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Migrant Women, Their Rights There and Here

- A qualitative interview study regarding the perception of migrant women's access to rights, at their country of origin and country of destination -

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Abstract

English: This thesis is based on four interviews, two with individual migrant women and two with female representatives of Swedish women organisations. The purpose of the study is to understand how the interviewed women perceive migrant women's access to rights in Sweden and at their country of origin, with the help of Martha C. Nussbaum's theory on central capabilities. The questions articulated in the question formulation are discussed throughout the analysis and are further discussed in connection to relevant prior research. The qualitative research interview cooperates with a qualitative content analysis, where the latter method is used to categorise perceptions in the interviews. In short the analysis discusses the interviewees perceptions of migrant women's rights in connection to five of ten central capabilities as presented in the theory. Additionally, themes concerning the importance of social relationships, family, education, employment, freedom, safety and more are discussed as fundamental issues. The analysis shows perceptions of rights that measure different levels of provided capabilities and discusses them in relation to responsible actors.

Keywords: migrant women, women organisations, women's rights, narratives, qualitative interviews, central capabilities, Martha C. Nussbaum, Sweden

Swedish: Den här uppsatsen "Migrantkvinnor, Deras Rättigheter Där och Här: en kvalitativ intervjustudie om uppfattningen av migrantkvinnors tillgång till rättigheter, i ursprungslandet och i Sverige", baseras på fyra intervjuer, två med individuell migrantkvinnor och två kvinnliga representanter för Svenska kvinnoorganisationer. Syftet med uppsatsen är att; förstå hur de intervjuade kvinnorna uppfattar migrantkvinnors tillgång till rättigheter i Sverige och i deras ursprungsland, med hjälp av Martha C. Nussbaums teori om centrala förmågor. Frågorna som är ställda i frågeställningen diskuteras genomgående i analysen och är ytterligare belysta i förhållande till relevant tidigare forskning. Den kvalitativa forskningsintervjun samarbetar med en kvalitativ innehållsanalys, där den senare metoden används för att kategorisera uppfattningar av migrant kvinnors rättigheter i koppling till fem av tio centrala förmågor som presenteras i teorin. Ytterligare teman gällande vikten av sociala relationer, familj, utbildning, anställning, frihet, säkerhet och mer är diskuterade som fundamentala problem. Analysen visar uppfattningar av rättigheter som mäter olika nivåer av tillhandahållna förmågor och diskuterar dem i relation till ansvariga aktörer.

Nyckelord: migrantkvinnor, kvinnoorganisationer, kvinnors rättigheter, narrativ, kvalitativa intervjuer, centrala förmågor, Martha C. Nussbaum, Sverige

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1 Introduction

The Universal Declaration on Human Rights (UDHR) is a document that represents a milestone in the history of human rights and was proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in Paris on the 10th of December 1948.¹ Since then it has been increasingly evident that all human beings by the virtue of being human, are entitled to certain rights. However, the neglect of women's particular rights is often criticised by philosophers, activists and other influential actors. Today, the issue of women's rights is widely discussed in most parts of societies including, governments, international organisations and non-governmental organisations.

Women suffer immensely during and after war, as existing inequalities are magnified, and social networks broken down, making them more vulnerable to sexual violence and exploitation.² As a consequence of many conflicts, a large amount of people (there in women) migrate in order to find safety elsewhere. Sweden has received a large number of migrants the past seven years; the majority of these are asylum seekers who are persons with citizenship in Afghanistan, Eritrea, Somalia, and Iraq. All of these previously stated countries have been conflict consumed the past seven years; therefore one could draw the conclusion that inequalities have escalated.³

¹ UN General Assembly, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, 10 December 1948.

² The United Nations Security Council, *Women Suffer Disproportionately During and After War*, Press Release SC/7908, New York, 29 October 2003.

³ 'Statistik; Asyl (2000-2018)', Migrationsverket, *Website*, 2018.

1.1 Problem Statement, Purpose and Question Formulation

Women's rights are actively discussed in many parts of society today, in the United Nations, in government meetings and within non-governmental organisations. Discourse concerning human rights is compelled to include the recognition of women's rights and their right to self-determination. Despite the enhanced recognition of the importance of women's rights there are many states and societies around the world that continue discriminating persons based on their gender.

