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**A Critical Understanding of Power Relations through Women's
Experience with the Mentorship Program, Carpe Sophia:
Is Women's Economic Empowerment a Way Out of Gender Inequality?**

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ABSTRACT

By applying a critical understanding of empowerment, this study explores the power relations in women's daily lives through their experience with a mentorship program called Carpe Sophia and analyzes whether or to what extent this program has an impact on women's empowerment that can bring about gender equality. Carpe Sophia is a women's economic empowerment program with an aim to increase employment rate among women with foreign background in Malmö, Sweden. The first round of the program consisted of 20 participants and 12 out of them received an employment after their participation. The number however does not tell anything about empowerment without further investigation. The findings of this study showed that women share a common context of struggle due to traditional gender ideology. Their migration choice is gendered and it resulted in a series of negative impacts in their daily lives. Moreover, the multi-dimensional identities of women make it impossible to capture if the participants are being empowered as 'women', as 'migrants', or as 'job-seekers' although there are indicators of empowerment after their participation in Carpe Sophia. It is also debatable if the participants are being 'empowered', or just reclaiming the power they used to enjoy back in their home country. After all, the effort of the so-called women's economic empowerment program is only to provide a temporary solution without solving the fundamental problem: the gendered power structure.

Keywords: power relations, power structure, women's empowerment, economic empowerment, discourse, gendered migration, intersectionality, Sweden, Malmö

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CS	Carpe Sophia
CV	Curriculum Vitae
IGO	Inter-governmental Organization
IKF Malmö	Internationella Kvinnoföreningen i Malmö
IOP	Idéburet Offentligt Partnerskap
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NGO	Non-governmental organization
SEK	Swedish Kroner
SFI	Swedish for Immigrants
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

1 INTRODUCTION

“Of course, you have to depend on your partner [when you do not have a job]. That’s not easy in a relationship. Sometime, it stresses the relationship because you have to ask for everything. You have to be like: “Oh, we don’t have it! Oh, we don’t have sugar! Oh, you know...” But right now, if there is no sugar, I can just buy the sugar. I do not have to ask, you know.”

— a quote from one of the interviewees, Jennifer

1.1 Background

Can we view women’s ability to purchase a bag of sugar as an indication of social change? Or, to be precise, can we perceive an increase in women's purchasing power as a sign of empowerment that will lead to gender equality? While there are many initiatives that believe economic empowerment of women is a crucial element in building gender equality, it piqued my curiosity about the impact and effectiveness of these empowerment programs. Undertaken an Internship at a women’s organization called Internationella Kvinnoförningen i Malmö (IKF Malmö or translated as International Women Organization in Malmö) in Malmö, Sweden, has provided me an opportunity to explore and analyze one of the women’s economic empowerment programs across the world: Carpe Sophia (CS). CS is a mentorship program operated by IKF Malmö. The objective of CS is to increase employment rate among women with foreign background in Malmö by offering individual support, educational workshops, and practical training as to improve its participants’ employment prospects, self-esteem, and network. The first round of CS had 20 participants. It started in January 2016 and rounded off with a joint networking event on September 14, 2016. At the end of the first round, 12 out of 20 participants

received an employment after their participation, where there was one person counted as two because she received two job offers.

1.2 Aims and Research Questions

Statistics show the ratio of men and women with foreign background in Malmö is almost 1:1. The employment rate of women, however, is lower than men (5,546 compared to 6,541) in 2015 (Malmö Stad). It takes around 9 to 11 years for women with foreign background to find a job in Sweden, compared to 3 to 7 years for men with foreign background (Tillväxtverket 2016, p.20). The Swedish public employment agency, Arbetsförmedlingen, claims that foreigners are three times more likely to be unemployed when compared to native Swedes (14.9% compared to 4.7%), and it predicts “six in ten jobless will be foreigners by 2017” (The Local 2016a; The Local 2016b). All these sources indicate women with foreign background are facing intersectional difficulties and they seem to be more vulnerable in the Swedish wage labor market.

While the aim of CS is to improve the unemployment situation of women with foreign background in Malmö and its first-round result seems promising, that 12 out of 20 participants got a job after their participation, I would question what do these numbers really mean. Especially such proxy variables can be misleading or meaningless without the validation of its users (Narayan 2005, Malhotra, Schuler & Boender 2002). The number alone is not sufficient to draw a conclusion on women’s empowerment. This study, therefore, applies a critical understanding of empowerment. It intends to explore power relations in women’s daily lives through their experience with CS, and to analyze whether or to what extent CS has an impact on women’s empowerment that can bring about gender equality. This study also aspires to interpret how power relations constrain women’s choices in both paid and

unpaid labor market, as well as to explain how it shapes the above-mentioned pattern of the Swedish labor market. In addition, it aims to discover discourse on international development, to find indicators of empowerment after women's participation in CS, and to understand how empowerment can lead to gender equality. Hence, the main research question that guides this study is: *How does women's experience with Carpe Sophia illustrate power relations in their daily lives?* It is followed by several sub-questions, including: *How do power relations affect women's choice? How does women's experience with Carpe Sophia empower them? Whether or to what extent women's economic empowerment leads to gender equality?* Questions that can answer how things work and what can be improved are also asked.

Departing from the standpoint of women with foreign background, this study focuses on listening to women's experience with CS, since their voice is always marginalized and invisible, especially in the field of international development. I view domination as the ground of gender inequality, which it creates barriers for women to enter the wage labor market. However, there is a possibility for women to exercise their human agents as to bring about social change, which is the women's empowerment process. Besides, this paper applies the term "wage labor market" to distinguish between paid and unpaid labor as to support Acker's (2005) argument: "class relations include not only relations of production and paid labor, but also relations of distribution and unpaid labor" (Acker 2005, p.1). Particularly the unpaid domestic labor provided by full-time housewives is ignored within the class system, where Acker (2005) argues that Marxist theory as "within a privileged white male perspective" that excludes gender and race from the class system. I agree with her standpoint that both paid and unpaid labor, as well as class, gender and race are inseparable from the capital accumulation. It is impossible to capture the situation in the wage labor market without mentioning the unpaid domestic labor within the household. Using the term 'wage labor market', therefore, can avoid devaluation of and ignorance about the unpaid domestic labor that is performed mainly by women.

1.3 Summary of Conclusion

This study employs semi-structured interview data from first-year CS participants to reveal the power relations that constrain women's lives. It applies a critical perspective on empowerment. My findings from a qualitative data analysis imply that women share a common context of struggle due to traditional gender ideology. Women are restrained by power/knowledge in gender relations that influences their family migration choice. The migration itself becomes gendered and women experience a series of negative impacts due to relocation. Rather than occupational and psychological difficulties, they lose bargaining power within the household as well as face intersectional discrimination in the wage labor market. Although there are indicators of empowerment after their participation in CS, the multi-dimensional identities of women make it impossible to capture if the participants are being empowered as 'women', as 'migrants', or as 'job-seekers'. It is also questionable if women are being 'empowered' or just regaining the power they used to enjoy back in their home countries. Moreover, the analysis results explain that the type of empowerment which can bring about gender equality is more of a bottom-up process. It requires women's awareness of their oppressive gender relations and belief in equal treatment as to use their agents to give rise to social transformation and to re-construct the power structure. The effort of women's economic empowerment program, after all, is only to provide a temporary solution without solving the fundamental problem. Women need to be empowered as 'women' if we want to achieve gender equality.

1.4 Structure of the Study

This study consists of six main sections, including this introductory section. The following section, section 2, literature review and theoretical framework, applies Foucault's (1995 & 1978) concept of discourse, power/knowledge to explain gender

power relations that constrain women's decision-making and the discourse on international development. However, I would argue Foucault's work has pitfalls as it disallows agency for social change. To fill the gaps, I employ the four types of power presented by Rowlands (1997) and Kabeer's (1999) notion of empowerment to fill the gaps. I use Women's Rights Movement in the United States during the late 19th century to illustrate how individuals can act upon their human agency to bring about a more gender equal society. Section 3, provides a detailed description of the mentorship program, CS, and situates CS within the framework of discourse and empowerment. Section 4 presents the feminist methodology, standpoint theory, that guides the data collection methods. By applying standpoint theory with an emphasis on listening to the marginalized group, as suggested by Harding (1992), the data were collect through online questionnaire and semi-structured interview. Four semi-structured interviews with the first-year CS participants were done. In addition, research limitations and ethical considerations are presented. Then, section 5 includes data analysis and discussion. It applies conventional content analysis as a method of examination of data material. The last section, section 6, is the conclusion and recommendations for further research.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Discourse, Power/Knowledge

“Power is everywhere; not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere.”

(Foucault 1978, p.93)

As said by Foucault (1995 & 1978), there is no single institution that holds the power, but instead, power circulates throughout society. It is diffused and embodied in discourse and knowledge, and it represents what is as a truth or as a norm in our society. Discourse is a site for both power and resistance, it constructs through the production of knowledge in everyday life. This knowledge is inseparable with power relations, and knowledge cannot be produced without discourse. Thus, discourse, power, and knowledge are interrelated.

“There is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations”

(Foucault 1995, p.27)

Discourse produces and reproduces power and knowledge simultaneously, and the power relations are being multiple and mobile. By producing and reproducing truth (a set of social values) and norms, it exercises power on social bodies that regulates the behavior of individuals, which is referred as “self-discipline” according to Foucault (1995). This “self-discipline” implements social control that influences individuals’ choice in their everyday life. It posits and frames individuals within discourse, which decides who they are possible to be and what is possible to do. Individuals turn into “docile bodies” when the disciplinary power has an effect on social bodies (Deveaux 1994).

Certainly, there are many discourses cross-cutting in our society that influences how individuals “discipline”. The “docile bodies” do not just happen in a linear process, but instead, a series of intersecting incidents. Using Foucault’s (1995 & 1978) concept of discourse, power/knowledge can explain the formation of gender identities and women's economic empowerment programs in the field of international development. The following sections, 2.1.1 & 2.1.2, explain how the discourse on male breadwinner model, which is derived from the ideology of traditional gender

roles, in/directly develop into women's economic empowerment programs. Section 2.1.1 illustrates how the power-knowledge dynamic on gender is being internalized, circulated, and reinforced through the society, and how it has control over the bodies (both men and women) and prevents individuals to move outside the fixed boundaries (the traditional gender roles) with the exercise of discipline power. Later on, in section 2.1.2, it exemplifies how the power/knowledge production of gender, along with academic, political, and economic discourse, turn into the women's economic empowerment programs.

2.1.1 Power/Knowledge in Gender Relations

Historically, the male breadwinner model allocates married women to perform “the care of children and any other dependent relative needing care as well as the provision of services for their able-bodied husbands” (Fink and Lundqvist 2010, p.19). This family model is derived from the power/knowledge dynamic on traditional gender roles, that women are associated with domestic activities and involved in six key tasks, an idea introduced by Virginia Novarra (1980) that Bradley (1989) mentions in her book. These six key tasks include “provision of food, care of the home, child care, nursing the sick, teaching and manufacture of clothing” (Bradley 1989, p.8), or generally, what Anderson (2000) calls as the three Cs – cleaning, cooking, caring. Men, on the other hand, are viewed as the head of the household by supporting the family financially (Blackstone 2003, p.337). This perception of traditional gender roles, the ‘independent’ male breadwinner and the ‘dependent’ wife and mother, is the foundation for the development of gender identity and the distinction of masculinity and femininity traits. The combination of these gender discourses suggests men to be ambition, confident, strong, focus on material success, etc., whereas supposed women to be humble, tender, soft, compromise, etc. (Hofstede 2005, p.297).

One could argue that the discourses on gender are outdated with the rise in women's employment, it signals the male breadwinner model is slowly being displaced by the individual citizen model, in which women are also expected in the wage labor market. However, the change in women's economic roles does not necessary transform the traditional gender perception, instead, similar gender ideologies still embed and dissimilate in the society. This power-knowledge dynamic on traditional gender roles shapes how individuals behave as well as influences their choice within and outside the family. There are studies that illustrate how gender discourses constrain individuals' educational and career choices (Favara 2012, Behrend et al. 2007). In addition, statistic from different countries show there are more men working full-time and more women working part-time (Statistics Sweden 2014, Office for National Statistics 2015, Census and Statistics Department of HKSAR 2016, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2017). For instance, in the United Kingdom, women, from age groups 16-49, with children have lower employment rate compare to women without children, conversely, the employment rate for men with children is higher than for men without children (Office for National Statistics 2013). I would conclude all these situations as a consequence of gender discourses, in which the discourses influence how women perceive themselves: a feminine wife and mother put her family before her career on the basis of gendered choice, and how employers perceive the workers: men are more in need of a job as they are the breadwinners of the household. This gendered choice further extends to what Bradley (1989) refers as sex-typing, "the process by which jobs are 'gendered', ascribed to one sex or the other", and segregation, "the way in which women and men are located in different types of jobs", in employment. However, I argue that the term "sex-typing and segregation in employment" is problematic as it is a binary category based on sexuality. It ignores the fact that occupational segregation is not purely based on the sex of individuals (men and women) but their gender as well (male, female, transgender, etc.). Therefore, I use 'occupational gender segregation' throughout this

paper with an aim to bring awareness of gender as socially constructed, albeit it focuses on gendered career choice between men and women.

