø (Østf.) Number of names	Name examples + translation of the last element; noncompd = noncompound; ref. = referring to
Bakar – ‘baker’ Bleikar – ‘cloth bleacher’ Brygger – ‘brewer’ Bøkker – ‘cooper’ Dreier – ‘turner’ Garver – ‘leather tanner’ Knapper – ‘button molder’ Kopper – ‘turner’ Lagger – ‘cooper’ Murmester – ‘master bricklayer’ Måler – ‘painter’ Notbindar – ‘net binder’ Pottemaker – ‘potter’ Rokkemakar – ‘spinning wheel maker’ Salmakar – ‘saddler’, ‘saddlemaker’ Skinnar – ‘leather maker’ Skjebinder – ref. to weaving <sup>1</sup> Skomaker – ‘shoemaker’ Skreddar – ‘tailor’ Snekker – ‘carpenter’ Suter – ‘shoemaker’ Svarver – ‘cupmaker’ Treskomakar – ‘clog maker’ Vever – ‘weaver’	H-4	Ø-2 Ø-1 Ø-3 Ø-1 Ø-2 Ø-1 Ø-15 Ø-1 Ø-1 Ø-1 Ø-1 Ø-1 Ø-1 Ø-1 Ø-1 Ø-1 Ø-1 Ø-2 Ø-1	Bakarbrekka – ‘steep road’ Blekerhuset – ‘house’ Bryggerhuset – ‘house’ Bøkkerkasa – ‘heap of cut down trees’ Dreierud – ‘clearing, farmstead’ Garvergården – ‘farmstead’ Knappervika – ‘bay’ Kopperud – ‘clearing, farmstead’ Laggerholtet – ‘small forest’ Murmesterplassen – ‘crofter’s farm’ Målerhytta – ‘cottage’ Notbindarskarvet – ‘rocky ground’ Pottemakerplassen – ‘crofter’s farm’ Rokkemakerhytta – ‘cottage’ Salmakerhytta – ‘cottage’ Skinnerud – ‘clearing, farmstead’ Skjebinderhytta – ‘cottage’
Skomaker – ‘shoemaker’ Skreddar – ‘tailor’	H-4	Ø-12 Ø-11	Skomakerneset (Ø) – ‘promontory’ Skredderplassen – ‘crofter’s farm’
Snekker – ‘carpenter’	H-2	Ø-12	Snekkertangen – ‘promontory’
Suter – ‘shoemaker’	H-1	Ø-10	Suteren (noncompd) – ref. a small farm
Svarver – ‘cupmaker’		Ø-6	Svarvermoen – ‘flat sandy area’
Treskomakar – ‘clog maker’		Ø-1	Treskomakerhytta – ‘cottage’
Vever – ‘weaver’		Ø-1	Veverhuset – ‘house’

<sup>1</sup> Skjebinder ‘person who makes the weaver’s reed in a loom’.

3. Official positions – secular	Hord Number of names	Østf Number of names	Name examples + translation of the last element; noncompd = noncompound; ref. = referring to
Borgarmeister – ‘mayor’		Ø-1	Borgermesterløkka – ‘enclosure, field’
Dronning – ‘queen’	H-2		Dronninga (noncompd) ref. to a hill
Formann – ‘foreman’	H-1		Formannshuset – ‘house’
Forsete (hist.) – ‘foreman’		Ø-1	Forsetlund – ‘grove’
Forvaltar – ‘manager’		Ø-1	Forvalterboligen – ‘dwelling’
Fut/faut – ‘bailiff, tax collector’		Ø-2	Futerød – ‘clearing’
Hovmann – ‘clerk of the court’	H-4		Hovmannen (noncompd) ref. a rock
Kansler – ‘chancellor’		Ø-1	Kanslerhytta – ‘cottage’
Keisar – ‘emperor’	H-1		Keisarbrakka – ‘shed’
Klerk – ‘clerk’	H-3	Ø-1	Klerkatjørn – ‘tarn’
Kommisar – ‘commissar’		Ø-2	Kommisaren (noncompd), ref. a dwelling
Konge – ‘king’	H-2	Ø-28	Kongskleiv – ‘rocky path’
Kornetta [deriv. from] cornet player’		Ø-2	Kornetta (noncompd) ref. a dwelling
Lensmann – ‘sheriff’	H-2	Ø-2	Lensmannsstølen – ‘summer farm’
Piparen – derived from pipar ‘flutist’	H-2	Ø-6	Piparen (noncompd) ref. a dwelling
Prins – ‘prince’	H-2	Ø-5	Prinsahaugen – ‘hill’
Skolemester – ‘schoolmaster’	H-3	Ø-3	Skolemesterhytta – ‘cottage’
Skrivar – ‘magistrate’	H-3	Ø-4	Skrivarteigen – ‘field’
Soldat – ‘soldier’	H-3	Ø-4	Soldatplassen – ‘crofter’s farm’
Tamburen – ‘drummer’		Ø-2	Tamburen (noncompd) ref. a crofter’s farm