The purpose of this paper is to through a qualitative research interview, present how certain migrant women and female representatives from Swedish women organizations perceive migrant women's rights at the country of origin and country of destination (Sweden). Their perceptions of rights will be analysed categorically with the application of Martha C. Nussbaum's theory on central capabilities, the capabilities detected in the interviews conducted will serve as the base for the analysis.

Sweden is a country that has had over 200 years of peace and has one of the highest equality rankings in Gender Inequality Index (GII).⁴ In contrast to many of the countries where asylum seekers have citizenship, Sweden is perceived to be one of the most gender equal societies in the world.

My aim is to study what migrant women themselves and organizations working in close proximity with migrant women really think about the issue. Western societies are often pictured as superior to non-western countries, but how do women who come from other countries⁵ actually perceive their rights in the superior and just West? Do these women perceive themselves as equal to men and Swedish women? Is Sweden perceived as a country where:

Gender equality is one of the cornerstones of Swedish society. The aim of Sweden's gender equality policies is to ensure that everyone enjoys the same opportunities, rights and obligations in all areas of life.⁶

⁴ The United Nations Development Programme, *Human Development Indices and Indicators: 2018 Statistical Update*, New York, 2018.

⁵ Other countries, refers primarily to non-western nations.

⁶ 'Gender Equality in Sweden', The Swedish Institute, *Website*, 2018.

Many female migrants come to Sweden having left a country endured with conflict and/or with a low equality ranking in the GII, this would entail a certain clash when seeking citizenship in Sweden where women's equality is one of the cornerstones of Swedish society. Although Sweden is a country that receives people from all over the world, the largest group of female migrants the past seven years have come from Syria.⁷

From a human rights perspective there are several reasons it is interesting to present migrant women's own perspectives on their access to rights at their country of origin and in Sweden. Most often women's well-being is judged on a society's national average statistics, neglecting the actual experiences of its citizens and therein migrant women.

Since the purpose is to gather an understanding of certain migrant women's perceptions of their access to rights, the study presents different views on the rights of women, on the one hand the perceived rights at the country of origin and on the other, the perceived rights at the country of destination (asylum-sought). In order to gain a deeper understanding, and perhaps a more general one, the study also presents women organisations perceptions of migrant women's experiences, when building a life in Sweden. The interviewed representatives will provide a helicopter perspective of what issues they perceive to be most current for migrant women.

The aim of the study is not to defend or attack policies of migrant women's countries of origin, Swedish policies or the policies of Swedish women organisations. My aim is not to "help" migrant women, but to shed light on certain migrant women's perceptions of women's rights in Sweden and at their country of origin. I hope to put forward aspects of a problem that often risks being "silenced" and give a voice to individual women and organisations, rather than spread information on governmental policies about equality and integration.

1.1.1 Question Formulation

In accordance with the aim of the study, namely to; present individual migrant women's perceptions of women's rights in their country of origin and in Sweden, and present women organisations perspectives on this issue through the lens of the central capabilities theory, I have formulated three questions that I aim to answer in this thesis.

⁷ 'Migration i Siffror: Ursprungsländer för Invandring till Sverige (2000-2018)', Delegationen för Migrationsstudier (Delmi), *Website*, 2018.

The questions I aim to answer in this study are:

- How do the interviewed migrant women perceive their rights in Sweden in contrast to their rights as women, at their country of origin?
- What are the reflections and thoughts of the interviewed women organisations, on the subject of migrant women's access to rights in the country of origin and Sweden?
- What does the perception of migrant women's rights imply, when applying Martha C. Nussbaum's central capabilities theory on the interviews?

1.2 Material and Delimitations

Below I will present my chosen primary material and the secondary material, which has been chosen to deepen the understanding of the primary material. To conclude, I will criticise the primary material.

1.2.1 Primary and Secondary Material

The primary material used in this study is based on interviews with two individual women with migrant background who have migrated from their country of origin to Sweden. In addition to these individuals, interviews have been conducted with two female representatives from two Swedish women organisations. The interviews are conducted according to the method of qualitative research interview, where three out of four interviews have been held in person and one via telephone. The methodology surrounding the interviews will be further discussed in the method section of the thesis. In order to successfully proceed with the study secondary material has been added in the process of gathering relevant information, these include; articles, websites and books.