These dominant gender discourses manipulate how women perceive themselves as well as how others perceive women in realms outside of the family, which are threaded throughout labor ideologies (both paid and unpaid) and closely linked to gender stereotypes in the wage labor market. Numerous research illustrate that women are overrepresented in certain occupations, such as childcare, elderly care, or cleaning (Gavanas 2010, Ehrenreich and Hochschild 2003), which has been considered as a ‘natural’ part of their duties and identity. Such ‘natural’ skills also assume women to have nimble fingers that they are more suitable as fruit pickers and packers (Perrons 2004) or as the low-skilled factory workers (Ong 2010). To problematize this situation, I would describe all these occupations that situated women in a disadvantaged position as ‘overrepresented by women’ instead of ‘dominated by women’. The meaning of ‘dominate’ – “have power and influence over, be the most important or conspicuous person or thing in, or have a commanding position over” (Oxford Dictionaries b) – portrays as if the situation is beneficial for women. It fails to capture the exploitation that women are facing. Conversely, using ‘over-represent’, which means “include a disproportionately large number of (a particular category)” (Oxford Dictionaries c), can bring awareness of this problematic situation. Moreover, employers’ perception of women as wives and mothers assumes women are “just going to get pregnant and leave”, that it is “wasting the months spent training them to work”, and they are too emotional and cannot be good leaders (Harris and Giuffre 2010, p.66). Such assumptions limit women’s career progression and can be viewed as the base of glass ceiling in the wage labor market, where women “face organizational and supervisor biases that hinder their performance” (Sahoo and Lenka 2016, p.311) regardless of their qualifications, experiences, and achievements. On the other hand, men, as the breadwinner, have been given more opportunities to move upward.

Despite the geographical and cultural divides, all these abovementioned examples demonstrate how women are sharing a common experience across national borders. In addition, Mohanty's (2003) comparison of the situations of women lace-makers in Narsapur, India, women in the electronics industry in the Silicon Valley, California, United States, and migrant women workers in Britain illustrates there are potential commonality "among women workers across class, race, and national boundaries that is based on shared material interests and identity and common ways of reading the world" (ibid, p.145). "In all these cases, ideas of flexibility, temporality, invisibility, and domesticity in the naturalization of categories of work are crucial in the construction of Third World women as an appropriate and cheap labor force" (ibid, p.159). Although Mohanty's (2003) notion is to demonstrate the common struggle among women without universalizing "Third World women", I find it is a contradiction in terms as if she reproduces her own argument that "the construction of "Third world women" as a homogeneous 'powerless' group" (ibid, p.23) by describing them as "poor Third World women workers" (ibid, p.160). There is also a feeling that the "First World Women", who are also facing the common struggle, have been forgotten as most research seems to pay more attention to the "Third World women" (Gavanas 2010, Ehrenreich and Hochschild 2003, Perrons 2004, Ong 2010). In order to avoid misconception and reproduction of hierarchy between different time and space, I would suggest the best is to abandon the use of "First World" and "Third World". Furthermore, the use of these terms is harmful to the solidarity among feminists. Regardless, my argument here is that women are sharing a common context of struggle across geographical and cultural divides because of the traditional gender ideology. The notion is not to generalize women as one homogenous group or to show all women's lives are the same, as Mohanty (2003) claims, but rather, there is a commonality and they are comparable.

2.1.2 Discourse on International Development

Fink and Lundqvist (2010) illustrate that the knowledge production of gender-role research has been very influential in social reforms and policy development in Sweden. I agree that “social scientists have, to a great extent, influenced the discourses that have shaped family policy” (ibid, p.67), however, I would also argue it has an impact on initiatives in international development as well. Especially when there are many feminist literatures criticize the image of women as housewives and mothers as problematic, and use the wage labor market as a ground to illustrate gender inequality (Ehrenreich 2004, Perrons 2004, Acker 2010, Gavanoas 2010, Ong 2010). An alternative interpretation could be it produces another discourse: getting women to participate in the wage labor market as a way to solve gender inequality. It becomes a political objective believing gender equality can be achieved when women are no longer concomitant of economic dependence (European Commission 2011). At the same time, I would argue, this political objective is more tied to the economic situation, as “there is no power that is exercised without a series of aims and objectives” (Foucault 1978, p.95). With the economic growth and increasing wage labor shortage in Sweden, it “resulted in an increased demand for labour: married women and housewives became, together with immigrants, an increasingly important ‘reserve army’ in the labour market” (Fink and Lundqvist 2010, p.73). Women are now called on to enter the wage labor market, which they were previously excluded from. Promoting gender equality through increase of women’s participation rate in the wage labor market, after all, is behind a mask of the government who needs more human power to ensure sustainable economic growth, to solve the wage labor shortage, and to lower unemployment rate. Gender equality is just a camouflage for the government’s real intentions. However, I am not claiming women do not benefit from being economically independent, nor saying it does not help with changing the gender discourses. It is just questionable who is gaining the most out of it and who has more power to make such decisions.

These interacting discourses among the academic, political, and economic discourse, along with the increasing advocacy of gender equality, created what we call as 'women's economic empowerment'. The term women's economic empowerment is now viewed as a crucial factor of achieving gender equality and it has been widely spread in the field of international development. The four World Conference on Women organized by United Nations (UN), the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the Sustainable Millennium, UN Women, World Bank, International Monetary Fund, and many other inter-governmental organizations (IGOs) come together to spread the power/knowledge of women's economic empowerment as a way towards gender equality and inclusive economic growth. The discourse on international development, since then, is "associated with the process by which women gain access to labor markets and accrue the skills necessary to productively participate in income-generating activities equally with men" (Krenz 2012, p.2) with an emphasis on inclusive economic growth. The same political rhetoric can also be found in numeral non-governmental organizations (NGOs') initiatives and interventions, including Women for Women International, Women's Environment and Development Organization, Women Empowerment Organization, School Girls Unite, etc. Women's wage labor market participation rate is now considered as 'the problem' of gender in/equality per se.

2.2 Conceptualizing Women's Empowerment

Foucault's (1995 & 1978) concept of discourse and power/knowledge provides a better understanding of the role of power in women's everyday lives and how the international development becomes a context for cross-cutting discourses. However, his analysis of power, in which it exercises an uncontrolled power over individuals' bodies, has limitation as it leaves no space for resistance and social change. It

disallows agency by referring individuals as “docile bodies” rather than subjects with the capacity to resist power (Deveaux 1994, Hartsock 1990, Fraser 1981). “Foucault does not allow for the internal processes which can interfere with the individual's agency and choice. He does not seem to conceive of any relationship where the individual is not 'acting on' another, and he therefore does not account for more than one individual joining together to act with each other” (Rowlands 1997, p.12). In this regard, instead of viewing power as pure domination and subordination that disallows resistance, there is a need to alter the vision of power through empowerment. Rowlands’s (1997) interpretation of power and Kabeer’s (1999) understanding of empowerment provide rooms for individuals to see themselves as having capacity and right to act and influence the power structure.

2.2.1 Power as the Central Element of Empowerment

Although empowerment is viewed as a crucial factor to break the cycle of inequality, it is difficult to conclude on *empowerment* without understanding power, especially when power is the bridge between in/equality and empowerment. Instead of defining power “as a resource to be (re)distributed, as domination, and as empowerment” (Allen 2016) like most feminists do, Rowlands (1997) draws a distinction between negative and positive power by differentiating it into four types. She distinguishes power as “power over”, “power to”, “power with” and “power from within”. In addition, she argues that power is not necessarily associated with domination and subordination, where one’s gain is another’s loss, instead, it can be associated with other forms of interaction that are positive. Without such distinction of the types of power, it is impossible to come into empowerment that redistributes power without reinforcing domination.

This first type of power, “power over”, is classified as a negative power that represents the relations between domination and subordination. This type of power is “a zero sum game where the increase power of one, means the loss of power of another” (FRIDE 2006, p.2). It is being exercised in the areas of conflict associated with decision-making process. It involves a dynamic of oppression through violence, manipulation, misinformation that “a powerful group might create a set of 'rules of the game' that effectively prevent a less powerful group from voicing its wishes” (Rowlands 1997, p.9). Dominance and coercion are used to create situations like men’s power over men, men’s power over women, or women’s power over women. “For instance, men’s power over women derives from and is reinforced by socially constructed gender relations that normalize male control over women’s bodies, behavior, access to resources and labor” (Krenz 2012, p.8), where women’s capacity to participate in decision-making is taken away from men as they have no control of resources. This type of power can be invisible and unconscious, “people who are systematically denied power and influence in society internalise the messages they receive about what they are supposed to be like, and they may come to believe the messages to be true” (Rowlands 1997, p.11). Simultaneously, it “is exercised by dominant social, political, economic, or cultural groups over those who are marginalized” (ibid, p.11). Most feminists view this kind of power-over relation as dominant relation which is the ground of gender inequality (Allen 2016). It contributes to the maintenance of inequality between men and women, particularly when women are deprived of their rights.

Liberal feminists, conversely, understand power as a resource and it is “a positive social good that is currently unequally distributed amongst women and men” (ibid). Their goal is to redistribute the resource (power) so both men and women will have equal power. In this regard, Rowlands (1997) claims that the redistribution of power is not necessarily negative and that increasing women’s power in decision-making can be done without the use of “power over”. “Power to” is an alternative

way “to inspire the activity and boost the morale of others. It is a generating power that engenders possibilities and actions without domination” (FRIDE 2006, p.2). This type of positive power is connected to “power with” and “power from within”, which is related to the ability to resist unwanted oppression collectively and individually. “Power with” provides a platform to share power. “It manifests itself when a group generates a collective solution to a common problem, allowing each member to express him or herself in the creation of a group agenda that is also assumed individually. This demonstrates that the whole can be greater than the sum of its individual parts” (ibid, p.2). “Power from within”, simultaneously, is based on self-belief and self-esteem. It is “the spiritual strength and uniqueness that resides in each one of us and makes us truly human. Its basis is self-acceptance and self-respect which extend, in turn, to respect for and acceptance of others as equals” (Rowlands 1997, p.13). Feminists who view power as “power to”, rather than “power over”, understand power as a capacity to empower oneself and others, which is associated with “power from within” and “power with” (Allen 2006). It can redistribute power without reinforcing domination and to achieve gender balance in decision-making.

2.2.2 Understand Empowerment through Power

The existence of “power over”, consequently, contributes to gender inequality where women are denied to participate in decision-making process. The discourse on traditional gender roles, as illustrated in section 2.1.1, is an example of how power over relation creates inequality. Because of the discourse on traditional gender roles, women are internalized as ‘mothers’ and ‘housewives’, who are primarily responsible for domestic activities, and are denied participation in decision-making, which is the time spend on domestic duties versus wage employment. This resulted in lower participation rate of women in the wage labor market. Women are being disempowered while men are the ones who hold power to participate in decision-

making within the household. Such oppressive relationship within the household becomes the fundamental building block of the society (Ibrahim and Alkire 2007) that extends its influence on the community level, where women's social, economic and political relations are also being interfered.

To resist "power over", a procedure called 'empowerment' is needed. Empowerment, in this regard, means bringing women who were outside the decision-making process back into it, and "individuals are empowered when they are able to maximise the opportunities available to them without constraints" (Rowlands 1997, p.13). Decision-making, where women can make their own decision and stay in charge of their life, is vital to empowerment. This is when the other three types of power, "power to", "power with" and "power from within", come into play to resist unwanted oppression collectively and individually. "Within the generative, 'power to' and 'power with', interpretation of power, empowerment is concerned with the processes by which people become aware of their own interests and how those relate to the interests of others, in order to participate from a position of greater strength in decision-making and to actually influence such decisions" (ibid, p.14). The individual awareness of oppressive relationship that is associated with "power to" and "power from within" is crucial to activate social transformation (Rowlands 1997, Krenz 2012, p.10).

Many social transformations began with individual awareness, "power from within", of their own oppressive relationship and believe in equal treatment. When there is a group of individuals who have a shared interest, the sum of its individual parts of "power from within" generates "power with" to solve a common problem collectively. These individuals, as a group, feel empowered during this process as they have found an entrance to what they were previously excluded from, and they are now back into the decision-making process that can change their lives. The Women's Rights Movement in the United States during the late 19th century is an

example of empowerment that resulted in a more equal society. It all started with Elizabeth Cady Stanton, who was a young housewife and mother in New York, sharing her thoughts on the situation of women with her four women friends. She “poured out her discontent with the limitations placed on her own situation under America’s new democracy” (Eisenberg and Ruthsdotter 1998). Her friends agreed with her and they began “to plan and carry out a specific, large-scale program” (ibid) to fight for better social, civil, and religious conditions and rights for women. A series of incidents happened after this small conversation, a gathering that call for women who shared the common interest hosted at Wesleyan Chapel in Seneca Falls on July 19 and 20 in 1848, the Declaration of Sentiments was drafted that pointed out the areas of life which women were treated unequally, the first women’s rights convention was scheduled, etc. After all the efforts and negotiations, women finally achieved full civil rights in United States.

The distribution of “power over” between men and women, therefore, determines the degree of gender in/equality which creates positive or negative effects on gender relations. It needs a structural reform and a more equitable distribution of power to break the cycle of gender inequality. Rather than reproducing “power over” to bring women back into decision-making process, using other forms of power, particularly “power to” and “power from within”, to empower women becomes a key to social transformation. As soon as women develop a critical awareness of their oppressive situation, they start to gather together to challenge the power relation and demand for a more equitable society. They come to realize their capacity and right to influence decision-making. Women’s empowerment, in this context, is not only a source of power redistribution but social transformation that can address gender inequality. The example of Women’s Rights Movement in 1848 demonstrates how social transformations began with individual awareness and how power can be redistributed without reinforcing domination. The victory of women’s full civil rights in the United States did not take away the decision-making process from men, but

instead, both men and women can equally enjoy the same civil rights. Empowerment, as the example illustrated, is a bottom-up process rather than a top-down process.

