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Integration through physical activity in Sweden.

Where are the women?

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Abstract

Integration through physical activity is getting bigger in national integration strategies. Healthy bodies and clear minds can improve many things in life, this is also true for refugees. Many of the integration projects focusing on physical activity have male participants but fail to get women interested in participating in physical activities. This study investigates why the women are not participating with the help of Helstein's combined theory for understanding identity creation and Bourdieu's Habitus. The study is an empirical explorative study that was carried out in Härnösand, Sweden, through the qualitative methods of interviewing and participatory observation. The data show that the women do not understand physical activity the same way that Swedish society tend to view it. The women do not see any importance in the training per se but rather the surrounding aspects of being part of the activity, such as meeting friends, clearing their minds and feeling free. Integration projects focusing on physical activity therefore needs to realize that to get the women in to regular physical activities the initiatives needs to start where the women are today. Organizations need to work slowly to integrate the women in to different kinds of activities to be able to integrate them in to a healthier way of life.

Key words: integration, physical activity, women, Sweden, refugees

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1.Introduction and background

The time when targeted development was to take place only in developing nations is gone. When the world is globalizing, the gaps between poor and rich are getting bigger and parts of ethnic groups seem to move further away from each other, development needs to happen everywhere. To quote Potter et. al (2008) “people are increasingly thinking in terms of an era of global change and a globalizing world”. In the aftermath of the 2015 refugee crisis this is more evident than ever. People who are suffering from war seek refuge elsewhere leading to the need of integration into a new culture while also remaining oneself. In recent years the effect of sport for development has been highlighted more and more by several actors e.g. The Olympic Committee (Olympic, 2018-01-07) and the United Nations (UN, 2018-01-07). With this, the NGOs focusing on different ways of getting people active in a peaceful and understanding way have grown in number. Some organizations like these around the globe are; Girls on the Run (GTR, 2018-03-07), Aleph Surf (Aleph, 2018-03-07) and Idrott Utan Gränser (IUG, 2018-03-07). Around these new NGOs new communities are created. If there is a place where you can have fun in a relaxed way while creating relationships people will join and this creates a snowball effect. Sport has been considered the cornerstone of youth culture (Neman et. al, 2017) and is considered a big part of the general culture in the Nordic countries. It is a place for personal development and understanding, while also learning rules and handling defeat and victory. This research focuses on integration through physical activity and is needed since physical activity is not just a development strategy that releases stress and makes you stronger mentally and physically but also a playful way to create social inclusion (Bailey et. al, 2013). In a world where so many things are serious, people need an outlet for play and letting go, something that movement is good at achieving. Having this outlet while also building relationships, muscles and creating inclusion can be a winning combination. If we knew more about how to include everyone, in this study the focus will be the inclusion of women, people from different cultures could find a common interest to gather around. After all sport is a language that most of us can speak (Meier, 2005) independent of our differences and diversity and could hence be a good starting place to create understanding.

2.Purpose and aim of the study

This thesis is an explorative study (Punch, 2005, p.137) that investigate integration projects focusing on physical activity in Sweden, with the particular focus of looking at why there are so few women participating in these projects. These initiatives are still a small number out of the overall integration initiatives around Sweden (HejFrämling, 2018-03-07) (Äventyrsgruppen, 2018-01-08) (FLF, 2018-01-08) (IUG, 2018-03-07) and all of these, with the exception of HejFrämling, are subgroups sprung out of other organizations not directly focusing on integration. With the knowledge that more men than women are arriving in Sweden as refugees and asylum seekers today (Migrationsverket, 2018-05-14), the numbers of women participating are still not representative for the allocation of men and women in the country. This leads to the belief that another force is behind this fact, which could be related to culture, religion and/or gender. The aim to investigate this issue is for the goal of future inclusion of the women in these integration projects since studies show that physical exercise is efficient when overcoming trauma (Ley et.al, 2017), it is a way to socialize and build social capital within the community (Bailey et.al, 2013) and it is also observed that practicing a common hobby together is an easier integration project for Swede's to participate in (Informal Talk vice president, 2018-03-07). This paired with integration projects that focus on an activity for both migrants and Swede's to participate in together are all arguments for expanding the inclusion of women and possibly increasing the number of organizations with this focus. This study will focus on the organization HejFrämling and the research questions are hence:

Why are there so few refugee women in HejFrämling's projects that focus on physical activity?

What are the women's experiences from being part of this type of project?

The following study will fill a research gap identified during the literature review stage in this area. The research gap identified is one of cultural sensitivity to the socialization process of the women's backgrounds and their participation in physical activity today. Equally important to investigate, in combination to the before mentioned, is this effect on integration and identity formation in the new setting.

The thesis will start by presenting previous research on the topic from different angles, including themes as; the importance to socially integrate, physical activity's effect on mental health, female empowerment and physical activity, women and sport and the Swedish context. In the theoretical framework, the theories used to analyse the material will be discussed, followed by the section surrounding method choice and ethical considerations in the field. After explaining the method, an analysis of the gathered theoretical and empirical data will be laid out together with the thesis limitations and implications. The thesis will end with a conclusion followed by a section with suggestions for future female inclusion of refugees in these projects in the context of Sweden.

3.Previous and existing research

Research on integration, women and physical activity have been multiple and the research has been expanding in recent years. The following section will introduce five subheadings in which previous research in the area have been conducted.

3.1. The importance to be socially integrated

When refugees arrive in a new setting it is important to find one's place and integrate in to the society. Osterlund and Seippel (2013) referred to the bonding of social capital as the superglue of social inclusion, something that many people are the witness of. In the Scandinavian countries voluntary sport organizations are a key aspect of civil society and also the part that is the strongest and gets the most funding (Osterlund & Seippel, 2013). Research has shown that participation in sport organizations have multiple physical and psychosocial benefits for especially youth with refugee backgrounds (Block & Gibbs, 2017). The sport organizations bring people together through common activities and have the ripple effect of creating engagement in other types of voluntary tasks within the organizations for the member's family members. This creates inclusion and community belonging to not just the person participating but the people around them as well (Block & Gibbs, 2017). It is also proven that sport organizations tend to foster interpersonal skills and good values that are then translated to the classroom setting for many of the young people participating (Block & Gibbs, 2017). That said it is important to add that the social inclusion is highly contextual and that high levels of participation does not necessarily lead to higher levels of social inclusion. The dark side of social inclusion can sometimes be that some members are excluded (Osterlund & Seippel, 2013). In recent years the participation in individual sports have

increased and the team sports have seen a decrease in member numbers, although many of the individual sport are still connected to a team for training. The effect of this on voluntary sport engagement and social inclusion have yet to be examined (Osterlund & Seippel, 2013).