Participants

The sample of interviewees participating in the interviews has consisted of two individual women from Syria who have lived in Sweden for four to six years. In addition to these two women I have conducted interviews with two female representatives from different women-oriented organisations working in Sweden, where one representative is of migrant background

herself. The interviewees have been interviewed in Stockholm, Malmö and via telephone from Lund with a woman in Malung, all interviewees have been between the ages of 30-65. The interviews have taken approximately 40-60 minutes, where three were recorded (with consent) and one without recording (due to dissent). All women provided me with written consent prior to the interviews and they all had intermediate and above levels of Swedish. The individual women have provided a more personal view and perception on the rights of women, in their country of origin and in Sweden.

The first woman I came into contact with was via a voluntary organisation in Malmö. I was invited to present the study for a group of women at a gathering and she was interested in being interviewed, in addition she had thoughts about women's rights and had a proficient level of Swedish. The second woman I came into contact with, approached me. She had heard from a friend that I was looking for interviewees. In my contact with her I made sure that she had access to information concerning the study and that she was comfortable understanding and speaking Swedish. This interview was conducted via telephone due to long distance.

I came into contact with both female representatives via email, after having researched the Internet for women organisations in Sweden. They both showed interest from the start and were supplied with relevant information about the study. Both organisations work in close proximity with migrant women through gatherings, social work and networking. I also came into contact with other organisations but due to lack of time, interviews were unable to be conducted.

The interviews with women (both individual women and representatives) provide the primary material for this study and will not be mentioned by their names or by the names of their organisations.

Secondary Material

In the process of writing this study I have used books, articles and websites to compliment the primary material. The use of secondary material aims to give a deeper understanding and background to the interviews. This includes information on prior research, organisations, women's rights and migrant's rights.

In preparation for the interviews, and in order to conduct them, I have read methodological books on qualitative research interview which will be presented further in the method section. Furthermore, I have used a qualitative content analysis to provide a method for categorising the interviews in preparation for analysis.

The theoretical framework is based on Martha C. Nussbaum's book, *Creating Capabilities: the human development approach*,⁸ which is applied to the interviews in order to analyse the meaning of the data collected. All parts of Nussbaum's theory are not used in this thesis but further information on this delimitation will be presented in the theory chapter of this thesis.

1.2.2 Criticism of the Sources

Due to the nature of my primary sources for this paper there is relevant critique that should be assessed. It is difficult to ensure the truthfulness of the interviewees' narratives, but since the purpose of the paper is to examine how women perceive their rights in their countries of origin and in Sweden, it must be kept in mind that as a researcher the importance lies with their personal narratives rather than facts about what is true or false.

The women I have chosen to interview have also chosen to keep their identity anonymous, which implies that the readers of this thesis cannot crosscheck information from the conducted interviews themselves. In respect for the interviewees' personal information and integrity, which is a fundamental aspect that must be taken into consideration when conducting interviews, the interviewees will not be presented by name. Although the readers of this study may not be able to access all information in the interview, the most relevant aspects for this study have been introduced.

It has also come to my attention that the women I have spoken with are very concerned with their identity not being revealed and this, for one, could be an interesting point of analysis, in terms of why this is of much importance to the persons concerned. This issue has also made me think about the importance of conducting these interviews and the privileged access I have been given to acquire insight into their personal lives and perceptions of women's rights.

The interviews have not been conducted with a substantially large group of interviewees; the interviews that have been conducted provide an insight into important aspects of migrant women's lives. It would be wrong to generalise and say that the individual migrant women in this study show how all migrant women in Sweden perceive women's rights in their country of origin and in Sweden. Just like it would be wrong to claim that the interviews conducted with female representatives of women organisations, show the

⁸ Nussbaum, Martha Craven, *Creating capabilities: the human development approach*, Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 2011.

perceptions of all Swedish organisations working in close proximity with migrant women. However these interviews, present the views of these interviewees, not of a large group in general, in accordance with the aim of this study.

1.3 Research Ethics Assessment

When conducting interviews with persons it is of importance to involve ethical considerations. I will discuss three main considerations of my interview and research process: consent, culture and the use of phone interviews. I have conducted interviews with both individual migrant women and with female representatives from organisations and I have been open in both instances informing them that they may interpret and answer questions as they wish.