2.2.3 How to put empowerment into practice?

The four types of power presented by Rowlands (1997) illustrate the relationship between women's empowerment and gender in/equality. How power operates is critical to determine what is un/equal, and who are dis/empowered. Empowerment, in this context, is viewed as a process of power redistribution grounded in women's own experiences, where women take control of their own agent to bring themselves back into the decision-making process that can change their lives. "In other words, women themselves must be significant actors in the process of change that is being described or measured" (Malhotra, Schuler and Boender 2002, p.7). The explicitly focus on 'process' and 'agency' distinguish empowerment from other concepts such as "power over" and "gender equality" (Narayan 2005, p.72). However, under what conditions will women's empowerment occur? There are various explanations of empowerment that depend on the orientation or the agenda of the author, but most of them understand empowerment by breaking the process down into key components. For instance, as concluded by Malhotra, Schuler and Boender (2002, p.8), the World Bank describes rights, resources, and voice as critical components of empowerment, whereas United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) defines it as control over resources and ideology. Regardless there are countless ways to define the process of empowerment; Kabeer's (1999) understanding of empowerment serves as a good reference point for conceptualizing women's empowerment as it allows agency to act on one's will. She views empowerment as a process of change that is interrelated to "resources", "agency" and "achievements".

Kabeer's (1999) way of thinking about power is in terms of the ability to make choices: "to be disempowered, therefore, implies to be denied choice" (ibid, p.436), and "the notion of empowerment is that it is inescapably bound up with the condition of disempowerment and refers to the processes by which those who have been denied the ability to make choices acquire such an ability" (ibid, p.437). Empowerment involves "resources", "agency" and "achievements". "Resources" is viewed as the preconditions of empowerment, it includes "not only material resources in the more conventional economic sense, but also the various human and social resources which serve to enhance the ability to exercise choice". It is the "enabling factors" to foster empowerment (Narayan 2005, p.73), and gaining access to resources alone cannot guarantee a change in the oppressive relation. The empowerment process needs "agency" to be activated, where women realize the oppressive relationship and develop their ability to resist through utilizing the resources. The agency gives women "the ability to define one's goals and act upon them" (Kabeer 1999, p.438) and become "an agent of change in her own life" (Narayan 2005, p. 73). Once women gain access to the "resources" that they are previously declined to, they activate the process of empowerment by recognizing and utilizing their "agency" to develop a sense of "achievements". The achievements can be defined as political participation, legal reform, economic security as well as the other outcomes of empowerment, such as gaining knowledge of legal rights or freedom of movement, not as empowerment per se (Malhotra, Schuler and Boender 2002, p.9).

Back in the case of Women's Rights Movement in 1848, it would have been difficult for Stanton to gather individuals who shared common interest together as to fight for their rights without the access of resources. The resources, in this situation, do not have to be something tangible like a pen and a paper where Stanton can write the Declaration of Sentiments down. It can be access to the public place like the Wesleyan Chapel in Seneca Falls or Stanton's friendship with the four women she initially had conversation with. The resources serve as a pre-condition or an enabling

factor to let women be an agent to change their life, and directing them to the achievements. The Women's Rights Movement illustrates empowerment as a process, which involved a series of events organized by women with the aim to move toward greater equality: women's full civil rights. Note that the achievement of Women's Rights Movement was not the end of the empowerment process by itself, it constantly empowers other women by ensuring their full civil rights in the future. It continually serves as an inspiration and brings more complex issues of equal rights to the surface, such as women's reproductive rights, women's enrollment in military, women's leadership roles in religious worship (Eisenberg and Ruthsdotter 1998).

Furthermore, there are different dimensions of empowerment, which are primarily divided into economic, social and cultural, legal, political, and psychological spheres with multiple levels: micro (household), meso (community), and macro (broader arenas such as national and global level) (Narayan 2005, Moghadam and Senftova 2005, Krenz 2012, Varghese 2012). Empowerment is multidimensional where "many aspects of economic or social empowerment overlap considerably with empowerment in the familial dimension, as when a woman achieves greater control over domestic spending or savings, or reduces limitations on her mobility or social activities" (Narayan 2005 p.74). The Women's Rights Movement in 1848, again, is an example of how different dimensions of empowerment (legal and political empowerment within household, community, and national level) can be cross-cutting and interrelated.

To be concluded, empowerment occurs when individuals gain access to the process of making choice that they are previously denied to. These individuals' choices are shaped by the shift of power and the access to resources. Women, as a disempowered group who realize the oppressive relations and believe in equal treatment, become agents of change to empower themselves by utilizing the positive power and resources, and to move toward greater equality. Without the redistribution

of “power”, the access to “resources”, and the action of “women” who are agents of change, no achievements will be made. Empowerment, therefore, is regarded as *women, individually and collectively; bring themselves back into the process of making choice through utilization of resources and their own agents to alter “power over”, as to achieve a more equitable society* in this study. I decided to use the term ‘choice’, instead of ‘decision’, from now on due to the different origins of the two words. “With decision, it is more of a process orientation, meaning we are going through analysis and steps to eliminate (or, cut off) options” (Mertz, 2012), whereas choice means “The right or ability to choose” (Oxford Dictionaries a) and “it is more of a mindset approach, meaning we have a perception of what the right or wrong choice may be” (Mertz, 2012). It is more appropriate to use the term “making choice” instead of “decision-making” since the disciplinary power is more of an unconscious perception that influence individuals’ right to choose instead of a conscious analysis process.

2.3 Intersectionality

“There is no such thing as a single issue struggle because we do not live single issue lives.”

(Lorde 2007, p.138)

Similar to the discourse on international development, which is built upon several intersectional discourses as illustrated in section 2.1.2, a single-axis framework that is based on gender does not accurately reflect the intersectional discrimination women are facing (Vivar and Lutz 2011, Acker 2000). The life situation of CS participants is not homogenized but distinct from one another based on their social position. Women are not only positioned as women, but also have different identities, for instance, working-class, migrant, etc. Such overlapping identities are not mutually exclusive but interdependent (Vivar and Lutz 2011), and

these multi-dimensional identities counter combined discrimination. They often experience double or multiple discrimination. Their bases of inequality, which Acker (2000) called as “regimes of inequality”, varies and “are constituted through ordinary organizing processes in which race, class, gender, and other inequality are mutually reproduced” (ibid, p.192). In addition, the visibility of inequality depends on individuals’ position in the structures of inequality, where the privilege ones normally fail to be aware of oppressive relations, and “often inequality is so much taken for granted that invisibility is enhanced” (ibid, p.206).

As to avoid normative perception of their experience as solely a gender issue, it is crucial not to overlook the role of other identities. Bringing women’s intersectional social identities into the analysis can prevent a single-issue framework that marginalizes women, as well as to “give a full account of the complexities of individual experiences and social structures” (ibid, p.193). Intersectionality, therefore, “is useful as a handy catchall phrase that aims to make visible the multiple positioning that constitutes everyday life and the power relations that are central to it” (Phoenix and Pattynama 2006, p.87). It assists to recognize the axes of identity based on gender, race, class, ethnicity, sexuality, geographic location, etc. that shape the intersectional experience of women. Furthermore, it describes intersecting systems of oppression, domination, or discrimination that women are facing.

3 THE EMPOWERMENT PROJECT: CARPE SOPHIA

A non-profit organization, IKF Malmö, runs several projects to empower women and CS is one of those. IKF Malmö was founded in Malmö, Sweden, in 1970. It is a politically and religiously independent non-profit organization. The organization is dedicated to gender equality work, and is focused exclusively on

promoting diversity, cultural awareness, integration, and female entrepreneurship. It acknowledges that women with foreign background are less likely to be employed than their native-born counterparts, and strives to reduce their unemployment rate and social vulnerabilities through women's empowerment programs. The mission of IKF Malmö is to enhance the visibility of women with foreign background in the wage labor market, and to ensure they have equal opportunities to access the resources to enter the labor force or to start a new business (IKF Malmö d).

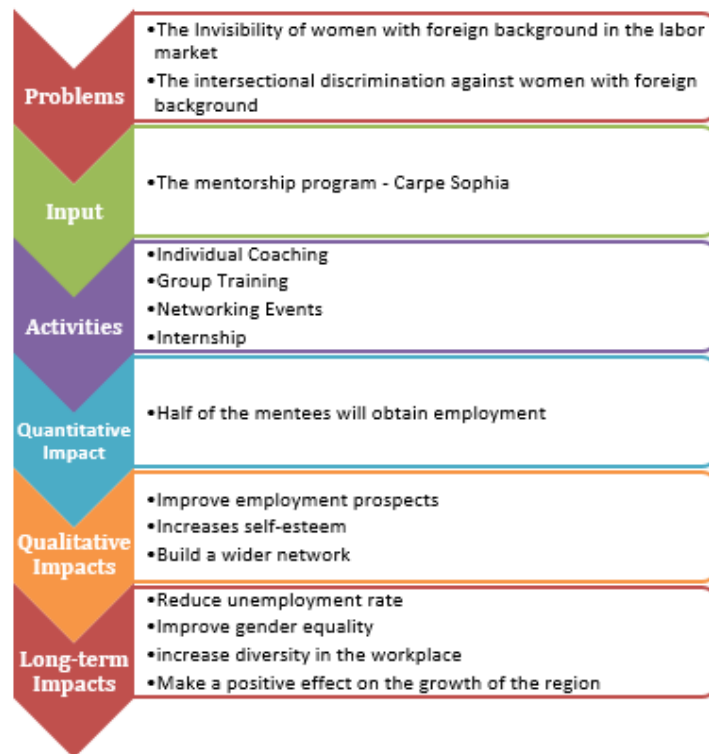
3.1 A Detailed Description of Carpe Sophia

IKF Malmö started a project called CS after they “signed an agreement Idéburet Offentligt Partnerskap (IOP) to improve the employment opportunities of women with foreign background by offering individual support, educational workshops, and practical training” (IKF Malmö b) with Malmö Stad (translated Malmö Municipality) in 2015. The aim of CS, as a mentorship program, is to strengthen women's economic self-sufficiency through employment. The target group is women with foreign background, aged 20-50, with tertiary education – including universities and vocational training – or work experiences abroad, who live in Malmö, Sweden, and are unemployed. CS highlights the employment situation of women with foreign background, in which they are often invisible and face intersectional discrimination, based on gender, ethnicity, social class, etc., in the wage labor market, and have a low employment rate. In order to improve their situation in the wage labor market, the strategy of CS is to increase employment rate among women with foreign background in Malmö (IKF Malmö a, IKF Malmö c, IKF Malmö e, IKF Malmö f).

CS consists of individual coaching, group trainings, networking events, and internships. The priority is to find an internship to each project participant that can hopefully lead to employment. The quantitative objective is that half of the women

will obtain employment at the end of each round. The qualitative objectives are to improve employment prospects, to increase self-esteem, and to build a wider network for each participant through individual support, educational workshops, and practical training. The expected long-term impacts are to reduce the unemployment rate, to improve gender equality, to increase diversity in the workplace, and to make a positive effect on the growth of the region (IKF Malmö a, IKF Malmö c, IKF Malmö e, IKF Malmö f). The following is an executive summary of Carpe Sophia (Diagram1):

Diagram1. Summary of Carpe Sophia



The first round Carpe Sophia started in January 2016 and rounded off with a joint networking event on September 14, 2016. There was a total of 20 prospective employees/women (mentees) who participated in Carpe Sophia, and each of them matched with a prospective employer (mentor). To begin with, the Project Leader first had to identify the needs of the mentors, as to increase the chances of mentees

getting hired, then searched for potential mentees. A curriculum vitae (CV) bank was developed for further use, and the recruiting is an ongoing process. Other prospective employees, who were not part of the first round, would still have a chance to participate in the next round if a match is found. The role of the mentor is to provide support to the mentee during her job search. If applicable, the mentee would be offered a 4 to 8 weeks internship at the mentor’s company to get relevant experiences and an introduction to the Swedish work environment. During the first round, the mentees attended activities that covered a wide range of themes during their participation; they met once a month during January to June 2016. The themes included interview techniques, tips for resume and cover letter, communication and presentation skills development, support to increase self-esteem and self-confidences, Swedish language training, guide to the Swedish work culture, and Meadow of Dream, which is a forum for the mentees to share their dreams, visions, challenges and thoughts on life. At the end of the first round, the mentees had done an exhibition of Meadow of Dream, a book called *Drömmar, Jobb och Mångfald* (translated as *Dream, Job and Diversity*), and a short video clip called *Meadow of Dreams* collectively to inspire others to believe in themselves. The quantitative result of the first round is as below (IKF Malmö a, Table 1):

Table 1. The Quantitative Result of Carpe Sophia, Round 1

Total matched pair	22
Number of internship	15
Number of internship led to job	5
Number of direct employment	7
Total number of job	12
Mentee who had two internships	1*
Mentee who had two job offers	1**

* This person counted as 2 out of 22 because she had two different internships

** This person counted as 2 out of 22 because she had two different job offers.

3.2 Situating Discourse and Empowerment in Carpe Sophia

To summarize, the agenda of CS is constructed on the discourse on international development that concluded in section 2.1.2. It repeats the same political rhetoric based on the discourse on international development. It puts its emphasis on economic empowerment as a way to alter gender inequality by increasing employment rate among women with foreign background. Within the rhetoric of economic empowerment, CS is associated with access to paid labor as well as the provision of “resources” including human capitals (education and skills) and social capitals (networks and mentors) that can improve women’s employment prospects to participate in income-generating activities.

As to situate empowerment in CS based on the detailed description concluded in pervious section, it is ideal to recall Diagram 1 to identify the project’s key terms. Within the framework of empowerment, CS realizes that women with foreign background have barriers to access the “resources” in order to enter the wage labor market. The resources, in this context, are the “activities”, such as individual coaching, group training, etc. The “power over” of resources limit women’s choice in the wage labor market, and they are “disempowered”. It causes “gender inequality” such as gender segregation or gender discrimination in the workplace. The objective of Carpe Sophia, therefore, is to “empower” women, individually and collectively, through redistribution of “power to”. It aims to bring women back into the process of making choice in the wage labor market, and to deconstruct gender inequality in the wage labor market. The program itself is an “enabling factor”. It provides women with the “resources” so that they get a chance to improve employment prospects, to increases self-esteem and to build wider network. These “resources” enable women to exercise their sense of “agency”, “power from within” and “power with”, to change their situation in the wage labor market. The social transformation towards greater

equality in the wage labor market begins with individual achievements, the ‘qualitative impacts’, by stimulating the “power from within”. Collectively, it circulates “power with” that leads to the other two “achievements”, the ‘quantities impact’ and the ‘long-term impacts’. Nevertheless, the practice of CS is crosscutting the social and cultural dimensions of empowerment although its main focus is on economic empowerment. It expects women to increase self-esteem and to build a wider network through their participation.