3.2. Physical activity's effect on mental health

More and more studies show a correlation between physical activity and mental health (Carlzén & Drackovic, 2016) (Bailey et. al, 2013) (Ley et. al, 2017). Many refugees have experienced trauma and war which effect their integration process and their mental capacity. Trauma survivors often show lack of ability to concentrate, relax and even closing their eyes since flash back and suppressed memories are normal (Ley et. al, 2017). In Skåne in Sweden the municipality have started an initiative called “Partnership Skåne” which is studied by Carlzén & Drackovic (2016). This initiative has many branches, one has the focus on creating “a holistic model for an inclusive and health-promoting integration process” (Carlzén & Drackovic, 2016, p. 442). These initiatives are increasing in number since physical activity have shown decreased chance for obesity in adulthood (Bailey et. al, 2013) and the ability to fade out trauma related thought during the exercise (Ley et. al, 2017) amongst many other things. Although the initiatives are increasing these studies are underrepresented in research, where the focus surround human capital often is surrounding studies on education (Bailey et. al, 2013). Education is important but the combination with physical activity can help increase results and intellectual ability among youth. The “Partnership Skåne” (Carlzén & Drackovic, 2016) initiative try to make health promotion available in the refugees’ mother tongue since the health literacy is very varied among the people arriving in Sweden today. One of the first steps is hence to educate on the benefits of activity. Trauma effects people on a neurobiological level (Ley et. al, 2017) and cardiovascular disease is the biggest cause of death worldwide today (Bailey et. al, 2013), this prove the importance of the integration of physical activity on all levels of society and in particular that of refugees and immigrants.

3.3. Female empowerment and physical activity

A study made by Deem and Gilroy (2006) on western women, physical activity and power structures show that women tended to be put off by the competitiveness in sport and rather want to practice individual activities such as swimming, climbing, running, horseback riding and yoga/Pilates. The authors argue that this might be the aftermath of a bad introduction to physical activity. Being forced to participate in physical education in school might have

created negative feelings around the activities practiced. Hence when choosing to move in adulthood they chose activities that were not included in the school activities and therefore were filled with bad connotations (Deem & Gilroy, 2006). Another interesting aspect of the Deem and Gilroy (2006) study is their focus on the power relations inside and outside home which affect women's participation in physical activity. The authors highlight the fact that many women chose calming activities when having spare time such as reading, knitting or yoga, when it comes to physical activity since their day is filled with tasks that need to be done. Consequently, when they had some time for themselves they used that to calm down. Deem and Gilroy (2006) question if this has to do with the labor division inside the home where women tend to do more and have more tasks at hand and in their head than the men.

The Deem and Gilroy (2006) study show that women felt empowered by physical activity. Even though the reason from the beginning might have been to lose weight and slow down the aging process while also being social the outcome was often that the women felt confident and that they had developed new skills. They felt stronger, both in their bodies and by standing up for their leisure interest. One might also ask if the lost weight might have something to do with it since beauty and feminine appeal creates power in heterosexual relationships which gives the women bigger possibilities for negotiation (Deem & Gilroy, 2006).

3.4. Gender, culture and sport

Feminist scholars have long highlighted the hegemonic masculinity of most sport and that these ideals need to change (Theberge, 1987). Sport has a tendency to reproduce gender ideals and masculinity that other parts of society have moved away from. It has a lot to do with power relations and while men's power has declined in comparison to women's in society, the symbolic expressions of masculine power in sport seems to show more in reaction to more equality overall (Theberge, 1987). While staying aware of the fact that Muslim women cannot, and will not, be collected and put in to one homogenous group for this study or in real life, a section focusing on the literature about women with cultural background in Muslim countries is included. The reason for this is that although the group "Muslim women" consists of great diversity, previous research has discovered some common aspects in the case of physical activity and sport participation. Muslim women's participation in sport has been of interest to researchers for quite some time. They have focused on different aspects of their participation; the limiting factors such as the veil, coaches' knowledge about Ramadan and

the need for segregated sport activities (Knez et. al, 2012) (Palmer, 2009) (Hargreaves, 2000), the parents as discouraging the young women paired with costs for transportation and gear needed (Palmer, 2009). What the literature about the topic has failed to show and take in to consideration is the diversity within the concept of “Muslim women”. Depending on the country of origin, cultural background, parents experience of sport and current political environment the group contains a lot of differences (Hargreaves, 2000). Another aspect that researchers have become more aware of is the fact that previous research has often looked at competitive sport and school based physical activity. The focus on these, narrows down the context in which Muslim women can be included and also excludes many activities that are healthy and physically active just because they do not fall in to the traditional, and masculine, definition of what sport is (Knez et. al, 2012) (Palmer, 2009). More recent studies have therefore tried to look at the broader spectrum at what physical activity can contain and how Muslim girls partake in these activities within the framework of their religious and cultural beliefs (Knez et. al, 2012). Knez et. al (2012) present a picture of Muslim girls participating in physical activity through walking with their moms, practicing dance at relatives before a big wedding and some girls practice more organized sports such as swimming and team sports if their parents had experience from that particular sport from before and hence felt secure with letting their daughters participate. In the same study the importance of siblings for the young Muslim women are displayed, since an older brother playing team sport can enable the girls’ possibility to play in the backyard together with their siblings during spare time (Knez et. al, 2012).

Parents are often perceived as constricting factors in the Muslim girls and women participation in sport, but studies show that there are as many encouraging parents as there are discouraging. The problems arise when the girls are supposed to publicly display their skill or compete in a tournament where men can be watching (Palmer, 2009). Individual sport was more encouraged by parents according to Knez et. al (2012) while being part of a sport club or likewise was discouraged no matter if the sport was individual or team based. The girls who took part in segregated team sport practice all had different ways of combining the activity with Islam in Palmer’s (2009) study. Some were bending the rules of strict Muslim conduct whereas others keep to the, for example, dress codes while playing. Palmer (2009) noticed that the way the girls wore their veils was a notion as how they interpreted Islam in their own life’s. Coming back to parents and public playing, many girls did not care that much about their Muslim dress codes but dressed accordingly because it was their parents will and

when competing in a tournament all girls covered up no matter how they dressed during practice.