Individual Women

When explaining the study to both of the individual migrant women I have found it very important to be honest with what and how the interview material will be used. At the beginning of both interviews I have handed out information letters and made sure to repeat the aim of the interviews, prior to conducting them. Further, I have been clear that the interviewees can contact me if they wish, at any point, to terminate their involvement in the study despite consenting to participation. Since both of the individual women I have interviewed have not been native Swedish speakers, I have put a lot of focus on making sure that they have understood all information surrounding the interview/study and making sure they have been comfortable with asking me if they have problems with communications.

I have thoroughly thought through the intention behind my study and the risk of unfavourable side effects, after conducting the interviews.⁹ When doing this I have explicitly written in my information letter that traumatic experiences will not be included in any questions, however if an interviewee herself talks about traumatic experiences I have decided to listen.

Since, the migrant women I have interviewed have spent the majority of their lives in a different country and culture it has been of the utmost importance to find balance in my closeness to the interviewee, making sure to not interfere in their life stories and in a sense following their lead. Both women have given me their voluntary consent, however one¹⁰ did

⁹ Dalen, Monica, *Intervju som metod*, 2., utök. uppl., Gleerups utbildning, Malmö, 2015, p. 20-24.

¹⁰ In analysis referred to as *Woman 2*.

not give me consent to record her. As a researcher recording the interview makes sure that the information obtained is correct, however it is of more importance to comply with the interviewee's wishes. Since this specific interview was held via telephone, due to long distance, I had time to pause and write exact quotes without having to think of maintaining eye contact. Even though telephone interviews are typically supposed to be avoided as an interview method, I found the purpose of my study of considerable importance, so I decided to attempt the method, which in my opinion was conducted with success.

The most central ethics assessment has been the one considering anonymity. I have ensured that the women involved are not presented with their names, making sure I consider the integrity of their identity.¹¹

Female Representatives

The female representatives that I have interviewed from organisations, working in close proximity with migrant women, are two women whom before booking in a meeting with, I have sent information letters to, in order for them to take part of the information before deciding to participate. The interviews have been conducted at their offices where I have started the interview by repeating what is written in the information letter, before collecting their consent. Both representatives have provided consent for both taking part in the interview and being recorded.

One of the representatives¹² is to my knowledge, herself a migrant and has shared her own perceptions on the issues subject to my analysis. This means that at times I have had the same approach to her as individual migrant women, concerning distance to her personal perceptions of her life and culture. I am unaware of the background related to the second representative, other than that she works for a women organisation. As earlier stated, both representatives will also be presented with anonymity in the sense that their names and the names of their organisations will not be presented in the study. To summarise, more information on how the interviews have been conducted will be addressed in the method section of this thesis.

¹¹ Dalen, 2015, p. 26-28.

¹² In analysis referred to as *Representative 1*.

2 Theory and Method

This section presents the theoretical framework and the methodology of this thesis. The theory I have chosen to apply is the Central Capability Approach as presented in Martha C. Nussbaum's book, *Creating Capabilities: the human development approach*. This theory has been used in order to provide a deeper understanding of the importance of a pluralistic approach to human capabilities and human dignity. The method I have chosen is a qualitative research interview combined with a qualitative content analysis. The former will serve as a platform for collecting data and the latter will serve as a method used for categorization. Further information on how both the theory and method shall be applied in this thesis is presented below.

2.1 Theory

The theoretical framework I have chosen to apply in my thesis is based on Martha C. Nussbaum's version of the capabilities approach presented with a list of *Central Capabilities*.¹³ Nussbaum is a professor at the University of Chicago; she has received many awards and honorary degrees and is the author of many books and articles.¹⁴

Nussbaum's theory is based on looking at life stories and the meaning of policy changes for real individual human beings.¹⁵ Her theory of central capabilities is provided as a theoretical framework that challenges those frameworks that she believes lack consideration for individual human beings and their situations, when evaluating human development in the form of success, wellbeing and most importantly human dignity. Nussbaum finds it of importance to confront dominant theories on development and starts with GDP (Gross Domestic Product). She claims that although GDP provides access to statistics on economic growth, it provides little consideration for individuals, meaning that approaches based on national average lack the aspect of even distribution. GDP suggests that those placed at the top of the list are doing better by their people, which would be wrong to suggest since it does

¹³ Nussbaum, Martha Craven, *Creating capabilities: the human development approach*, Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 2011, p. 19.