The abovementioned scenario, of course, is the ideal way to achieve gender equality within the framework of empowerment program. It will be the dream of every project practitioners that their empowerment programs can bring about social transformation that can improve the situation of women. The reality, however, is another subject matter when women’s empowerment is classified as a bottom-up process. Whether or to what extent such women’s economic empowerment program can redistribute power and address gender equality is still uncertain, and I will further discuss it in section 5.3.

4 FEMINIST METHODOLOGY AND DATA COLLECTION METHODS

4.1 Feminist Methodological Approach

One must start from outside them to gain a causal, critical view of them.

(Harding 1992, p.581)

The data collection methods are derived from the standpoint of women with foreign background in Malmö, Sweden. Women’s experience with CS is the point of departure as to discover power relations that coordinate their daily activities in local

setting (the Swedish wage labor market) and extra-local (outside the Swedish wage labor market), as well as to explore elements of empowerment through their participation in CS. The aim is to place women's knowledge as central in science, and the best way to acquire the perspectives of marginalized individuals is through "Listening", according to Harding (1992). "Listening attentively to what bothers them is a crucial assistance in standpoint projects" (ibid, p.582) and "listening carefully to what marginalized people say—with fairness, honesty, and detachment—and trying to understand their life worlds are crucial first steps in gaining less partial and distorted accounts of the entire social order" (ibid, p.583). But then, how can I listen to their voice? The best way, of course, is to engage myself into their ordinary daily activities through participant observation. However, as the first round of CS has already ended and the time to conduct this research is limited, I decided to carry out an online questionnaire and interview, which will be described in the section 4.2.

4.1.1 Standpoint Theory

The participants of women's empowerment programs, I argue, have been traditionally left out of the production of knowledge. A top-down approach during the project development disregards the voice of its target population. This group of women (the participants) is being marginalized during the knowledge production process within the empowerment framework. The project practitioners, as well as myself as a researcher, are situated in a dominant position that prevents us to discover the "real cause" of the issue as well as to search for solutions. As Harding (1992) claims, "if one wants to detect the values and interests that structure scientific institutions, practices, and conceptual schemes, it is useless to frame one's research questions or to pursue them only within the priorities of these institutions, practices, and conceptual schemes" (p.580-581). As to understand the truth of the world without distorting the way the world is, I "should start out in the social activities of people,

and not in the theoretical concepts when investigating how the social comes about, so as not to read and write the social (only) through our own position (as part of the ruling relations)” (Widerberg 2004, p 181).

To get “the best knowledge claims”, “a reality that is "out there" and unchanged by human study of it” (Harding 1992, p.585), I should start from the lives of marginalized people, which are the women with foreign background who participated in CS in this case, and to value their point of view, situation, and experience. It is because they have similar socio-economic status, and share collective identity and political struggle within the marginalized lives. This subordinate position allows them to become aware of the perspective of the dominant group, as they are forced to adopt the perspective of the mainstream, and therefore, they have a better understanding of the situation. Besides, starting from below provides a multidimensional perspective instead of just producing knowledge from a single story (from my own point of view), as well as to avoid any biases or misrepresentation of the group. It can also help to trace up the institutional chain of power and the relations of ruling from the standpoint of women. Applying standpoint theory, a method of inquiry rooted in feminist epistemology, allows me to gain a more causal and critical view of the situation by situating myself outside of a predetermined conceptual framework, and to produce a more objective and more relevant knowledge.

4.2 Data Collection Methods

4.2.1 Limitations

Listening to the marginal group cannot be done without having any contact with them. One of the biggest challenges for this research was that I did not have any

direct contact information of the first-year participants. Nothing would be possible if I could not get in touch with any of these women. To overcome this situation, I had an informal meeting with IKF Malmö's Director and CS's project leader, in which I explained the purpose of my study, asked for their permission if I could access their internal documents, such as funding proposal or reports that are related to CS, and asked if they are willing to pass on the information.

Another challenge was the language barriers, as I only speak English and Cantonese. I had to believe in Google Translation as most of the documents are in Swedish. Widerberg (1998) brings up the issue with translation, for instance, while the word "gender" is not translatable in another language; it might as well eliminate its meaning. To lower the chance of translation mistakes, I made notes whenever I was uncertain of something, and asked CS's project leader at another informal meeting. Furthermore, the fact that I do not speak Swedish made it difficult for me to make contact with potential interviewees. I also realized that I will have limited number of interviews, as the project leader has told me not all of the participants can understand English, and none of them can speak Cantonese. The ideal way, as suggested by Gavanas (2010), is to find an interpreter. However, it was nearly impossible in my situation as there are a lot of different spoken languages among the participants. I could have found a Swedish Interpreter as most of them speak Swedish, but still, my limited time and network did not allow me to do so. I handled these language limitations in two ways; conducting interview in a common language, as Gavanas (2010, p.17) recommended, and sending out an online questionnaire that is available in both Swedish and English to approach the non-English speaking participants.

4.2.2 Online Questionnaire

Online questionnaire has pitfalls itself under the framework of standpoint theory as it does not allow any interaction. But still, it provided me a chance to ‘listen’ to the non-English speaking participants. An email was drafted to introduce myself, to explain the purpose of the research, to invite the women to participate in an online research through the survey link. Additionally, a possibility to schedule a face-to-face interview was presented for anyone who was interested. The email and the questionnaire were translated in easy-to-understand Swedish, and made available in both English and Swedish. The translation was done by an employee from IKF Malmö, who has experiences in translating organizational document (from English to Swedish or reverse) and cultural competence. The role of Project Leader was to spread the words about my research among the first-year participants.

The online questionnaire was created by Google Forms, and “a major disadvantage of online questionnaires at present is that penetration is still relatively low” (Muijs 2004, p.42). This was confirmed as there were only few women who were reached by email and answered the questionnaire. Therefore, I asked the Project Leader to send out reminders to encourage their participation. The aim of the online questionnaire was to examine the effectiveness of CS, in other words, if there is any mismatch of its pre-defined “resources” and “achievements” between the program staff and the participants (Appendix A). The questionnaire was composed of both open-ended and closed-ended questions. “Open-ended questions allow the respondent to formulate their own answer, whereas closed questions make the respondent choose between answer provided by the researcher” (Muijs 2004, p.46). To ensure responders were not placed in my situated knowledge, all closed-ended questions had an option of ‘other’ where they could type in their perspective. It had twelve program related questions; followed with a few questions about the respondent’s background, such as employment status, reason to move to Sweden, place of birth, etc. On the last

page of the survey, respondents could express their interest in participating in a face-to-face interview, in which they were asked to provide their contact information.

The online questionnaire, unfortunately, suffered a low response rate. There were only 5 responses out of 20 participants, which is not sufficient to draw on any conclusion. Luckily, all five respondents agreed to participate in a face-to-face interview. Their responses, therefore, served as background information for the interviews, in which they had been asked to provide a more qualitative explanation of their answers.

4.2.3 Semi-Structured Interview

Although there were 5 women agreed to participant in a face-to-face interview, I only had interviews with 4 of them due to language limitation, all conducted in English. The responses from the online questionnaire prepared me to filter out or add in extra questions to ask during the interview. It helped me to gain a better understanding of their underlying reasons or opinions which they have mentioned in the questionnaire. The semi-structured interviews took place either at the respondent's workplace or my home, at the interviewees' convenience. They lasted between 30 to 45 minutes, and were recorded and transcribed. Interviews' aim was to understand the power relations in women's lives through their experience with CS, as well as to provide a platform for them to reflect on their program participation experience (Appendix B). The interview questions did not "insist on 'yes' and 'no' answer, which can be intimidation or bullying in an interview" (O'Reilly 2009, p.66), but instead, it "concerned with giving voice to women's own accounts of their understandings, experiences and interests" (Edwards and Holland 2013, p.18). Nearly all questions were open-ended or "specific to the participant's comments rather than to a preexisting theory, such as "Can you tell me more about that?"" (Hsieh and

Shannon 2005, p. 1279). Semi-structured interviews allowed me to develop a keen understanding of the topic of interest, provided the opportunity for identifying new perspective, as well as giving interviewees the freedom to express their views in their own terms without being manipulated by the researcher.

4.2.4 Ethnical Considerations

Research participants were given as much information as possible regarding the aim and purpose of this study, and they could ask any questions or concerns before the interview began. The interviews were recorded based on mutual agreement. However, I do realize the relationship of interviewer and interviewees is hierarchical. As to ensure women feel like they hold the control of the interview process, they have been told that I was here to learn about and to listen to their experiences. There is no right or wrong answers. They can skip any questions they do not want to answer or terminate their participation at any time. Due to the fact that the first-year CS participants only consist of a small number of women, namely 20, their identity will be kept confidential as to avoid any predictable and unpredictable harm that may impact their lives (O'Reilly 2009, p.62). All names in this study, therefore, are pseudonyms because of anonymity concerns. The interviews have been transcribed and each informant was given a pseudonym, they are called Natalie, Janet, Karina, and Jennifer. Moreover, as Gavanas (2010) and O'Reilly (2009) suggest, I altered personal details about the backgrounds and work places of interviewees as to prevent identification by participants in CS or people from their work place.

5 THE ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Departing from the standpoint of women with foreign background as to situate them in the knowledge production process, this study employed conventional content analysis to analyze the interviews. Applying a conventional approach to content analysis allowed me to gain “direct information from study participants without imposing preconceived categories or theoretical perspectives” (Hsieh and Shannon 2005, p.1279-1280), in which the knowledge is generated from “participants’ unique perspectives and grounded in the actual data” (ibid, p.1280). Additionally, this study applied an inductive approach where no preconceived categories were established before the analysis, but instead, the categories were flowed from the data (ibid). As recommended by Hsieh and Shannon (2005), I started with reading the transcribed interviews repeatedly as to engage myself to the texts. By reading word by word, I developed codes for each key concepts as well as made notes of my initial analysis. The codes, later on, were grouped into clusters of related meaning as to develop categories. It applied an interactive approach as to connect and create a dialogue between the categories and the theoretical framework. Relevant theories or other research findings were addressed in the analysis to compare my finding with others’ theories. The interview data demonstrated that the theoretical framework repeated itself in women’s daily lives, or the other way around. Furthermore, as to avoid confusion, I describe the first-year participants, or namely the interviewees, as women and use the word ‘husband’ and ‘partner’ interchangeably in this section.

5.1 Power-over Women’s Social Bodies

Through analyzing women’s experience with CS, I realized there are many power relations restraining women’s choices in their daily life. The power/knowledge dynamic of traditional gender roles, the independent male breadwinner and the dependent wife and mother, is embedded in our society and exercises discipline

power on women's social bodies. This discipline power puts "power over" women's social bodies and creates conflicts during their processes of making choices. It shapes the social structure, in which women are subordinated to men, within and outside the household setting. Women are manipulated by gendered relations as well as intersectional power relations, according to their race, class, etc., that create situations where men have power over women or native women have power over migrant women.

5.1.1 A Gendered Explanation of Career Choice and Family Relocation

Because men are viewed as the breadwinners, priority is to be given to the promotion of men. Employers as well as most people believe men should receive a higher salary than women to earn sufficient amount of money to support the household, which widens the gender pay gap. Within this gendered discourse on labor market, men are more likely to be offered a position abroad for their career advancement and receive a higher salary than women (Galgóczy, Leschke, and Watt 2016, p.278, Hersch and Viscusi 1996). Women, conversely, are manipulated by their destined identities, as dependent 'mothers' and 'housewives'. This ideology of 'motherhood' or 'wifehood' has a profound influence when it comes to making a family migration choice. Moreover, this family migration choice "is oriented towards improving the career prospects of the husband with little regard for the career prospect of the wife" (Cooke 2001, p.421). It hinders women's career advancement as they are told that they should place family before their personal achievement.

This discourse on male breadwinner model, that is embedded in the labor market, can be found in Janet's and Karina's experiences, where they mention that it is easier for men to enter the wage labor market when compared to women, regardless if they are living in their home country or abroad:

Janet: In [my home country], being a man gives you a better job than a woman ... I do think sometime companies do look ... if you have a couple, like... if they only have one place, they will offer the job to the guy because he is in charge of the family, somehow, still.

Karina: It is much easier for men to look for a job [In Sweden], to find a way in or a way out. Then women come [here] pregnant or pregnant right away, or have to take care of children right away. Then, have a longer way to go. I have colleagues [classmates] that was in SFI [Swedish for Immigrants] with me, and for all of them, the men took the first jobs, the men were the ones who got employment.

This is not difficult to understand, from the employers' perspective; men should be given priority to employment as everyone has been taught that men are the primary wage earners, and women on the other hand, will eventually quit the wage labor market when they start a family. Therefore, men are more likely to receive a job offer because they have the economic burden to feed their family. Interestingly enough, even women themselves are manipulated with this power/knowledge and believe in their destined identities, as dependent 'mothers' and 'housewives'. They, consciously or unconsciously, think it is more vital that their husbands or partners keep their jobs:

Janet: For example, one of the time I moved, I have just been hired...when I was actually got start really working, my husband was moved to a city that is two and half hour away from [the city we were living in], so we moved half way there so I could continue working, and it was impossible to work so far away, so I have to quit.