3.5. The context of Sweden

The context of Sweden is particular in some respects, such as in the aspect of physical activity and feminism along with many other. These two are included here since they are in line with the study and also make out important parts of the national identity (Berggren & Trägårdh, 2011) (Hornscheidt, 2008). During the 1900s many foreign authors discussed the Swedish people's love for nature and they argued many times that the love for being active, such as walking, in nature was greater than the love they had for fellow humans (Berggren & Trägårdh, 2011, p. 20-22). Individualism is a big influence in Swedish society along with state rooted feminism (Hornscheidt, 2008). Hornscheidt (2008) undertake the discussion and analysis about feminism being a way of politically branding the country. Feminism has been part of state politics for a long time in Sweden and today Sweden is exporting a feminist foreign policy (Aggestam & Bergman-Rosamund, 2016). Including feminism in politics have pictured the Swedish government as progressive and liberal resulting in being one of the most gender equal countries in the world (Hornscheidt, 2008). Feminism, equality for all and having the right to choose oneself, might be argued to align with state individualism which according to Berggren and Trägårdh (2011, p. 25) is at the centre of the Swedish state. The individualism and urge for nature is summarized in an analysis by a foreign author in this statement: "it is the urge to be fully and completely one's own that drives the Swedes to go out in nature, it is an expression for the Swedish person's irrepressible individualism and headstrong desire for freedom" (Berggren & Trägårdh, 2011, p. 21).

4. Theoretical framework

The analysis of data will be done by drawing on Helstein's (2007) identity concept, combining Lacan's and Foucault's theories on identity creation and by using Bourdieu's concept of Habitus (Costa & Murphy, 2015).

4.1. Seeing your sporting body

Helstein's (2007) article on identity within sport sociology argues for the combined use of Foucauldian theory and Lacanian theory, instead of using them as opposites as done today. Helstein (2007) uses the mirror stage from Lacan's theory of consciousness to examine the

identity creation in the mirror stage while she uses Foucault's discursive theory to examine subjectivation in relation to power, knowledge and the body. Helstein's (2007) combination of these two theories makes it possible to investigate identity on a deeper level with a social psychology focus. Although the theories have been said to point towards different direction they have the significance of the body in identity creation in common. While set in a post structural context, which has been critiqued for breaking down everything to text and illusion, the author uses these two theories to bring back the substantive part of human existence through the body (Helstein, 2007). The combined two theories presented includes many appropriate aspects for analysis in this study. The mirror stage as the primary identification is when the infant sees its own reflection for the first time and understands, as Helstein (2007) calls it, the imagined body/image in relation to the I/eye. In this instant there is a split between the physical body and the image in the mirror. The concept of subjectivities is included, which explains the identification as a subject while also understanding the discourse in which the subject is the object (Helstein, 2007). So, understanding "what you are" and "what you might choose to be" while also understanding the normative discourse that the label of your subject fits in to. Helstein (2007) explains that how we talk about a subject or situation right now is also how that subject or situation is perceived in this very moment of history. Going back to the concept of I and the imagined body, Helstein (2007) also introduces the third symbolic aspect of the Other. The Other is the hypothesis of the Law of Father and shows up as an internalized perspective. The Other symbolizes an all-knowing and all-seeing force that is always present and sees what you are doing in life. The Other is the necessity of submission to order, law and knowledge in the creation of the subject. The internalization of this all-knowing force is the symbolic importance of the Other. The text also argues that power only works when the Other is necessary in our desire to be and that the Other is always lacking, it can never fulfill what the subject feels an absence of (Helstein, 2007). The Other will be utilized in discussion with the unwritten rules that the women in the study live by, almost religiously, although circumstances around them have changed.

4.2. Bourdieu and habitus

To highlight the socialization process within the context of the Swedish society and the particular context of integration through physical activity, Bourdieu's concept of Habitus will be part of the study's theoretical framework.

“Habitus is socialized objectivity that agents embody both individually and collectively, through the interrelationships they establish in social spaces to which they belong”.

(Costa & Murphy, 2015, p. 7)

This quote explains the core of Habitus, where people adapt their view and opinions according to the normative thoughts of their time, community and surroundings. People are social actors which are formed from their life experiences and through these one creates a way of being (Costa & Murphy, 2015, p. 7). Bourdieu talks about primary and secondary Habitus, where the primary Habitus is more negative towards new perspectives and the Habitus created early in life. The secondary Habitus is more positive towards this and represents the socialization process into a specific context, or field as Bourdieu calls it, at a later stage in life. The primary Habitus wants things to stay the same while the secondary adapts to new settings. Through migration factors that are taken as truth and are unquestioned will change and this will create tension in Habitus. One then needs to reflect over one's own dispositional systems and the structures that one lives by. Adopting to a new situation or understanding other customs, which immigrants and refugees have to do, will materialize ambivalence, rejection and stress in the people in question (Nowicka, 2015, p. 94). At the center of Bourdieu's Habitus is the body, since the processes of understanding normative behaviors and feeling out of place is mainly a bodily experience (Costa & Murphy, 2015, p. 7) (Nowicka, 2015, p. 102). With Habitus Bourdieu tried to understand the internalized behaviors and perceptions that people get through their social context (Costa & Murphy, 2015, p. 3). Being a refugee in another country trying to learn the language, the culture and social practices is an example of what might create confusion in personality since most of us take our values and ways of life for granted until presented with something that is different. Bourdieu was also obsessed with reflexivity and staying aware of his own positioning in relation to the researched (Costa & Murphy, 2015, p. 6) which is well aligned with the methodological approach to gathering data in this study. Habitus can help us understand intercultural practices of symbolic importance which is something that many immigrants are faced with, reacting to or acting with everyday even though they might not be aware of the process (Nowicka, 2015, p. 97). The socialization process is constituted by two aspects; subjectivity, which is the individual experience of life accumulated through a collection of past experiences, and the objective world; which is affected by the economy, power, culture and many other things in the context of the surrounding community that the individual hence live by (Costa & Murphy, 2015, p. 5).

These two concepts will help guide the analysis of data on both an individual level, for these women personally, and on a structural level, guided by their background and current situation. Utilizing these will help the analysis by the researcher to dig deep in how we identify ourselves in different cultures and make possible a discussion on the new realizations when coming in to a new context. Two other theoretical aspects that were used during the data collection will be discussed shortly in the methodology section.

5. Methodology and research design

This thesis started out with the idea of being based on theoretical resources but two months in to the process the opportunity to meet one of the directors of the organization of HejFrämling opened up. With that lunch the opportunity to interview some of the women who have participated in their projects was realized. This altered the direction of the research and sparked the excitement of carrying out empirical work to get first-hand information from the women.

HejFrämling is an organization that started out in project form during the autumn of 2013 and was registered an organization in 2015 (HejFrämling, 2018-03-07). It started in Östersund where Emma, the organization founder, went out to a refugee facility in the woods outside of the main town to ask the current residents if they wanted to do something together and what that might be. The refugees answered Emma that they would like to try to ski, which was the first activity the future initiative of HejFrämling facilitated (Vice president, informal talk 2018-03-07). After this the organization have grown fast and have gotten multiple awards for their engagement in promoting health through increased communion (UngtLedarskap, 2018-04-03) (MedborgarprisetEU, 2018-04-03) (SvenskaHjältar, 2018-04-03) and the organization is expanding over the country. The choice of Härnösand for this study was because the initiatives have had a bigger focus on the participation of women in this part of the country and there is a will power within the organization in this part to include even more women and girls in their activities (Vice president, informal talk 2018-03-07).