¹⁴ 'Martha C. Nussbaum', The University of Chicago: Division of the Humanities Philosophy, *Website*, 2019.

¹⁵ Nussbaum, 2011, p. 13.

not consider the important aspects of measuring religious freedom, political access or security from violence.¹⁶

The second approach that Nussbaum confronts is the utilitarian approach, although the approach is better suited than GDP, due to its consideration for quality of life, it is problematic because it is based on satisfaction. If the majority does well, the people suffering are forgotten, due to the measurement of average satisfaction. Another of her main critiques towards the approach is that if society makes it difficult to access a certain capability, people learn to not desire that capability and may report as satisfied when they are in fact being treated unjustly.¹⁷

The third approach Nussbaum criticizes is the resource-based approach, the approach is based on a theory that the more resources and the more equally divided they are among citizens, the better a country does. However, this approach marginalizes certain groups because the approach neglects the fact that some people need more resources than others.¹⁸

This brings us to Nussbaum's approach, she believes in considering the most important elements of people's quality to life and focuses on answering the question; what is a person able to do and be? This entails analysing not just abilities, but also freedoms and opportunities created by personal abilities and the environment a person finds herself in. Nussbaum defines "substantial freedoms" as a form of *combined capabilities*, meaning that these capabilities represent opportunities for choice and action, in people's specific political, social and economic situations. *Internal capabilities* are instead capabilities that are personal, fluid and dynamic traits. A distinction between the two is important due to the fact that a society can do well in creating *internal capabilities* but not in creating avenues for them. The example Nussbaum uses is that; a society may educate persons in freedom of speech but not allow citizens to practice it. Nussbaum also presents the idea of *basic capabilities*, meaning capabilities that are innate abilities of a person that provide avenues for later development, this will be presented in detail when presenting the list of *central capabilities*.¹⁹

The version of the capabilities approach that Nussbaum has developed encompasses areas of freedom so central (hence the name *central capabilities*) that the removal of any of them makes a life not worthy of human dignity. She builds her version on that of Amartya Sen's theory of capabilities, but chooses to instead focus more on plurality. Her approach to social justice asks; what does a life worthy of human dignity require? And she has provided a threshold level of ten *central capabilities* to demonstrate, that which is

¹⁶ Nussbaum, 2011, p. 47-49.

¹⁷ Nussbaum, 2011, p. 51-56.

¹⁸ Nussbaum, 2011, p. 57-58.

¹⁹ Nussbaum, 2011, p. 18-24.

needed.²⁰ The underlined capabilities in the list are those that will be analysed and used as categories in this thesis. This is something that will be addressed further in the “Method” and “Analysis” section. I have summarized the ten central capabilities’ explanations below:

- 1) Life – having the ability to live a life of normal length, to not die prematurely.
- 2) Bodily health – having the ability to access good health, an adequate amount of reproductive health, nourishment and shelter.
- 3) Bodily integrity – having the ability to move freely from place to place, to be secure against violence, sexual and domestic. Having choices in matters of reproduction.
- 4) Senses, imagination and thought – be provided with the ability to sense, imagine, think and reason in a “truly human” way informed and nourished by adequate education. Use imagination and thought in experiencing and producing works and events of one’s choice. Be able to use one’s mind and expression freely with respect for political and religious exercise.
- 5) Emotions – having the ability to have attachment to things and people outside oneself. Not having one’s emotional development destroyed by fear and anxiety.
- 6) Practical reason – be provided with the ability to shape an understanding of what is good and be able to critically reflect and plan one’s life.
- 7) Affiliation – being able to recognize and show concern for other people and engage in various interactions. Having a social basis of self-respect and non-humiliation, treated with the equal worth of others. This entails provisions of nondiscrimination on the basis of race, sex, sexual orientation, ethnicity etc.
- 8) Other species – have the ability to live with concern with animals, plants, and the world of nature.

²⁰ Nussbaum, 2011, p. 31-32.

9) Play – have the ability to laugh, play and enjoy recreational activities.

10) Control of one's environment – A) Political. Have the right to political participation, free speech and association. B) Material. Being able to have possession over property, having the right to those properties, having the right to seek employment, all on an equal basis with others. Being able to work as a human being, use practical reason and entering meaningful relationships of mutual recognition with others.