It was not the first-time Janet needed to quit her job to accompany with her husband. Even before moving to Sweden, Janet already had experience to move from

one city to another as to bridge the distance between family members. Still, it did not work out and she ended up giving up her career. But why it had to be Janet who leaves her job but not her husband? One explanation is because men are being discipline as breadwinners whereas women are being discipline as housewives and mothers. Another explanation is associated with the masculinity and femininity traits, where men should have ambition and focus on material success and women should be tender and place family first. Later on, Janet's husband had been offered a better position in Sweden. His opportunity of promotion can be explained by the gender discourse that men are more likely to be promoted than women (Blau and Devaro 2007). This time when they had to make another relocation choice, the same gender discourses exercised on Janet again, and like last time, she decided to sacrifice her career to support her husband's career advancement as well as for her kids' better future:

Janet: We decided it was a great opportunity; it was only for two years [at the beginning] and was a great thing for the kids and also for his career...So I did not want to work... [Because I will] have to quit again when we moved.

This uncertain future, whether Janet's family would stay in Sweden after two years, constrained her career choice. She chose not to search for a job until she could foresee her husband's career path as she was afraid she will have to quit and move again. Janet's identities as a wife and a mother have power over her choice, where she 'decides' to put family before her own achievement. The same 'gendered discipline power' is also found in the case of Karina and Natalie, when they must choose among migration, their career, and their husband's /partner's career:

Karina: I think it was more of my decision but it was based on the idea that I was more flexible than he was
Me: Why?

Karina: Partially because ... and now I see it... it was quite a sexism talk that women are more flexible than men. But I now actually understand it for his personality; it will be very difficult for him to live in [my home country] and keep the same quality as he has here.

Natalie: We talked about it and later we found that maybe it was easier for me to move. Because of his job, he could not move that easily.

In the case of Janet, Karina, and Natalie, they all had a steady job before they moved to Sweden. One of them even had established her own company back in the home country. But still, they decided to forgo their career opportunities when it comes to making choices among migration, family, their career and their partner's career. They 'chose' to place their family and their partner's potential career achievements before their own personal goals. This pattern of husband-centered migration, as several studies illustrate, does relate to the gender attitudes or the gender role perspective (Brandén 2014, Cooke 2001). As Shihadeh (1991) claims, the phenomenon of women becoming the ones who are more willing than men to follow their partner's career opportunities, is derived from traditional gender-role distinctions. In the case of Jennifer, her whole family moved back to Sweden as to pursue a brighter future for their child. She, like other women, also had to sacrifice her career to move to Sweden. In contrast, her husband owns a business that can easily be transferred from Jennifer's home country to Sweden, where he can remain as the breadwinner:

Jennifer: I have a relationship with a Swedish man, and we have a [kid] who is ...we decided when [the kid] started to go to school, we took [the kid] to a Swedish School in [my home country]. But, as you know, I could not speak Swedish and then we decided it is better to move back to Sweden, so [the kid] can continue with schooling here, so for that reason, we moved back, all of us, to Sweden for my [kid] so [the kid] can go to Swedish school, and I can be able to learn Swedish and get used to here.

The migration choice of Janet's, Karina's, Natalie's, and Jennifer's family consist of the power relations that is associated with domination and subordination, "power over" as referred by Rowlands (1997). Their family members are the ones gaining from migration while they all lost their steady jobs. Even though all of them claimed it was partly their decision to move abroad, this "gender role perspective does not propose that women are not involved in the decision-making process but argues that wives are likely to defer to their husbands when making migration decisions" (Cooke 2001, p.420). When "women are often socialized to place family first and personal goals second when it comes to critical household matters" (Shihadeh 1991, p.433), this dynamic of traditional gender roles manipulate women's choices. The gender discourses hold power to create a rule that says *put family before your personal achievement*, it creates a gendered discipline that exercises power over women's social bodies. It places women in a subordinate position and keeps them from voicing their wishes (Rowlands 1997, p.9). Eventually, during the process of making migration choices, women tend to be more willing to sacrifice their own careers as to support and pursuit a brighter future for their family members. They are embedded with the ideology that men should be the primary wage earners to support the family, so that it is fine to quit their jobs and move abroad as long as their husbands are still the breadwinners. There is also a belief that their partners will get more opportunities for career advancement and better salaries than themselves, and therefore, a better supplier for the family.

5.1.2 The Impact of Gendered Migration

Within the gendered discourses, power/knowledge, women will always be the ones that are more willing to be tied migrants because of their family members,

regardless of their occupational status or income. This migration choice is gendered and creates a “trailing wife” or “trailing mother” phenomenon as mentioned by Cooke (2001). The consequence of this gendered migration, however, not only reinforces gender inequality, it also has negative impacts on women occupationally and psychologically.

5.1.2.1 Women’s Obligation

Women, as tied migrants, have to face more barriers compared to their partners. Among all the women, Janet’s husband was the only one that received a job offer in Sweden while others’ partners are Swedes. Regardless, these men, especially the native Swedish men, do not have to experience barriers of networking and language as they have foundations in Sweden, as Natalie stated:

Natalie: If they are native, it will be easier for them to get employment because they have network here. They came from here, they already have friends and networks, everything is in place.

Women, conversely, have more barriers during their job search in Sweden. These trailing wives, as Karina mentioned, are all in “a very easy to break, fragile situation”. These barriers, such as networking and language, keep these women away from the wage labor market for a longer period. Most of them have to spend years to equip their Swedish skills, and some of them have to postpone their career due to pregnancy:

Karina: I become pregnant ... then all the network I have worked with at the beginning, disappeared, because I got isolate at home with the baby.

Natalie: After I have my [kid], I then have to stay home for a year to take care of [the kid].

Pregnancy prolonged Karina's and Natalie's wage labor market entry, as well as their Swedish language learning progress. For Karina, it also hindered her built network. As Cooke (2001) reveals, "mothers of young children experience a sizeable long-term decline in both labor-force participation and employment following family migrations" (p.428) when compared to non-mother migration, who has only a small and short-lived impact on employment. By comparing Karina and Natalie, who got pregnant after they moved to Sweden, and Janet and Jennifer, who have older children when they moved, I found the same pattern as Cooke (2001) brings up. It took longer time for Karina and Natalie to have their first employment in Sweden. Moreover, the longer period they are unemployed, the more they have to dependent on their partners, in which they do not have much bargaining power within the household:

Karina: In many case, for instance, when you come here, then you have to dependent on your husband, or your partner's income, at least in the beginning ... Of course, I have a lot of support from him, but he was working all the time, because he was the only one who was providing for the family. I did not want to stress him, I could have asked him, he would do it, but I did not have... I did not believe I could ask him for more, because he is providing, so it is my obligation to take care the other things.

Jennifer: Of course, you have to depend on your partner (when you do not have a job). That's not easy in a relationship. Sometimes, it stresses the relationship because you have to ask for everything. You have to be like: "Oh, we don't have it! Oh, we don't have sugar! Oh, you know..." ... Most of my friends who are unemployed or anything, they are still looking for their

job, of course, now [they] have to be home and take care [their] child.

Me: ... So, it was mainly you, who has to take care of your kid?

Natalie: Yes, because he had to work, he had to work full-time to support us.

Regardless women are normally the ones who take care of ‘domestic’ activities that involve six key tasks (Bradley 1989), or what Anderson (2000) called three Cs, the tailing wives and mothers are situated in a more subordinate position when they are unemployed. Women feel like it is their obligation to take on household chores and child-care duties while their partners are the primary wage earners. However, what put them in such a situation? If women were not taught to be ‘housewives’ and ‘mothers’, if they were not told to be more flexible and always put family before their personal goals, and if there are no gender discourses that exercise discipline power over the social bodies, then both men and women should have equal power to make choices in their lives with less restrictions. These gender discourses, which arise from the traditional gender roles, did not disappear when they relocated to another country, instead, they are being reinforced and posits women in a further disempowered situation. When women’s employment status changed, from employed to unemployed, they did not just lose their job but their bargaining power within the household. They feel like it is their obligation to take on the three Cs as that is the only contribution they can make in the household.

5.1.2.2 Intersectionality in the Wage Labor Market

Although the family migration choice is gendered, the impact on women when they move abroad as a “trailing wife” or “trailing mother” is not only gendered but intersected with other oppressive structures as well. The intersectional oppressions women are facing come more to the surface when they start to find an

entry to the wage labor market in Sweden. Jennifer, as a migrant woman, have been told to forget about her career goal, and takes on gendered jobs:

Jennifer: Everybody say, “Because you are a [woman with] foreign background, you can only be a personal care assistant, you can only take care of people, you can only be a cleaner” They boxed you ... your job level is this, and they set the box so low, so you know it is very ... you can only do this, in this area. So even you are in [some other career path], they tell you to forget [your career goal], you will never get a job in [your field of study]. They said “Yay, take a job as a cleaner, it is much easier, you know, clean the toilets, you will get the job. It is easier for you to get a job in a cleaning firm, then to get a job in [your field of study]”, they told us. They tell many many people with foreign background, it is better to study personal care assistant. Even it is not something you will be passionate about and interested in, oh, but they said, it is very needed here. Forget about your experience with ... or what so ever, because you will never ever success with that job in this country as a foreigner. That’s what women are told here... so you feel discouraged, and you are like, okay, let me take personal care assistant, let me start with that because then I have more chance of getting a job.

As Bradley (1989) mentions, “ideas about feminine and masculine nature and behavior were highly involved in the gendering of jobs and resulted in the formation of gendered work cultures” (p.229). Jennifer, as a migrant woman with educational background and work experiences from abroad, is called on taking the unskilled and gendered jobs. Her qualification is being disregarded as a foreigner. The identity as a migrant woman is not only subordinated to men, breadwinner versus housewife, but also to native Swedish women, us versus other. As opposite to Foucault’s (1995 & 1978) concept of power that disallows agency, I argue women do have space to activate their agent for resistance and change, meaning that not all of them will ended up in these unskilled and gendered jobs. However, not everyone has a choice when it comes to economic difficulty, and those women can only take whatever jobs out there when life leaves them no choice, as Jennifer said:

Jennifer: Many people, even my friends, they are qualified, they have jobs, they have university, but nobody knows about them, they are out there, and they are taking jobs that are not worth their talent, but because you need a job, you can be a cleaner, but cleaner with a degree?

Jennifer is luckier in this situation, where she has a better socioeconomic status that allows her to hang on her career goals. The only tradeoff was to continue to be dependent on her partner while she was pursuing her dream job. This class differences among women, higher socioeconomic status versus lower socioeconomic status, determine the level of control over their career path. The class relation crosscutting the gender relation also determine the chances of getting employed:

Me: How did they [the men] find the job?

Karina: Through networking and other things, or some work in kitchen or restaurant, or jobs in construction, and then it is another thing, not all the women can work in construction ... The men got the work faster, and the women that were single. Oh, no, no single but not mothers, and not planning to have family any soon, and not married, they have a boyfriend or something, and those were separated from their partner. [They get jobs] quite fast after [men]. I do not know if there is any actual logic, but it was interesting for me to see that, and I, me, who got pregnant in the middle of the process, got drain back.

The ideology of gendered jobs appeals again, but instead, it puts migrant men into what is considered men's work. While both men and women in SFI course are migrants, in which they face more or less the same barriers when they enter the wage labor market, still, men become the ones who get hired first as breadwinners. The hierarchies among migrant men versus migrant women, married women versus single women, mother versus non-mother, determine who get the job offer faster. In

addition, Karina also brings up the “Third World women” discourse that influences how Swedes perceive migrant women. The employers categorize migrant women in to a homogenous group, as if they are more likely to take on the traditional gender roles when compared to Swedish men and women, and migrant men:

Karina: When you come to interview as an immigrant, and if you were a woman, you get those questions “How is it... Who is going to take care your kid? How does...” I got those, and I have never thought I got those, and I have never heard of any guys that have to answer those kind of questions...I got those kind of questions, then I realized, [Sweden is] not more gender equal, still assume you [women] have to take care of the kids.

Besides, the same categorization can also be found outside the wage labor market, where the Swedish men view foreign women as “more traditional” when compared to Swedish women:

Karina: I see some time with some Swedish men that had married a foreigner, because they have expected that those women are little more docile.

In this situation, choosing a ‘more traditional foreign woman’ can fulfill the Swedish men’s ‘traditional mind’. I brought it up because it is another gendered issue we should not disregard, however, the focus here is the intersectionality in wage labor market. So, to return to the Swedish wage labor market, the experience of Karina’s job interview illustrates that the employers perceive migrant women differently. Other than this, employers also tend to sort out educational background and work experience from abroad from the Swedish one. Women’s experience outside of Sweden, regardless of how professional they were in their home countries, is not

valid in the Swedish wage labor market. I felt sorry when I heard Karina convinced herself it was purely cultural differences that make her professional being devalued:

Karina: I was a very important person in my country, that people would listen to, to give advice to people that they would take consideration, and many times, many times in Sweden, I was taken like a joke, many times, like not seriously. I don't know [if it is] because the way I look, the way I talk, if I lack some language skills at the beginning ...I coped with it, and I come to understand this is a totally different culture, it does not mean people do not take me seriously, it is just the way they are. It was terrible. I was quite immature in that in that subject, because I hadn't had many experiences where my experience was not taken in consideration, here all the time, because here was just one more immigrant.

However, she is not alone. Natalie and Janet also feel that their identities as foreigners create obstacles for them to enter the wage labor market, when I asked them what their barriers are when searching for job in Sweden:

Natalie: That's my experience. If I use respect... maybe it is too strong... but they don't respect education and work experience from abroad. Yay, they do not recognize, so that's the difficulties that most foreigner have ... from my experience, if you look at it at educational point of view, I don't think they [Swedes] are better than I am...because I have my education as well, I have been working as well, so the only barrier I have is because I am a foreigner.

Janet: I think the biggest thing is that I have not worked in Sweden and I do not have a last name in Swedish, maybe, non-Swedish last name is the biggest barrier.