The research of this study has been carried out through a feminist constructivist lens and with an aim of creating a holistic understanding of the organization and context in question, the method of an instrumental and explorative case study was hence chosen (Punch, 2005, p. 144). The empirical part of the study was carried out in Härnösand between the 11th and 12th

of April 2018 at Samlingspunkten which is run by the municipality and a place that the organizers of HejFrämling in Härnösand had access to.

5.1. Individual interviews

Seven semi-structured interviews with women participating, or who had participated, in HejFrämling's activities in the Swedish city Härnösand was conducted during two days. Since it is a qualitative study an important part of doing field work was to go to Härnösand to visit the women in their natural setting (Punch, 2005, p. 141). Although stating that it is their foundational natural setting is complex since they have fled from their home countries. With natural setting in this context natural setting is meant as the setting where they now live and know preferably well and the place where the women have had the chance to create some sort of connections, with the HejFrämling organization for example. It was also important for the researcher to keep in mind the identity negotiations going on within the women in relation to the persevered natural setting and their ideas about this in their place of origin.

The interviews were individual and between 25 min to 50 min long with a translator present on one occasion when the woman had limited Swedish language. This translator was her husband which influenced the material and depth of that interview. The feminist approach of the study created a possibility for a "dialogic, dialectically educative encounter between researcher and researched" (Punch, 2005, p. 137) and this mindset of the researcher created an open atmosphere during the interviews. The selection of women was based on the women who were willing to be part of the study and who had the time free during the particular days. It was also based on which women that knew the coordinator for the activities of the region.

Many of the women felt strong connections to the three women organizing the activities in Härnösand and this sample bias will be discussed further below. Hence there was no intended selection in case of age, activity which they had partaken in, country of origin or likewise. The only criteria were that they all were refugees and/or asylum-seeking women that had been or were part of HejFrämling's activities in Härnösand. Since the interviews were semi-structured they gave a lot of room for the women to express their own thoughts and ideas about the subject (Bryman, 2012, p. 471). Utilizing transnational feminist theory, the practices of self-reflexivity, constant interpretation of the researchers own voice and power and the awareness of co-creating knowledge, hence giving of yourself as a researcher in order for the interviewees to give of themselves created a broad base of knowledge from the texts read and

the field work conducted for this study (Nagar & Swarr, 2010, p. 7). Many times, during the interviews the positive outcome of reading up a lot about the situations one studies were brought in to light.

As mentioned above the choice of semi-structured interview was taken since it was important to be open towards what the women wanted to talk about (Punch, 2005, p. 169), which proved affective. The women revealed other aspects of their participation and non-participation than thought of before conducting the interviews. The activities the women had been a part of was dancing, cycling and running. A few women had been taught how to swim and some had gotten a key for the local gym, but these two activities were not provided by HejFrämling but other organizations in Härnösand.

5.2. Group interview

One group interview with three of the women who had taken part in the individual interviews was carried out the day after all individual interviews were done. The group interview was also semi-structured, and the aim of the interview were to create discussions surrounding the themes brought up during the individual interviews and have the chance to ask questions regarding the previous day's conversations. The hope was that the group dynamic would bring up other aspects of focus or would help with digging deeper in to the structures of why women are underrepresented in the integration projects focusing on physical activity. As mentioned in Punch (2005, p. 171), group interviews can enable conversations surrounding topics that the researcher would not get access to during an individual interview. This said it was also important to be aware of the problems with group interviews considering group dynamics and differences within the group setting (Punch, 2005, p. 171).

5.3. Key informant interview with coordinators in Härnösand

During the time in Härnösand one key informant interview were conducted with two of the coordinators of the Höga Kusten initiative. This interview was aimed at highlighting the more overarching situation of the initiatives focusing on women. The coordinators presented a Swedish female view on the initiatives and integration process in Härnösand. They also provided information about the relationship with the municipality and in which ways they had gotten financial help. Many of the themes from the interviews with the refugee women came back in the interview with the key informants. But there were also a few interesting aspects that were new.

All the above-mentioned interviews were conducted in Swedish, with varying depth since the interviewees language skills were very different. The translation of the interviews to fit this thesis have been done by the researcher who are fluent in both Swedish and English.

5.4. Participatory Observation

Every Thursday at Samlingpunkten, the place where the interviews took place, only women are allowed inside. During this day they have a dance class or yoga session for the women. During the field work a participatory observation was conducted during this dance class called Belly Power. The observation was carried out as a member-researcher and the things noticed is of course affected by the active participation (Punch, 2005, p. 182).

5.5. Informal talk

One informal talk with the vice president of the organization was done. This was not an interview but a lunch. The lunch did not have the focus on getting material for the thesis but during the lunch important information about the organization was highlighted and hence it is included in the methodology section of this paper.

5.6. The researcher's presumptions and hypothesis

Starting out researching this area I came with many presumptions and prejudice, which I myself did not even realize was prejudice until I started conducting interviews and meeting the women in Härnösand. I have since realized that my personal starting point is a safe upper-middle class Swedish one. One that I have been colored by and socialized into during my upbringing and hence take to be the reality and ultimately "the truth". I started to read about the refugees in Sweden and those texts together with the media geared me towards researching Muslim women and physical activity/sport since the majority of the refugees are from Muslim countries. When reading texts about culture, religion, women and sport (Toffoletti & Palmer, 2017) (Maxwell et. al, 2013) (Hargreaves, 2000) (Palmer, 2009) (Knez et. al, 2012) (Wiggins et. al, 2005) I created an idea from my previous experiences and knowledge that the men in the Muslim culture were the limiting factor for the female participation in physical activity, and if exploring it from a meta-perspective this is of course true since the world have been dominated for centuries by patriarchal powers and those powers are still very dominant in the countries of Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka and Palestine, where the interviewees came from. But while talking to the women another picture

emerged, a picture where the husbands of the women wanted to follow many of the customs in Swedish society since this is now their home. These men supported the women to participate in activities to learn the language, to meet international people and many of the women talked about how their husbands had started helping out at home since they fled their home country. I suspected and was also advised by my mentor to keep an open mind when conducting interviews which lead me to utilize some concepts from transnational feminist theory (Bahkru, 2008) (Nagar & Swarr, 2010) and post-colonial feminism (Mohanty, 2003). One can argue that Mohanty's (2003) approach might be quite limiting in certain aspects of analysis and in the question of inclusion but to stress the awareness of my own limitations in studying this topic I brought in that literature (Mohanty, 2003) and transnational feminism (Bahkru, 2008) (Nagar & Swarr, 2010) in to the interview, data collection and reflection process. Post-colonial feminism (Mohanty, 2003) will also be part of the analysis while reflecting on "otherness" and my own conclusions in relation to the data. In the coming sections post-colonial feminism and transnational feminism will briefly be explained.