4. Official positions – clerical	Hord Number of names	Østf Number of names	Name examples + translation of the last element; noncompd = noncompound; ref. = referring to
Biskop/ bisp – ‘bishop’	H-2	Ø-7	Biskopskleiv – ‘rocky path’
Kannik – ‘canon’ (type of priest)	H-1		Kannikeberg – ‘mountain’
Klokkar – ‘sexton’	H-5	Ø-27	Klokkargarden – ‘(small) farm’
Munk – ‘monk’	H-10	Ø-9	Munkabu – ‘shack, cottage’
Prest – ‘priest, vicar’	H-15	Ø-40	Prestegarden – ‘farm’
Prestkone – ‘priest’s wife’	H-1		Prestkono (noncompd) refer. to a ‘hill’
Ringer – ‘bell-ringer’		Ø-2	Ringerhytta – ‘cottage’

## 12. Findings and conclusion

As shown in the table above, 81 different occupations were found in the material. It may be surprising that 34 terms are found only in the eastern material and 19 terms only in the western material. This is partly due to the above-mentioned difference in the material selection, but it is also due to differences in the basis for trade and industry of the different locales; for instance *mjølner* ~ *møller* 'miller' is found 20 times in the eastern material and not at all in the western material. *Budeie* 'milkmaid' is found in 16 names in the west compared to none in the east. As to the last element we see that words for dwelling are far more frequent in the east than in the west, which also is due to the material selection. In the western data topographical words are far more frequent than in the eastern data. Almost any topographical word may be used as last element in composition with an occupational term. However, as mentioned above the term *prest* 'priest' is in most cases compounded with *gard(en)* '(the) farm'. In the data from the eastern area (dwelling names) we find, not surprisingly, *hus* 'house', *hytte* 'cabin' as last elements much more frequently used than in the west.

The findings show that a great variety of specialists were at hand, not necessarily all of them at the same time. But we should also bear in mind that an inventory of place-names does not contain a complete list of occupational terms in the area in question, as the name giving is accidental as to motive. There is reason to believe that the society at any time had the specialists needed for various tasks, and that the technique developed over time. Thus, the terms may be seen as a mirror of a rather complex society. The study also shows how occupational terms may be used in a connotative context.

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## Abstract

Terms referring to occupations or professions are frequently found in Norwegian place names. A study of this category of names can give us information not only on the names in question but also on their regional distribution and to some extent on their social context. Names like *Munketeigen* ‘the monk’s parcel’, *Skrivargarden* ‘the farmstead of the district court judge’, *Falkafangarnuten* ‘the falconer’s hill’, *Sutarebrekka* indicate not only a topographical phenomenon,



but also give an indication of the status of the inhabitants. The last example is composed of Old Norse (ON) *sútari* ‘shoemaker’ and Norwegian (NOR) *brekke* ‘steep part of a hill’. In current Norwegian *sútari* has been replaced by *skomakar*, which is a Middle German loan word. In some cases, names in this category are coined as metaphors, for instance *Hovmannen*, from NOR *hovmann* ‘clerk of the court’ also ‘the king’s deputy’, referring to a rock which the name givers have associated with the king’s servant. One part of the discussion will be devoted to the *occupation ~ profession* inherent term. Whereas for instance *husmann* ‘cotter’ and *taus* ‘maidservant’ are included in the analysis, terms like *brur* ‘bride’ and *frue* ‘wife’ are excluded. The study is based on data from an eastern, mainly coastal, district and a western inland district in Southern Norway. There are significant differences in the data from the two areas, partly due to the data selection. The eastern material is taken from a comprehensive list of names for farmsteads and cottages, whereas the western material comprises all sorts of named features. One noticeable difference is that metaphoric names are more frequent in the western material than in the eastern.

**Keywords:** place-names, settlement names, words for professions in place-names, distribution of words for professions