This is another hierarchy that migrant women are facing in the Swedish wage labor market, Swedish versus non-Swedish educational background and work

experience. Such hierarchy creates otherness and differentiates us (Swedes) and other (migrants). Migrant women, other than being told to take on unskilled and gendered jobs, are being devalued. Their qualifications abroad are not taken into consideration when they search for job in Sweden. They are being disheartened when they decided to pursue a career based on their field of studies. This discouragement and devaluation of women's profession also have psychological effect. Several of them used the words, such as "down", "sad", or "frustrated" to describe the job search process:

Karina: It took much much longer time than I thought it would... and then I got ... I would not use the word depress, but I got a little bit down by the situation... you don't get as much thing done as you thought, and it is rainy in Sweden, it is dark, and sad, and then you get a little down, so it took much more time and energy that I though it will take me.

Natalie: I got really frustrated ... I was not having any helps from Arbetsförmedlingen at all ... Before, I was doubting if I will even find a job in Sweden. I was doubting a lot...

In addition, migrant women realized the degree of gender in/equality between Sweden and their home countries varies, when they compared themselves to Swedish women:

Janet: In Sweden, I don't think that much people get less opportunity than men, I think it is...it is actually like, especially when you compare to my [home country] ... being a man gives you a better job than being a woman.... But here, I don't think that's much the case, some people said it is, but I don't feel it ... I think they (Swedish women) are entitled. I think the Swedish women feel they are entitled to anything...

Natalie: The Swedish society, the gender equality, I think it's the best, so the Swedish themselves have no problem, especially in the labor market I think. I think they compete on the same

level as Swedish man ... personally, I haven't experience any discrimination to make me feel... of course I know I am different, I am not Swedish, but I haven't experience any discrimination.

This discourse on gender equality in Sweden, that Sweden always named as the world's gender equality frontrunner, creates an illusion for migrant women to believe they have the same share as Swedish women or men. However, as many studies indicate, Sweden is still far from gender equality (Fink and Lundqvist 2010, Gavanas 2010, Rothstein 2012, Grönlund, Halldén, and Magnusson 2017). This socially constructed misinformation of gender equality in Sweden becomes normalized, imperceptible, and have power over migrant women's bodies, behaviors, and access to resources. Migrant women, "who are systematically denied power and influence in society internalize the messages they receive about what they are supposed to be like" (Rowlands, 1997, p.11), come to believe the message (Sweden as an equality paradise) as true that they are free from any forms of discrimination. In such situation, disciplinary power is exercised on women's bodies, they turn into docile bodies and become unconscious of the power relations.

Perhaps, individuals need to be able to experience unequal treatment based on their gender, race, class, etc. as to realize the power relations. Like Karina, her personal experience of street harassment in her home country versus her job interview experience in Sweden (quoted in earlier paragraph), gives her a reflective faculty:

Karina: The Swedish women is very ahead of [the women in my country], and men as well, but there is still a long way to go, it is a much deeper issue than you think. Men cannot harass you on the street, that's not the only, so much more, when you are thinking salary, for instance, even in Sweden, you have huge gap between men and women, and that's not okay because we are just as much. We have same or better qualification, but we are still getting lower payment than the men, based on what? Based

on the fact that we are not born with penises? It is crazy when you analyze that way.

The discourse on traditional gender roles, as discussed in section 2.1.1, has power over women during the process of making migration choice. Women, regardless of their professional background, are more likely to relocate with their partners as a trailing wife as they have been internalized with the gendered ideology. It denies women to make rationalized choices and place them into a more disempowered position, where they have to put aside their career goals and become economically dependent on their partners again. Being unemployed affects their bargaining power at home. They feel like household chores and childcare are their obligation because they cannot contribute to the household financially. During the job searching process, they also experienced series of intersectional discrimination based on their gender, race, and class. Such stereotypes about migrant women have negative impact of their career advancement and their mentality. They feel discouraged and begin to doubt about their abilities. Such gendered ideology also creates hierarchy among migrant men and women, Swedish women and migrant women, mothers and non-mothers that make it more difficult for migrant mother to enter the Swedish wage labor market.

5.2 Women's Empowerment

The pervious section illustrates that migrant women are disempowered due to disciplinary power over their bodies that restricts their ability to make choices. This discourse on traditional gender roles within the household also interfere with women's social and economic relations (Ibrahim and Alkire 2007). CS, in this regard, steps into these women lives with a hope to alter power over relations by focusing on empowering women economically.

5.2.1 Indicators of Women's Empowerment in Carpe Sophia

Like many other social initiatives, CS views increasing employment rate among migrant women as the pathway towards gender equality. As Rowlands (1997) mentions, decision-making, or as I referred to making choices, is the key to women's empowerment, where women have the ability to make their own choice and stay in charge of their life. Within this framework, is women's economic empowerment, or employment to be precise, make women feel they are in charge of their life? Women were asked to reflect on what is needed in order to feel they have more control of life:

Natalie: The only thing I need is to have a well-paying job, money and oxygen rank high up there, so without those two, life is worthless. This is my personal view. Having financial security gives one the freedom to do what they want, when they want it and how they want it. In other words, it allows one to have "control of their own life", if I may use your own words up there!

Jennifer: Initially, when I come to Sweden, it was a job. Now I have a job, I feel I am in control. So probably for me to have more control of my life it will be going to the next level, like in job, and I am working toward that...

Karina: If you had asked me this question about a year ago I would surely answer, a job. But now that I have a job and therefore, financial independency and security, I feel in control of my life.

Most of them related control of life as having a job that can provide financial resources or economic security. It seems like CS has chosen the right direction, economic empowerment, to bring women back into the process of making choices where they can utilize CS's resources. The internship opportunities become the main "resource" of the empowerment process as 5 out of 5 questionnaire respondents claim their lack of work experience in Sweden prevents them to make choice in the

Swedish wage labor market. In addition, most of the women concluded their internship opportunities has changed their lives and put them into a better position:

Natalie: It suddenly changed my life, because I did not say that I actually had an internship [through CS] before I get a job. Internship in [a city in Sweden], so that was good to learn a little bit how the things function in Sweden, and how they work, you know...just to be out and meet people. I think it was really important, just have a feeling that you are doing something, instead of sitting at home ... Because now I have [been] working, so it put me a better position to find another job. It is better when you are working than you are not... I have to appreciate it because of this program I've been able to move forward in my career.

Janet: Okay, right now, I am applying for a PhD that has to do with... and now I have the experience [through an internship referred by CS], then I think it is gonna make a difference...I don't think I will be able to do it if I have not had the CS experiences ... Thanks to CS and the internship, I have a person ...can recommend me, I have her in my reference, so yes, that's give a different perspective

Jennifer: Most obvious change, I have a job. I would not have a job here, if they did not help me get my internship here, probably I will still be unemployed, and probably I will still be looking for job.

This “resource” (internship opportunities) provided by CS apparently solved the problem of “lack of work experience in Sweden” among these women. It creates career advancement possibility for these women and becomes an “enabling factors” to foster economic empowerment (employment prospects). Women feel more in charge of their career as well as their lives based on their definition of ‘a better control of life’ as abovementioned (employment). Indeed, Natalie and Jennifer landed a job due to CS, which can be considered as “achievement” of the empowerment process. As for the other aspect of decision-making, the ability to make choices,

women claim they were able to make their own choices during their participation in CS:

Natalie: When we [the project staff and Natalie] meet, it was really a good meeting; because she was so interested in knowing what I was doing, my CV, and I told her my stories, what kind of work I was looking for.

Jennifer: They kicked the door for me, inside my career path, of my choice, or something that I am good at, and I show them, this is what I do, I am as better as anybody else.

All the women I had interview with told me they have been offered an internship based on their interest and their field of studies. They met with the project staff individually as to discuss their career goals so that they could be matched in their area of interest. The matching is based on their choices of career path and they have the rights to refuse the internship opportunities offered by CS. Indeed, Karina rejected to the internship offer, although it is related to her skills and experiences, as she found something better for herself. It appears that the two components of decision-making, making choice and staying in charge of life, have been granted to these women through their participation in CS. Moreover, the activities of CS generate positive power, namely “power to”, that inspires women to pursue their own goals:

Natalie: I was doubting if I will even find a job in Sweden. I was doubting a lot, but then, when I went to CS, I met the others and talked, and discussed with everybody. Everybody has an experience, and you see “oh! If she can make it, then I can also make it”. Yes, so it gave you the motivation... Even now I am struggling as I am working, but hopefully, because I started to work, and hopefully something will happen soon.

Janet: Something like CS helps you realize that you are not alone, which is one of the thing they help you be also not... feel

totally lost. You said like what am I doing wrong...it helps you like “no, it is not you, it is the situation, maybe, but you are just trying”, and it helps...It helps me realize I was not alone, and it helps you trust yourself more, instead of saying everything I did was terrible, it does help you say no, keep the work going, keep doing it, you can get out there.

Karina: When I first talked to [the project staff], I break down actually, because it was the first time that I was well receive as a professional in Sweden, and [the project staff] understand my situation, right away, she said: “okay, but you have the qualification, they have to give you a job, because I can see perfectly you have what they need, what’s the problem then? We are going to find it out, together!” Because I could not put my finger on what was wrong, and then, I got from [the project staff], I got this feedback from [the project staff]. It helps a lot with my self-esteem...that was very important for me.

CS disseminates “power to” among its participants. It is “the kind of leadership that comes from the wish to see a group achieve what it is capable of, where there is no conflict of interests, and the group is setting its own collective agenda” (Rowlands 1997, P.12). It generates both “power with” and “power from within”. It provides a platform to distribute positive power, as well as creates a collective solution (internship/job opportunities) to a common problem (unemployment among migrant women). Migrant women believe more in their ability to resist the unwanted oppression, which is the barriers to enter the Swedish labor market in this situation, through their participation in CS. They also try to spread “power to” within their own network:

Janet: later on if have the opportunity to actually offering a job to somebody, I will probably go there [CS]. I will start to say: “do you know those people?” I will ask: “we are looking for something with this characteristic, and I do think a lot of us have been there would like to do it. So I guess, it is starting, it is going to be more complicated. People who have come out of there, and got a job or not, hiring or not, but maybe in a couple of years, there will be more possibilities to do that.

Karina: I talked to some people with the same situation as me, and then I referred them to CS, I don't know if they have talked to [the project staff], but as I thought it was so nice that you have these kinds of support.

Jennifer: Every time I met women from CS, they have the same kind of goal that they are willing to work together, I've talked to many of my friends, I encouraged them, and I referred two more people to come to join IKF.

Participants utilize the resources provided by CS with a hope to assist other women who share the same struggle: facing economically disadvantages in different aspects of life. They relate themselves to others as to support those women to find a way out. This group of first-year CS participants, consequently, is becoming new "resource" to enable others to become aware of their own interest. In a positive sense, this dissemination of "power to" will increase the employment rate of migrant women in a long term if all the people they referred ended up in CS and utilized its resources. Jennifer also noted that CS is not merely helping her but a much bigger group:

Jennifer: When they helped a person like me, how many people are they helping? I am supporting my parents, right now I bought a house for them. [With the salary I am receiving in Sweden], I almost build a home for my parents back in [my home country]. I am about to help my siblings, pay a little fee here and there for them. I am supporting my friend right now, he is starting a business, I am helping with small money, so he can start up a business, so it goes over, so it is not only when somebody get a job here, it takes care of other families, all my relatives and people that I care about. Like when I help my friend in [my home country], who establish his business, he has 4 kids, that will take care of his family, that is due to this opportunity I got [through CS]. So, it is a big picture...they should just look at the big picture because if you have one person you are helping, maybe five more within that ... I think they should just continue to what they are doing and never give

up and keep pushing and keep knocking the door, and keep telling people we are here, we are talent people, give them the opportunity, they are willing to work...

Jennifer is using the resources, the salary from her employment, which she gained from CS to change other people's lives. She is spreading "power to" that "engenders possibilities and actions without domination" (FRIDE 2006, p.2). Additionally, Jennifer considers herself as being empowered when she was asked to reflect on what is women's empowerment:

Jennifer: [When I] first join CS, they asked me why do I want to be there, and I said to them: "I want to be independent, I was craving for independent, my dream was to be independent, to be able to take care of myself, without having to depend on my partner or anybody else. And they did that, today, I am independent, today, I have my salary, I can save if I want to save, I can spend if I want to spend, I can help if I want to help. It is me who decide, I do not have to beg, go to somebody like: "Please, today we do not have this." No! Even today, not a lot of money, but this is my money, and I made decision about the money, I feel independent, I feel empowered.

Like Jennifer, Natalie and Karina also related their employment as empowerment:

Natalie: It is empowering, it is empowering women, if you want to classify getting a job as empowerment, then yes.

Karina: Depends on situation, it can be defined on many ways, but if we think as job opportunities, career, professional life, then it is very important work CS does, because it gives you tools, helps your self-esteem, it taught you not to give up on things, so it is very important as an empowerment tool, I think. Sum it, [another] one of it is to teach men that they are not allowed to treat us bad ... but there are many things that can be done to empower women...

Although Natalie could not convince herself as being empowered, still, her and Karina's responses provide trace of other aspects of empowerment, such as psychological empowerment that is associated with self-esteem (Narayan 2005) as Karina pointed out. Janet, simultaneously, identifies social and cultural empowerment within CS:

Janet: The part of empowering is to make you responsible for your own growth, or your own whatever, you are the one who make it [happens]. And I do think a lot of things they [CS] are doing, like having you to... the idea to get your CV, personal letter, and stuff, the way they do, they don't tell you do this ... between all of us, we have to figure out what is the way to go, so that's giving you the own responsibility on how to continue doing that, I think it does help.

CS gives participants a social space where women can work together to make choice, as well as to improve "strength of extra-familial groups and social networks" (Narayan 2005). In this regard, CS is not only about economic empowerment (internship/ job opportunities). It is crosscutting psychological empowerment as it increases women's self-esteem and self-efficacy, as well as contributes to their psychological well-being while most of the women feel discouraged and upset during their job searching process as illustrated in section 5.1.2.2. It also engages in social and cultural empowerment when it provides a platform for women to meet each other and share their stories. However, I find it difficult to connect these empowerment indicators to social transformation that lead to gender equality. Does it mean women are not being empowered? Moreover, recalling the ideology of empowerment which is 'individuals gain access to the process of making choices that they are previously denied to', can I conclude that women are being empowered because they get internship or job opportunities through CS? Have they not always been working back

in their home countries? A more critical understanding of ‘women’s empowerment program’ will be presented in the next section.