Post-colonial feminism

In the book "Feminism without borders" by Mohanty (2003) the first chapter problematizes the western feminism's ethnocentrism in research and in feminist discourse. Mohanty (2003) starts off by presenting the two projects that "third world feminism" has to deal with continuously, namely stating critique towards the ethnocentric perspectives of the hegemonic western feminism and to formulate their own goals and opinions unaffected by the hegemonic discourses (2003, p. 33). If these aspects are not dealt with simultaneously the "third world feminism", as Mohanty (2003) calls it, will continue to be marginalized and ruled by the western feminist's views on them. All research is political and the western feminist view on "third world women" encounter problems in their creation. Problems such as codifying "third world women" as a homogenous group and making them the Other by automatically assuming their given centrality as the reference point of discussions and research. Another problem western feminisms face is their unawareness of the effect their discourse has on the global world system and the women who are coded as "Other", view of themselves (Mohanty, 2003, p. 35). Mohanty (2003, p. 37) states that the ethnocentric western feminism has a tendency to interfuse imperialism. The "third world women" are often presented as a homogenous group, who threatened by collective oppression stays together. These women are more often than not painted as nothing but victims of male violence, religious ideologies,

family systems etc. and not pictured as their own entities in debates today (Mohanty, 2003, p. 41).

Transnational feminism

Can feminisms be something more than just a critique? This question is stated by Bahkru (2008) while reflecting on her process working with her PHD dissertation utilizing the concept of transnational feminism. Transnational feminism was developed in the US and Canada through social movements and activism (Bahkru, 2008). The concept accepted notions of globalization in to its analysis, among which the theorizing of migration as a transnational process was highlighted (Nagar & Swarr, 2010, p. 4). In a globalizing world, transnational and global research is one of many forever shifting paradigm with complexities and contradicting practices within its relationships, something that the feminist focus of analysis allows in to the discussion (Bahkru, 2008) (Nagar & Swarr, 2010, p. 5). Fundamental in feminist research is to work through the differences rather than around them. This include considering aspects of class, gender, biases of power, experiences, cultural backgrounds and sexuality as factors involved in the knowledge production while carrying out research (Bahkru, 2008). Transnational feminism as a methodological tool will make it possible to acknowledge power structures within the research area and in the field while conducting interviews and highlight the heteronormative, masculinized and classed practices of globalization and of the capitalist world order. The approach also includes self-reflectivity and the criticisms surrounding the topic is included in the analysis of research as to not recreate suppressing structures of hegemonic knowledge and/or experience (Nagar & Swarr, 2010, p. 5).

5.7. Sample biases in the interviews

Important to discuss is the sample bias. First of all, the women interviewed are the women who had gone to the activities provided by HejFrämling. In the interviews with the coordinators of the HejFrämling activities, further discussed below, one of them confirms that there are about 1000 refugees in Härnösand and this study includes seven women who have partaken in physical activity of some sort in the management of HejFrämling. There is a big number of women, and men, who are not participating in the activities. We do not know why they are not participating, although the two afghan women interviewed talked about how the afghan men told their wife's not to talk to them since what they do, taking of their hijabs,

cycling and dancing, is not good for women. The women who had participated in the activities had very strong emotional connections to the organizers and might therefore paint a prettier picture than reality provides to try to show the organizers in better light. Yet another sample bias would be that these women have made the effort to participate in physical activities hence it might be close to their interest. What the women who do not have these kinds of interests believe or think we do not know.

Another sample bias worth highlighting is the limited number of interviews and the fact that the women participating in the study either talked about their supportive husbands or that they did not have a husband at all. A bias could therefore be the fact that the women participating in the activities could do so because of the liberal views of their husbands or that they did not have husbands who held them back. The data could falsify the prejudice about women being controlled by their husbands since all the women in the study had supportive husbands, but it could also show a sample bias of the fact that the only women being able to participate in activities of physical activity can do so because they have liberal husbands.

5.8. Limitations and ethical considerations

Logistics

The field work in Härnösand was carried out during two full days in the town. This is a very limited time scoop to get a broad overview and to notice tendencies that might not be spoken about. The limited time can also create a situation where the people included in the study “puts on a good face” for the sake of meeting the researcher, something that is more difficult if the methodology would be more anthropological and span over a longer time.

The sample group of women were a limited number and they all had very different levels of Swedish and background with very different educational level. These two aspects might affect how much they can say and explain during the interviews both Swedish language wise and in descriptive accounts about feelings, structures and culture differences.

Swedish, young and female researcher

The ethical considerations have been added continuously throughout the study since this is an aspect that I as a researcher investigating another culture than my own wants to be sensitive about. There are limitations to conducting interviews from the perspective of a Swedish woman with women from other nationalities. We come from different backgrounds, are

brought up differently and are socialized in to very different societies. In line with the transnational feminist theory Buhkru (2008) highlights the relationship of insider or outsider when conducting research which is of relevance to bring up here. Feminist scholars have questioned if it is better to be an insider or an outsider while conducting empirical research, in this case I, as a researcher, am an insider in the Swedish culture and its politics but an outsider to the context of the refugee women. Buhkru (2008) stresses the possibility for the outsider researcher to adapt certain knowledge and accidentally marginalize other knowledge in line with her socialized perspective. Keeping these arguments in mind was central during the data collection process and is also one of the main reasons for choosing a feminist interview technique, to stay open and co-create the knowledge. This said I am aware of my own effect on the material collected and how this is perceived and analyzed.

The women who were not reached

The women's talk about their husbands and their liberal ways in Sweden came very naturally, that said this was something reflected about in the beginning of the interviews. Have they caught the discussions on equality in Sweden and hence are trying to prove something? Are they bringing this up because they are interviewed by a Swedish woman? Or are they expressing genuine priorities? The fact that the feelings about their husband's support were genuine were without question, but the priority to mention this as one of the first things during the interview, was that genuine? The discussion brought up as a sample bias in the methodology section about the small number of women interviewed and that all of them had liberal husbands or no men at all is worth mentioning again. These women might be able to participate just because they have liberal husbands or no man at all. As mentioned preciously, the coordinators mentioned the estimated number that there are around a thousand refugees in Härnösand and I have spoken to seven women. This is hence a case that explains the specific case of these specific women and cannot be generalized. It rather shows an example of one of the many integration processes both in Härnösand and in Sweden.

5.9. Data analysis

Using an inductive qualitative method while gathering and coding data, themes appeared after reading through field notes several times. The data analysis method of thematic analysis (Bryman, 2012, p. 578-579) was hence decided upon. Even though the thematic analysis does not explain a specific system of structuring the analysis the belief was that the data collected

strongly showed points of discussion and analysis that this lack in analysis method was not perceived as a con but rather as a way for more free analysis connections.