5.3 Women’s Empowerment?

5.3.1 Intersectionality in Empowerment

Everything seems to be promising, the “resources” provided by CS becomes an “enabling factors” for economic empowerment, as well as psychological and social and cultural empowerment, which are concluded as indicators of women’s empowerment according to Narayan (2005). However, women’s participation in CS, apparently, only raises their awareness of oppressive relations that is related to their job-seeking process and their migrant background. The so-called women’s empowerment program is not empowering women as ‘women’, but instead, a combination of their identities or another identity rather than ‘women’:

Jennifer: I think it is very important to empower a foreign background woman, because when you come to Sweden as a foreigner, it is a lot of expectation and with a lot of shock with the culture.

Like Jennifer, Karina also thinks it is extremely important to empower foreign women because they are in “a very easy to break, fragile situation”, as mentioned in section 5.1.2.1. They need more assistance when compared to native women. In this case, they relate CS as a program that empower women as ‘migrants’. At the same time, Natalie and Janet do not feel they need to be empowered as ‘women’ when compared themselves to others:

Natalie: Most women have problem, depending on their background and stuff like that... there are some women who have moved to Sweden...Hmm... whose background is different from mine, like maybe they were not able to work in their own countries because it is not allow. It supposes women need to take care of family, and when they come to Sweden, because it is equal society, then I think they benefit more than this, because they get a forum where they can discuss what they go through, and then they can get ideas on how to change their situation, to be more active, then sitting at home.

Janet: I personally do not think being all women is important, I think some people do, but I personally do not. I guess some people can only speck to women, and they will feel safer, I always been in a mixed environment with school and everything...I haven't felt the women part of it being the problem.... but I do feel the non-Swedish part...because my last name, not because I am a woman ...

Their comments bring up the intersectionality in empowerment, where there is a possibility that their participation in CS is resulting in other dimensions of empowerment rather than 'women's empowerment', because of their multi-dimensional identities. Although women are being disempowered due to their overlapping identities, it is more likely they are being empowered as 'migrants' or 'job-seekers' when CS puts its focus on helping migrant women to find a job in Sweden. Additionally, the intersectional identities of women, such as "women with foreign background", "women who were not allowed to work in their home country", or "women who do not feel safe to talk to men due to cultural differences", make it impossible to determine which part of their identities are being empowered through their participant in CS. Even though Jennifer has mentioned that she feels empowered, as illustrated in section 5.2.1, it is uncertain if she is being empowered as a woman, as a migrant, as a job seeker, or a combination of all identities. The intersectionality in empowerment makes it questionable that which single/multi-dimensional identity is being empowered after women's participation in CS. It becomes debatable whether or

to what extent economic empowerment program can address gender inequality when the “resources” provided by CS are mainly focusing on empowering ‘migrant job-seekers’ rather than ‘women’. The upcoming sections, section 5.3.2, will further discuss the issues of ‘women’s empowerment program’ within the field of international development.

5.3.2 Empowerment or Disempowerment?

When Janet and Natalie are unsure whether they need to be empowered as a woman, Natalie also shared an incredibly thoughtful statement that guided me to reflect on the gendered structure within our society as well as the ideology of women’s empowerment within the field of international development:

Natalie: I would not classify myself as being empowered because I was working before I moved to Sweden.

Natalie feels disempowered as a migrant rather than as a woman. Like all other women who had a steady job back in their home countries, she brings up the family relocation is more of a loss than gain. So, I started to ask myself whether I can consider their participation in CS as women’s empowerment. Based on these women’s situation, it is more like the gendered migration and the combination of discourses that have taken their career choice away and the role of CS is to grant it back to them. When these women resigned their jobs and relocated to Sweden, they lost the power they used to enjoy back in their home country, such as bargaining power within the household or career advancement as mentioned in section 5.1. They are losing power rather than gaining as the migration choice is gendered and there are still gendered perspectives exist in the Swedish society. In addition, there is a series of identities added on their social bodies, such as ‘foreigner’, that further

disempowers this group of women as illustrated in Section 5.1.2. In this context, can I really consider assisting these women to get an employment in Sweden as achieving empowerment when this is something they used to enjoy back in their home countries? Or is it just reinforcing the gender discourses that produce a vicious circle to restrain women's lives?

Moreover, the denial of education and work experience from aboard within the Swedish wage labor market gives rise to the belief of lack of work experience in Sweden as the cause of unemployment, and it resulted in offering internships as an entry to gain work experience in Sweden. Undertaking an internship, however, places women in a precariat position, where they have "insecure labour, being in and out of jobs, without long-term employment contracts" (Standing 2014, p.969). Although Jennifer told me she received around 4000 Swedish Kroner (SEK) a month plus transportation expenses during her internship, which is paid by Arbetsförmedlingen, this amount is way below standard. In general, men earn an average of 33,305 SEK per month whereas women earn 24,176 SEK per month in Sweden (Sweden.se 2016), and not to mention there is still a huge pay gap between men and women in Sweden. Moreover, there is no guarantee if the internship can lead to a job at the end. Women still have to experience job insecurity where they have "to do a lot of work-for-labour that is not counted as labour and is not remunerated as such" (Standing 2014, p.969).

In this situation, women, who relocated to Sweden, are losing power rather than gaining. Their disempowerment begins with the gendered migration, where they forgone their career advancement and lose their bargaining power within the household all together. The intersectionality in the Swedish wage labor market, simultaneously, disempowers women as 'female migrant job seekers'. Furthermore, overtaking internships as a way to validate women's education and work experiences from abroad make them become members of the proletariat, in which it places them in a further disempowered position. If they end up receiving an employment through

their participation in CS, they are just reclaiming the power they used to enjoy back in their home countries. The role of CS, therefore, is just assisting women to reclaim their power that they have lost due to relocation. It is not sufficient to classify CS as 'women's empowerment' due to the intersectionality in empowerment, as stated in pervious section, as well as the complexities of women's lives as mentioned above.

However, I am not claiming CS is not helpful at all, nor blaming CS uses internship as a way to 'empower women'. It does assist women to adjust their lives in a new country as well as to open the door to the Swedish wage labor market based on women's preferences. The program staff also never try to convince women to take on gendered jobs, which is an important aspect of not to reproduce any gender discourse. It is just questionable if CS can be called as a women's empowerment program or more like guidance for job search as Natalie mentioned. Regardless, the problem here is the power structure in society that has "power over" individuals, as well as organizational way of thinking and acting. Within the discourse on international development, as mentioned in section 2.1.2, on top of "a competitive funding environment, most NGOs are at least somewhat beholden to the demands of donors who prefer to fund mainstream development "solutions" with quantifiable results" (Krenz 2012, p.3). To ensure sustainable financial support, practitioners need to find a formula that can benefit different parties (the society, the government, and the economic). Perhaps there is no other way as good as economic empowerment. From the gender perspective, it can increase women's wage labor market participation rate and lower unemployment rate among women, which are always the factors to consider regarding the gender equality level in different countries. From the government perspective, it can ensure sustainable economic growth and solve wage labor shortage. This package tempts the donors as it benefits the economic as well as provides a "better image" of its country by being called as "one of the best country for gender equality". CS, at the end, is just constrained within the discourse on international development like many other NGO programs. It has to be called as a

‘women’s empowerment program’ that can address gender inequality as well as economic growth in order to secure the funding resources.

5.4 The Importance of Agency in Women’s Empowerment

When the field of international development put so much emphasis on women’s economic empowerment as a way to achieve gender equality, the so-called women’s empowerment program, after all, empowered women as ‘migrants’ and as ‘job seekers’ rather than ‘women’. The CS participants, simultaneously, viewed access of financial resources (salary from employment) as the cause that hinders/enables their control of life as mentioned in section 5.2.1. They do not realize it is the power structure that put them in such a disadvantaged situation. However, if women’s empowerment programs adopted to improve gender equality, the priority should be put on empowering ‘women’ by raising their awareness of gendered oppressive relations and their belief in equal treatment. This is not only about redistribution of power temporality by increasing women’s wage labor market participation rate, but instead, there is a need to bring about social transformation that can address gender inequality by awaking women’s unconsciousness of oppressive gender relations, where the women agents come into play.

Ironically, only Karina has this gender awareness out of all the interviewees, and her consciousness does not come from her participation in CS, but her individual experiences. She is the only one who viewed a more gender equal society can lead to a better control of life while others only related ‘a better control of life’ as getting a job in Sweden:

Karina: Of course, there are other factors, in a wider perspective, that could contribute to an even better sense of control, such as not to have to worry about being afraid of walking alone in a street at night, no matter where in the world, because I am a

woman. See, I'm not talking about fear of been robbed or even killed, but of the almost certainty of been sexually assaulted or, at the very least, harassed. Not to have to worry about gender issues getting in the way of my professional or private life, no matter the circumstance, is another meaningful part of the process of feeling in control, I think. But we still have a long way before getting there.

Karina's belief in gender equality as a way to have a better control of life recalls the importance of "agency" during the empowerment process, which is referred as the motor of social transformation that can address gender inequality (Kabeer 1999, Narayan 2005, Rowlands 1999, Krenz 2012). Her consciousness of gender sensitization arose from her individual experiences. For instance, she had experienced street harassment back in her home country, her awareness of migrant men were the first to find a job in SFI class, the gendered questions she had been asked during interview in Sweden, etc. All these individual experiences became the "enabling factors" of her empowerment process and contributed to her "power from within" that she decided to raise her child without gender bias:

Karina: What can I do to empower women? Oh, I can teach my [kid] that a girl is not different from [anyone], just because they have different genitals. They have to treat with respect and they have equal value.

Karina demonstrates how empowerment is a bottom-up process that begin with individuals' awareness of "their own interests and how those relate to the interest of others, in order both to participate from a position of greater strength in decision-making and actually to influence such decisions" (Rowlands 1997, p.14). Her individual experiences are the "resources" that assisted her to identify her goals (gender equality as a way to achieve better control of life) and act upon it

(raising a child in a gender-neutral way). This empowerment process is very similar to the case of Women's Right movement in the United States during the late 19th century, and if there are more individuals who have shared interest as Karina, the sum of "power from within" will generate "power with" that can possibly lead to social transformation. In other words, there is a possibility to deconstruct gender discourses and to revise power/knowledge in gender relations if there are more parents who raise their child in a gender-neutral way. Unlike Foucault's (1995 & 1978) concept of discourse and power/knowledge, which leaves no space for resistance and social change, Karina uses her agent to alter "power over" relations. She has the capacity to resist the power relations and to influence the power structure by becoming an agent of change in her own life (Kabeer 1999, Narayan 2005).

The case of Karina illustrates the importance of agency in women's empowerment. This is the type of women's empowerment that is needed to bring about social transformation as to address gender inequality. This consciousness of oppressive gender relations and belief in fair treatment is founded on her personal experiences. It requires women become the subjects of their own development rather than as objects that are being 'empowered'. Empowerment, after all, should be a bottom-up process, that *women, individually and collectively; bring themselves back into the process of making choice through utilization of resources and their own agents to alter "power over", as to achieve a more equitable society.* The role of agency is a crucial element of empowerment to build gender equality. Without woman becomes the "an agent of change in her own life" (Narayan 2005, p. 73), the achievements or efforts of the so-called women's economic empowerment programs are just a temporary solution that do not solve the fundamental problem. It cannot activate women's capacity to act and influence the power structure.

6 Conclusion and Recommendations

6.1 Conclusion

The gender discourses derived from traditional gender roles generate a series of negative impacts on society and individuals. This traditional gender ideology gives birth to gender stereotype, gender discrimination and segregation in the wage labor market, etc. that constrain both men's and women's choices. This power/knowledge of gender internalized and disciplined women as 'mothers' and 'housewives' who should put 'family before personal achievement'. Within these gendered discourses, women share a common context of struggle across geographical and cultural divides, and it becomes obvious when it comes to making family relocation choices. When considering family relocation, the gendered disciplinary power has "power over" women's social bodies. Women are more likely to surrender their career and become "trailing wives" or "trailing mothers". This gendered migration disempowers women, which they become unemployed, lose their bargaining power within the household, and feel it is their obligation to take care of the household chores. In addition, they face intersectional discrimination in the Swedish wage labor market due to their multidimensional identities. They feel depressed and devalued while searching for a job in Sweden although they have the qualifications back in their home countries.

CS, in this regard, aims to 'empower' this group of women (women with foreign background) through women's economic empowerment with a belief in bringing gender equality. It provides women with internship opportunities when women view their lack of work experience as the main cause of unemployment. There are indicators of empowerment after women's participation in CS, such as increased self-esteem and self-confidence or built an extra familial network. However, it cannot be effectively captured if women are being empowered as 'women', as 'migrants', or as 'job-seekers' due to their intersectional identities. It is more likely they are being empowered as 'migrant job seekers' because most of them view

employment as a way to have a better control of life. Their unconsciousness of oppressive gender relations also makes it questionable if women's economic empowerment can really address gender equality. Moreover, it is problematic to count women's participation in CS as 'empowerment' as they used to have employments back in their home country. They are only reclaiming the power they used to enjoy in the past, especially the 'resources' provided by CS, the internship opportunities, situate women in such a precariat position which further disempower them.