6. Analysis and discussion

During the interviews and data collection some reoccurring themes were highlighted among the women. These themes will be analyzed in the different paragraphs below.

6.1. Being social and meeting friends

The main theme that appeared when talking to these women, who had participated in HejFrämling's activities, was that first and foremost they took part in the physical activity for the chance to be social and meet other women. When arriving in the new setting they first felt lost but when they started participating in the activities that HejFrämling provided they got to know people and felt more at home. All the women talked about the fact that they had met both Swedish women and women from other countries that they now call friends. This was very important for them and something that many of them mentioned twice. We are all socialized in to different contexts and Habitus (Costa & Murphy, 2015, p. 8) and to integrate in to a new setting one needs to be exposed towards the new ways. After some time, the settings of our life become our comfort blanket, we relax in what we know. The known becomes comfortable and many times the fear of losing that which is known is what creates prejudice and resentment among groups of people towards others since they have other ways of being. Taking the example of the women's focus on being social, this might be a sign of the search for something that feels secure in an unknown situation. Having that security might also be what makes them braver and more open towards cultivating new ways, hence activating the secondary Habitus (Costa & Murphy, 2015, p. 7).

This theme reoccurred in the group interview, that was conducted the day after the individual interviews. The discussion that followed a question about what they thought was important to have time for, except for family and work, in everyday life showed the importance of interacting with others. All of them answered that it is important to have time to meet up with friends, which is in line with the focus on the social part of the activities of HejFrämling during the individual interviews. One woman said that the combination of going for a walk and meeting a friend would be ideal. The most important activity, apart from family and work for the women participating in the group interview, was to have the chance to talk to a female friend and share experiences about life. One woman explicitly said:

“I want to meet other women. I want to know how they think, I want to know their courage. It is good for me and makes me calmer. Now I dare to talk to any woman. But first I did not dare to look. I did not dare to do anything” (Interview nr 4, researcher’s translation).

This woman felt braver to “take on” the new setting/life when she had a community in which she felt she could mirror herself and feel a part of the group. Helstein (2007) highlights the notion by talking about how our surroundings and the people around us becomes a benchmark in how we see ourselves and also is a benchmark for what is normative. When the women exchange their experiences with each other they might get their feelings verified which might make them feel less lonely in the situation they are in. Human connection is important and adding on to the discussion in the previous paragraph, that is particularly true in the case of being a refugee. Fleeing what is known to you to something uncertain, security must play an important role. The fact that these women could meet other women in the same situation, hence mirroring them and their ways (Helstein, 2007), made them feel secure. But not just that, the women also mentioned the importance of meeting both other women from their culture or in the same situation and meeting Swedish women. Showing signs of engagement to integrate and to see/learn/get to know the women and customs in the new setting. The refugee women might be more open to integrate in the new setting since Nowicka (2015) argues that it is often some form of crisis that makes us change our perception and how we react to our surroundings. Fleeing from war or malfunctions in the home country, through multiple countries and arriving in something that is unknown certainly has the potential to create this crisis. Hence the women arriving here seeking security and a new home might be more open towards the always ongoing process of socialization and identity creation (Nowicka, 2015). Being social also reoccurred in the key informant interview with the coordinators. The coordinators mentioned that the biggest legacy, which they see now, from their work with this initiative is the bridges they have been part of creating between people. Especially between refugees and Swedish people since they have been able to vouch for people on “both sides” because they know them all. The bridges built between people and the involvement of family members to the participating woman is supported by the previous research above (Block & Gibbs, 2017).

6.2. Clarity of mind

On the question of how the physical activity made them feel most of the women said that it made their mind clear, that they forgot their problems. The women who had been part of a

cycling project said that being on the bike made them feel free and one woman said the same about dancing. Another woman explained the feeling after her weekly dance class like she felt born again and continues:

“I feel super strong when I return home. I can do everything. I can help my children with everything. I do activity and after I am a better mother” (Interview nr 7, researcher’s translation).

These women explained during the interviews how physical activity never was an option for them, which is discussed further in the section on restrictions below. Since these activities never was a part of the women’s daily life’s one could argue that it is the change in habits and structure, also called *Habitus* by Bourdieu (Costa & Murphy, 2015), that clears their mind. *Habitus* (Nowicka, 2015) and identity creation (Helstein, 2007) is an experience through the body and when the habits of the body change so does one’s perception on life and one self. The clarity of mind might hence be created through them getting out of their role structure among many other things.

During the participatory observation the theme of clarity of mind was perceived by the researcher. This part is from the field diary kept during data collection.

“At times one exchanged looks with a smile but most of the time the women danced in their own space, taking space all over the room but they seemed to be inside themselves. Since this was the day after all the individual interviews highlighting how movement cleared their minds, this was interpreted as a moment of that” (Participatory Observation BellyPower dance class, Härnösand 2018-04-12).

The women seemed to experience something within themselves, they looked as they felt relieved or very much in their own body. This suggests that the finding is in line with the hypothesis of the realization of new *Habitus* (Costa & Murphy, 2015).

6.3. Segregated, female only, activities

Another aspect that all the women agreed on was that segregated, women only, activities were the best. While four women would not be part of the activity at all if men were present, three women said that they did not mind if men were part of the activity but that they felt more relaxed if there were only women. When asked why they would feel more relaxed when there were only women, they referred to their home country. They explained that in their home

country women and men would never dance together because they are Muslim. It is not good for women to move their bodies in certain ways in front of men and they would feel uncomfortable if the men were looking. Something that Knez et. al (2012), Vu et. al (2017) and Elling and Knoppers (2004) also confirms.

“If there are men I cannot [dance]. I am shy. I cannot move around men. It is different cultures you know. When I was little I could not laugh or play with boys. Only women are really good for me” (Interview nr 6, researcher’s translation).

“I can move anywhere and do anything [during dance class]. But if there are men there I feel shy, I cannot move. For me it is special since I am a Muslim. I cannot take of my hijab. There are certain clothes for me if I want to dance, or swim. I cannot have workout clothes but if there are only women I can” (Interview nr 4, researcher’s translation).

The main reason for segregated activities for the women were to avoid the male gaze. These women explained that they have been brought up in countries where the culture and normative thing to do is to keep girls and boys apart. This has been their normality while the normality in Sweden is completely different. The concept of Habitus can help us explain behaviors of symbolic importance in intercultural meetings (Nowicka, 2015) such as the symbol of the hijab and womanhood and also symbols of manhood, which will not be further explored in this study. Even though it might not work to forever have segregated activities for women when living in Sweden, the cultural sensitivity of this can be a door to further adaption or integration of mixed activities in the future.