This study, however, does not mean to blame CS but to bring awareness of the power structure that not only constrains individuals' but organizational way of acting. Within the discourse on international development as well as the competitive funding environment, economic empowerment provides a more measurable result, which in this case is the number of women who received employment after their participation in CS, to secure the future financial support and to maintain its sustainability. Nonetheless, such economic empowerment initiative is only to provide a temporary solution without solving the fundamental problem. Regardless of how many "resources" are out there, women's empowerment cannot be achieved without the use of women agents to alter the "power over" relations. The so-called women's empowerment programs place women as objects of being 'empowered' instead of being subjects of their own development, while women's empowerment requires women to become their own agent of change as to lead to social transformation that can address gender inequality. Women's Empowerment, after all, is more of a bottom-up process instead of top-down approach. However, if the field of international development insists on using the term 'women's empowerment' to describe their program and views it as a way to achieve gender equality, their priority should be to empower women as 'women'. They should also remember that gender inequality is a more profound issue and that it is insufficient to just increase women's participation in the wage labor market without changing the power structure. Lastly,

as to recall, the difficulties that women are facing when relocated to Sweden would not have happened if the migration choice had not been gendered. Without ‘women’s’ empowerment becoming the source of power redistribution to bring about social transformation that can address gender inequality, the same gendered vicious circle will continue being reinforced and reproduced.

6.2 Recommendations

I propose the following recommendations for further research, which can contribute to deconstruct and transform the gendered power structure as well as to provide suggestions for project practitioners to improve the effectiveness of women’s empowerment programs. Although I argue women should not be the objects that are being ‘empowered’ but the subject of their own development, still, we should not disregard any possibility of achieving gender equality:

1. As to support the findings of this study, perhaps a similar study on a larger number of participants/interviewees is needed. Drawing conclusion based on 5 questionnaire responses and 4 interviews might not be sufficient to illustrate the common context of struggle that this group of women are facing.
2. Because empowerment is an ongoing process, it is ideal to conduct another research with CS participants in 5-10 years to see if anything happens in their lives that activate their gender awareness. One approach is to disseminate the findings from this study to the CS participants and see if it will become one of the “enabling factors” of their empowerment process and awake their unconsciousness of oppressive gender relations. If the result is positive, it could be a good idea to include lectures about gender in women’s

empowerment programs to maximize the possibility of activating human's capacity to act and influence the gendered power structure.

3. Research on what can be done to improve the impact and effectiveness of so-called women's empowerment programs, where the objective should be focused on how these programs can empower women as 'women' so that these programs can classify as 'women's empowerment programs'.

4. The integration of gender analysis in migration studies is needed since there is insufficient amount of studies that focus on gender and migration, as Nawyn (2010) points out. Majority of the studies are quantitative without a qualitative explanation (Shihadeh 1991, Brandén 2014, Nisic and Melzer 2016). A more qualitative research design would bring in new perspectives and innovative approaches to transform the gendered power structure.

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Appendix

Appendix A: Online Questionnaire

Part I:

1. How did you found out about Carpe Sophia? (Hur fick du vetskap om Carpe Sophia?)
 - IKF Malmö (IKF Malmö)
 - Arbetsförmedlingen (Arbetsförmedlingen)
 - Social Media (Sociala Medier)
 - Friends or Family (Vänner eller Familj)
 - Other, please specify (Annat, vänligen specificera)

2. Overall, how satisfied were you with Carpe Sophia? (Överlag, hur nöjd är du med Carpe Sophia?)
 - Very satisfied (Mycket nöjd)
 - Somewhat Satisfied (Ganska nöjd)
 - Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied (Varken nöjd eller missnöjd)
 - Somewhat dissatisfied (Ganska missnöjd)
 - Very dissatisfied (Mycket missnöjd)

3. Before your participation in Carpe Sophia, what were your barriers when searching for job in Malmo, Sweden? Select all that apply. (Innan ditt deltagande i Carpe Sophia, vilka var dina hinder när du sökte jobb i Malmö, Sverige? Välj alla svar som stämmer in)
 - Did not know how to write a resume and cover letter (Visste inte hur jag skulle skriva CV och personligt brev)
 - Lack of interview skills (Saknade intervjukunskap)
 - Lack of network in Sweden (Saknade nätverk i Sverige)
 - Lack of work experience in Sweden (Saknade arbetslivserfarenhet i Sverige)
 - Lack of Swedish language skills (Saknade kunskap i svenska språket)
 - Lack of confidence in job hunting (Bristande självförtroende i att söka jobb)
 - Lack of time due to taking on household chores, such as cleaning and cooking (Saknade tid på grund av hushållssysslor, såsom städa och laga mat)
 - Lack of time due to taking care of my child or family member (Saknade tid på grund av omhändertagande av barn eller familjemedlem)
 - If other, please specify: (Om annat, vänligen specificera:)

4. After your participation in Carpe Sophia, do you still face the same barriers when searching for job in Malmo, Sweden? (Efter ditt deltagande i Carpe Sophia, står du fortfarande inför samma hinder när du söker jobb i Malmö, Sverige?)

	Yes (Ja)	No (Nej)	Not applicable (Inte tillämplig)
Did not know how to write a resume and cover letter (Visste inte hur jag skulle skriva CV och personligt brev)			
Lack of interview skills (Saknade intervjukunskap)			
Lack of network in Sweden (Saknade nätverk i Sverige)			
Lack of work experience in Sweden (Saknade arbetslivserfarenhet i Sverige)			
Lack of Swedish language skills (Saknade kunskap i svenska språket)			
Lack of confidence in job hunting (Bristande självförtroende i att söka job)			
Lack of time due to taking on household chores (Saknade tid på grund av hushållssysslor)			
Lack of time due to taking care of my child or family member (Saknade tid på grund av omhändertagande av barn eller familjemedlem)			
Other (Annat)			

5. During your participation in Carpe Sophia, what types of resources did you gain access to? Select all that apply. (Under ditt deltagande i Carpe Sophia, vilka typer av resurser fick du tillgång till? (Välj alla svar som stämmer in)

- Communication and presentation skills (Kommunikations- och presentationsfärdigheter)
- Guide to the Swedish work culture (Guidning i den svenska arbetskulturen)
- Individual support (Individuellt stöd)
- Internship opportunity (Praktikmöjligheter)
- Interview Techniques (Intervjutekniker)
- Job opportunity (Jobbmöjligheter)
- Swedish language training (Svensk språkträning)
- Tips for resume and cover letter (Tips till CV och personligt brev)
- If other, please specify: (Om annat, vänligen specificera:)
- None (Inga)

6. How helpful is the resources provided through Carpe Sophia in terms of preparing you to enter the labor market? (Hur användbara är Carpe Sophias resurser i syfte att förbereda dig för att träda in på arbetsmarknaden?)

- Very helpful (Mycket användbara)
- Somewhat helpful (Ganska användbara)
- Neither (Ingetdera)
- Not so helpful (Inte så användbara)
- Not at all helpful (Inte alls användbara)

7. After your participation in Carpe Sophia, do you think your employment prospects, such as employment opportunities or employability, have been improved? (Efter ditt deltagande i Carpe Sophia, tycker du att dina anställningsutsikter, såsom möjligheter till anställning och anställningsbarhet, har förbättrats?)
- Yes, because: (Ja, eftersom:)
 - i. I feel more comfortable and more prepared for job interview (Jag känner mig mer bekväm och mer förberedd för jobbintervju.)
 - ii. I feel my chance of getting a job has increased. (Jag känner att mina chanser att få ett jobb har ökat.)
 - iii. The letter of recommendation from Carpe Sophia improved my chance of being selected (Rekommendationsbrevet från Carpe Sophia förbättrar mina chanser att bli vald.)
 - iv. If other, please specify (Om annat, vänligen specificera)
 - No, please specify: (Nej, vänligen specificera:)
8. After your participation in Carpe Sophia, do you have a more positive attitude toward yourself? (Efter ditt deltagande i Carpe Sophia, har du en mer positiv attityd gentemot dig själv?)
- Yes, because: (Ja, eftersom:)
 - i. I got the tools, such as tips for resume, interview techniques, etc. and feel self-improved (Jag har verktygen, såsom tips för CV, intervjutekniker etc. och har stärkt min självkänsla.)
 - ii. I had an opportunity to share my story and got support from other participants (Jag hade möjlighet att dela med mig av min historia och fick stöd från andra deltagare.)
 - iii. I received support from the mentor and the project leader (Jag fick stöd från min mentor och projektledaren.)
 - iv. I got more interview opportunities (Jag fick fler intervjumöjligheter)
 - v. Other, please specific (Annat, vänligen specificera)
 - No, please specify: (Nej, vänligen specificera:)
9. Did Carpe Sophia provide assistance to help you to build a wider network? (Har Carpe Sophia ger stöd för att hjälpa dig att byggt ett bredare nätverk?)
- Yes, because: (Ja, eftersom:)
 - i. The activities of Carpe Sophia taught me how to build networks (Carpe Sophias aktiviteter lärde mig att bygga nätverk)
 - ii. I can participate in other activities at IKF Malmö (Jag kan delta i andra aktiviteter på IKF Malmö)

- iii. I receive information from other organizations through Carpe Sophia (Jag tar emot information från andra organisationer genom Carpe Sophia)
 - iv. Other, please specific (Annat, vänligen specificera)
- No, please specify: (Nej, vänligen specificera:)
10. If you selected “Yes” in Q8, do you think you have built a wider network after your participation in Carpe Sophia? (Om du väljer "JA" i Q9, tycker du har byggt ett bredare nätverk efter ditt deltagande i Carpe Sophia?)
- Yes (Ja)
 - No (Nej)
11. How did your participation in Carpe Sophia change your situation, especially your situation in the labor market? Try to compare the before/after. (Hur förändrade ditt deltagande i Carpe Sophia din situation, speciellt din situation på arbetsmarknaden? Försök att jämföra innan/efter.)
12. Overall, do you think your participation in Carpe Sophia has increased your employment opportunities? (Överlag, tycker du att ditt deltagande i Carpe Sophia har ökat dina möjligheter till anställning?)
- Yes (Ja)
 - No (Nej)

Part II:

1. You Employment status: (Din anställningsstatus:)
- Full-time (heltid)
 - Part-time (deltid)
 - Self-employed (egenföretagare)
 - Unemployed (arbetslös)
 - If you are employed, did you get this job opportunity through Carpe Sophia? Yes/No (om du är anställd, fick du den anställningsmöjligheten genom Carpe Sophia? Ja/Nej)
2. When and why you moved to Sweden? (När och varför flyttade du till Sverige?)
3. Place of Birth: (Födelseort:)
4. Marital Status: Single, Married, Separated, Divorced, Widowed (Civilstatus: Singel, Gift, Separerad, Skild, Änka)

5. How many children do you have? (Hur många barn har du?)
6. Would you like to participate in a face-to-face interview? The interview will only take around 30 mins, and we can arrange a time and place to meet at your convenience. (Vill du delta i en riktig intervju? Intervjun kommer bara ta omkring 30 minuter och vi kan bestämma tid och mötesplats som passar dig.)
 - Yes – Contact information: name, email, phone number (Ja – Kontaktinformation: namn, email, telefonnummer)
 - No (Nej)

Appendix B: Interview Guide and Interview Questions

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Interview guide

Basic Information:

Reference Code:	
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Name of interviewee:							
Contact:							
Date & Time of interview:			<table border="1"> <tr> <td style="background-color: #d9e1f2;">Start at:</td> <td style="background-color: #d9e1f2;">End at:</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Start at:	End at:		
Start at:	End at:						
Location of interview:							

Interview Preparation Checklist:

1. Questions have been prepared.
2. Have the paperwork printed out and bring pens/pencils.
3. Remember to set your cell phones/ devices etc. on vibrate/mute before the interview

Interview Opening:

1. Introduce yourself
2. Explain the purpose of the research (ethical concerns etc.)
3. Explain the interview process - how long will the interview take, note taking, etc.
4. Point out that it's the interviewee's perceptions that's important. Further there are no wrong answers
5. Explain that the interview will be recorded
6. Her personal information will be kept confidential.

After the interview:

1. Make sure you get the contact of the interviewee and give yours
2. Ask if the interviewee have any questions or concerns
3. Thank the interviewee for spending time for the interview

Interview Questions

Part I. Basic Information – background of the interviewee:

1. How long have you been living in Sweden?
2. Why did you move to Sweden?
3. When did you start searching for job after you moved to Sweden?
 - a. Immediately – then go to next question
 - b. Why did you wait for ____ year(s) before start searching for job?
4. Are you currently employed?
 - a. If yes:
 - i. When did you start this job?
 - ii. Is it a job referred by Carpe Sophia?
 - iii. Are you satisfied with your job?
 - iv. Is there change in your household roles and responsibilities since you start working? Such as the time you spend on household works or care of child/family member?

Part II - Interviewee's impression of the Swedish labor Market:

1. What are the biggest barriers when you search for job in Sweden? And why?

Part III – Interviewee's experience with Carpe Sophia?

1. Before or after joining Carpe Sophia, did you participant in any other similar program(s)?
 - a. If yes
 - i. What are the differences between Carpe Sophia and the other program(s)?
 - ii. Do you think it is important to have a female only program like Carpe Sophia? Does it really make a difference?
 - b. If no
 - i. Do you think it is important to have a female only program like Carpe Sophia? Does it really make a difference?
2. Compare the before and after your participation in Carpe Sophia, what are the most obvious changes or the most significant outcomes?
 - a. Did it make a difference when you entering the labor market/ searching for job? If yes, how?
 - b. Did it motivate you? If yes, how?
 - c. Did you discover new things about yourself? If yes, how?
 - d. Did you learn new skills? If yes, how?
3. Your overall experience of Carpe Sophia?
 - a. Did Carpe Sophia help you connect with the prospective employers?
 - b. Did Carpe Sophia meet your needs as a job seeker?
 - c. What did you like, dislike, think can be improved in regard to your experience with Carpe Sophia?

Part IV: Interviewees' thoughts

1. The aim of Carpe Sophia is to empower women. In this regard, I would like to ask you what is women empowerment according to you? And do you think it is important to empower women?
2. Do you have any recommendations or advices for how can we improve the situation of women with foreign background in the Swedish labor market?