When talking about identity creation through subjectivation and the mirror stage Helstein (2007) bring in a third aspect to the Imagined body and the I, the third is the Other. The Other is the Law of Father, a concept which symbolizes the submission to language, law and order in identity formation. In this study this is interpreted as the submission to the normative behavior of the community around you to be able to mirror yourself in other and be accepted as part of the group. What Helstein (2007) also brings up is that the Other is always lacking and never has the object that the subject wants in its belief that it will make it whole. The Other can also be interpreted as the male gaze, father or patriarchal system of many countries where women need to submit in to a structure to be accepted and the belief that this will make them whole as women while in fact, although they become accepted, it is also the structure that holds them down. The women feel they are more comfortable around only women and

feel shy when men are around, could this be part of a feeling that someone might see them or that the system are watching them in one way or another and hence wants to make sure they are proper?

6.4. Restrictions and Muslim culture

All the seven women in this study referred to Islam one way or another. Five of the women explicitly said that certain things are not allowed for me since I am a Muslim woman and the other two, both with family from Afghanistan but born in Iran, referred a lot to the hijab. These two women had adapted western clothes and attributes and had taken off their hijabs after living in Sweden for an unspecified amount of time. The women who had adapted western clothing both talked a lot about their families in Afghanistan not knowing how they lived here without hijab, how the afghans in Härnösand treated them badly because they “wanted to be free” and how many of the afghan men in Härnösand had offered them money for sex because they dressed in western clothes. In this case the men show extreme confusion in relation to these two women that have chosen to change their Habitus (Costa & Murphy, 2015) and adapted a more Swedish one. Some argue that the hijab is a religious symbol for Islam (Wiggins et. al, 2005) and the importance of the hijab in our conversation shows that the family from their home country put a lot of value in their daughters wearing it. Whether they were faithful Muslims or not the Muslim culture of their home country were often referred to when discussing physical activity in the interviews and it was apparent that it affected them. The Habitus they have created from their home country’s culture has been loaded with knowledge of what is not appropriate for women to do and not do (Nowicka, 2015). This is an aspect of every culture, although these women showed much more knowledge during the interviews of what they could not do than on what they were allowed to do. Some women showed resentment against the restrictions while others just explained the way it was. This way of living had been internalized in their idea of their identity (Helstein, 2007).

The restrictions on the women in their country of origin was an often-mentioned aspect of life. All of the women mentioned many things that, as they put it, were “not good” for women. As girls none of the women interviewed were allowed to be on bikes, not outside or in their own house. They were not allowed to learn to swim, they could not dance, and two women mentioned that they were not allowed to go out by themselves without their father, brother or husband in their home country. The restrictions for the women are not desired, but

too often women are portrayed as victims of different kinds of oppression (Mohanty, 2003, p. 41). Understanding that women are unfairly treated is one thing but making women victims takes away their agency to act and that is something that this study will try to stay firmly away from. The goal is to inform about the data found but to analyze it with different perceptions and tools to create a nuanced picture.

Four of the women explained that their room to maneuver was very different now in Sweden. When asked how, they explained that they went where they wanted by themselves and three of them talked about how their husbands were very supportive of this new freedom. The women with these statements show renegotiation of their imagined self and the I (Helstein, 2007). New aspects of life have given them other opportunities and hence also reshaped their view of themselves and their ways of being (Nowicka, 2015). Five of the women interviewed came to Sweden with husbands and children while two of the women came to Sweden without the father of their child. All of the women interviewed expressed very clearly that their husbands supported their activity once a week outside the house since they saw that it made them happy and relaxed. Three of the women talked a lot, and with a lot of love, about how their husbands helped them at home and said to their wife's that they could take off their hijab if they wanted to. One of the married women had done this, while one kept it on for her parents in Iraq but did not want her daughter to wear it. Palmer (2009) highlight that many women living in the west decide to wear hijabs to show respect to their parent although themselves does not care so much. The other three married women all had hijabs and did not mention the attitude of their husbands or their attitude towards their daughters wearing hijab or not. All the women talked a lot about their hijab, both because of the focus on physical activity for the interview but there was also a feeling of them trying to explain themselves. A hijab is something that gets noticed and something that has been brought up in political discussions (DN)(SVTnyheter) and therefore might be something that these women want to explain. Mohanty (2003, p. 44) writes that Muslim family structures often is pictured as brought back from the prophet Muhammed's time in a non-nuanced picture of the patriarchal system they live under. The women interviewed in Härnösand showed many signs of having liberal husbands with a progressive attitude towards gender roles and family. The outside world's tendency to put a whole context on women who wear hijabs might create the need to explain themselves. The women might want to state that "yes we are wearing hijab's, but we do this and these things, that does not go with the context you put on us". The focus on restrictions in their home country with the following explanation of that they thought it was

better with the bigger freedom they had gotten when coming to Sweden might suggest that the women are blending their two cultures. This might create divides in their country communities, as the Afghan women explained, since members of the communities adapt different things and different scopes of Swedish culture in their lives.

6.5. Freedom for the refugee women

Another theme that was very apparent in the interviews with the refugee women and that also came up during the interview with the coordinators were the importance of the activities that created freedom for the women. The two activities that most talked about when referring to freedom, during this study, were being able to ride a bike and to be able to swim. If subjectivation takes place centrally through the body (Helstein, 2007) then the freedom of being able to ride a bike or swim is not just something that helps the women grocery shop or survive in water but the act of riding a bike might change the women's perception of themselves. Subjectivation is the process when the person is identifying as a subject and understands the surrounding environment to which one is the object (Helstein, 2007). The third activity that came up once during the individual interviews and reappeared during this interview was being able to ride a car. The coordinators expressed that if they were to do this all over again, this engagement in physical activity and integration, they would focus on these three activities and only focus on women. The coordinators explained that they see a need for empowerment and independence for the refugee women and that this also is something that the women have been asking for during other activities. Deem and Gilroy (2006) show in their study that physical activity can help women to feel empowered. It has changed the view on what they are allowed to do, which the interviews showed, but it might also change their view of themselves and what they are able to do. The coordinators also confirm this with their comment about what the refugee women have been asking for.

Going back to the concept of the Other that Helstein (2007) talks about, which is discussed in the section on segregated activities above. Arriving in a new country, with new structures and a new "Other" will create confusion. Drawing back to the interpretation of the patriarchal system of countries, arriving in Sweden will be in direct clash in The Law of Father from a Muslim country. If you many times are expected to submit under the family, with the father as the head of the group, in Sweden you are expected to submit under the "father of state" and the extreme belief in state individualism (Berggren and Trägårdh, 2011, p. 25) that is our religion in this long country. The contrasts are big and trying to mix these and submit to both,

or even to more different kinds of language, order and law will undoubtedly create identity confusion. Hence the women who are wanting and willing to ride bikes, swim, move and dance are renegotiating the laws under which they have submitted previously and therefore are also renegotiating themselves as people and their capabilities as women in general, and Muslim women in particular. While doing this they are also unknotting the prejudice and stigma, in Sweden, related to them as a melded and non-nuanced group.

6.6. The Swedish culture of movement and the view on body

During the group interview we also spoke about their perception about Swedish people and being active. One of the women laughed and said:

“Swedish people move all the time! They create things just, so they can move more!” (Group interview, researcher’s translation).

She went on by saying that they, the refugees, cannot do that even if they live in Sweden now. They have no time to move as much as the Swedish people do. The other women agreed with the first woman about this. Another perception about Swedish people was that the body was nothing special to them. For the women interviewed this was odd and they very explicitly talked about the fact that hands and feet were the same as breasts for example. One woman talked about the experience of going to the swimming pool and that the men and women were naked and carried their children. They would never do this they explained. They also said that they felt shy when wearing a bikini or burkini while Swedish women were exactly the same in a bikini as with clothes on. They continuously referred to the fact that the body was not something to have secrets about in Swedish society.

The coordinators talked about how refugee women are not used to using their bodies and hence that they feel uncomfortable participating in the running activities. Both because of their clothing and because of the fact that they are not used to using their bodies in that way. Developing that theme, the coordinators talked about the way most of these women use their bodies. They do not have a perception of their bodily abilities and do not use their bodies as a tool. Something they also understood to be a Swedish mentality. One of the coordinators explained how the women never have pushed their limits and challenged themselves in this aspect and hence believe that a lot of things are dangerous for them. One of the things that the female participants believed was dangerous was to get breathless or having higher pulse.

When this occurred, the women stopped running since it felt uncomfortable and they hence never pushed through their limit and developed.

Mohanty (2003, p. 41) argues that the way that “third world women” are pictured in the western feminist writings has a tendency to reproduce imperialism something that sport for development also have been criticized for (Meier, 2005). These arguments work against and problematize the aims of this research, which is to include more women in physical activity. While being aware about the cultural setting of having a normative discourse where the body is a tool and a temple in Sweden and the cultural background with non-existent exercise from most of the refugee women, all research shows that exercising is good for you or even necessary. Since this is considered common knowledge, that exercise is needed for a healthy body and a longer life today reference to particular studies will not be included. This study welcomes initiatives and arguments of encouragement towards all different cultures to have healthy bodies and to move regularly. This said, the strategy of including these women need to be done with gentleness and in a culturally sensitive matter. During the key informant interview the theme on a healthy body and exercise came up through this story:

The coordinators told a story about one of the young men from Syria that had been part of the running group who had a dad back in Syria who ate a lot and always felt tired. After running for an amount of time with HejFrämling and being exposed to the health ideals in Sweden he told his dad to start taking walks and eating less. This led to that the dad lost weight and could decrease his medicine. The coordinators said that things like these kept them going even when they lost members who got moved to another city in Sweden or deported back to their home country, they had left something with them. They had given them some information about a healthy body that they could bring with them no matter where they ended up in the world.

This story together with the fact that two of the women said, during the group interview, that our conversation the day before had gotten them thinking about their own activities and that they wanted to be more active in the future demonstrates that encouragement of exercise can lead to better health and self-awareness. The body is essential in post-structural theorizing on identity (Helstein, 2007) and being in tune with your body can both lead to a healthier and longer life and also a smoother integration process. We cannot know the world in any direct way according to Helstein (2007) but one thing this study will argue is that the closer you get to knowing your body the easier it is to understand the world around you and be a part of it.

7. Concluding discussion

This thesis has investigated why there are so few refugee women in HejFrämling's activities that focus on integration through physical activity. Previous studies have focused a lot on cultural aspects that hinder the integration of women in projects like these. Studies have also focused on empowering women through physical activity but neglected the discussion on socialization and identity negotiation. The studies focusing on social capital and community have highlighted these aspects but have not applied it to the situation of refugees. This study therefore fills a gap about physical activity, integration, socialization in to a new setting while also renegotiating one's identity. The data collected, and the theories applied, show that inclusion of refugee women in projects focusing on physical activity cannot be a fast and linear project. Because of the cultural, non-physical aspect of these women's lives the encouragement to move and be healthy need to be backed up with information, social gains paired with cultural sensitivity concerning clothing and venues where the activities take place. An intriguing aspect that was highlighted during data collection was how the physical activity made the women feel. The fact that moving their bodies both made them calm and started new processes within them of empowerment and self-prioritization is something that would be good to research further. Unfortunately, the scope of this thesis does not allow that. Physical activity for all can, and should, be the goal but the way there is not as straight forward as just welcoming women to participate in a running group or swimming lesson. Some women might come but most, it seems like, need the surrounding comfort of knowing the women who will go there and seeing them as friends, being sure that the right type of clothing is available and knowing that no men will look at them. It also seems like the women first and foremost wants to do activities that are good for them in other situations in life and gives them freedom, such as biking and swimming. The women interviewed does not seem to view the physical part in itself as something appealing but rather aspects surrounding the physical activities. It seems as though the activities are intended towards the wrong direction in the meaning that most of the women do not see the worth in "just" being active but want the things that come with the activity. By seeing the participation of these women in the running group as the end goal and providing activities that lead to the realization of one's own bodily capacities and the positive health effects of movement might create the process of inclusion on all levels of activity. Having sub targets along the way that include all the aspects that this study has shown to be important for participation might in the end create a healthier population overall, smarter integration processes and happier refugees. To get the women to

participate from the start it seems very important to be culturally sensitive and to guide them slowly but intentionally towards the sub targets and the end goal of physical participation. Sweden must realize that these women do not in any way have the same view on physical activity as is common in this country. To be able to spark that knowledge and interest one must start in their end and encourage their own path towards discovering their bodies and their abilities.

In the following section a short summary of suggestions for future inclusion is presented.

8.Suggestions for future inclusion

Starting out with sub targets such as walking together one day a week was something that the women themselves suggested that more women would be comfortable to participate in. Walking together, building relationships and being social one day a week and having yoga another day could be a smooth lane towards more physical activity. When the group is close to each other, starting off with only women, they might be able and be curious to try some running in their walking sessions. There might be curiosity towards some strength training when they have had some time to feel the results of the walking and yoga. The leader/organizers of the activity should be prepared with appropriate clothing for the possibility to borrow. A next step could be to have trial trainings in different sports and activities available in the surrounding area, to build more social capital and for the chance to be active in one's own particular choice of physical activity. At this stage the women might be more aware of the culture surrounding physical activity in Sweden and hence feel more comfortable trying out a club membership or a team activity. There are many possible ways towards bigger integration of refugee women and the starting point is to realize their starting point and knowledge about health, to understand the Swedish culture and also to understand their own gains when being more active in life.

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