The capabilities that I have chosen to analyse in this thesis are based on the interviews conducted. Those capabilities that have been detected in the interviews are those capabilities that have seemed most relevant in the connection to the individuals and representatives perceptions of migrant women's rights in country of origin and in Sweden. Therefore, these capabilities will be analysed from the interviewees' perspectives and will be presented in the "Analysis" section of this thesis.

Nussbaum advocates pluralism meaning that she sees an evident importance that people be seen as an end and that the goal is to; produce capabilities for each and every person. People should be able to get above a certain threshold level of capabilities and people who need more help to do so should receive it.²¹

Two of the capabilities on the list play an especially important role according to Nussbaum; these are *affiliation* and *practical reason*. These abilities correspond to a life with human dignity, the capability of *practical reasoning* organizes other capabilities because it provides an opportunity to choose and order one's functionings corresponding with other capabilities. *Affiliation* infuses the other capabilities in the sense that when they are made available the person is respected as a social human being. These capabilities do not solve the problem of distribution but specify an ample social minimum. Setting the capacity threshold is an issue for each nation and means that it is occasionally understandable that they do so differently depending on tradition and history.²²

Nussbaum claims that the capabilities approach is a species of human rights, closely allied with the international human rights movement, due to their common perception that people are entitled to rights due to their humanity and that it is a basic duty of society to respect and support this idea. However, the capabilities approach attempts to create a solution

²¹ Nussbaum, 2011, p. 33-35, 24.

²² Nussbaum, 2011, p. 39-41.

in human rights approaches regarding gender, race and so on. Nussbaum's approach aims to build a relationship between human rights and human dignity.²³

Nussbaum sees entitlements as correlated to duties, if people have entitlements there is a duty to secure them, even if it is unclear who has this duty. She states that the primary duties are appointed to the nations basic political structure (government), it is responsible for providing an ample threshold amount of entitlements and for the indignities suffered by the people. The secondary duty is assigned to richer nations, who have a duty to aid poorer nations. The third, and last, duty is assigned to NGO's (non-governmental organizations), corporations, international organizations and individuals.²⁴

These duties are ethically binding rather than political since they do not require state enforcement to be morally binding. If the primary responsibility holder, governments, fails to secure basic entitlements, they have failed their central task. They have a duty to use law and political policy to achieve their central task and be – at least – minimally just.²⁵ In order to successfully fulfil one's duty as a nation it is important to draft a constitution that considers the central capabilities securing their people with capabilities.²⁶ By analysing the interviews from this perspective of duty in connection to capabilities, it will be evident if the government and organizations are doing what they can to lift migrant women above the threshold within the chosen central capabilities.

As earlier mentioned Nussbaum supports the idea of pluralism and it is a central theme in her theory. She believes that cultural and religious expressions should be taken into respect and are of importance when considering the central capabilities. The idea is that the approach not discuss divisive issues about god and soul, but instead respects diversity and all citizens despite their religious and non-religious beliefs.²⁷

Finally, Nussbaum's list of central capabilities is set forth to be open-ended and subject to on-going revision and rethinking. The list is also put forth as general and abstract in order for citizens, legislatures, and courts to deliberate before recognizing them in constitutions or other founding political documents with legitimacy. Nations should focus on the rights of minorities and equal treatment, providing those in need with special judicial treatment while accounting for equal dignity for all human beings.²⁸ To conclude Nussbaum writes:

²³ Nussbaum, 2011, p. 62-63.

²⁴ Nussbaum, 2011, p. 64-66.

²⁵ Nussbaum, 2011, p. 167-168.

²⁶ Nussbaum, 2011, p. 114.

²⁷ Nussbaum, 2011, p. 108-109.

²⁸ Nussbaum, 2011, p. 109, 177.

The Capabilities Approach is offered as a contribution to national and international debate, not as a dogma that must be swallowed whole. It is laid out to be pondered, digested, compared with other approaches - and then, if it stands the test of argument, to be adopted and put into practice.²⁹

By applying the central capabilities theory on the interviews, it will be clear if the women and representatives perceive that they are above a threshold within certain capabilities. Although Nussbaum expresses the importance of individuals being placed above an ample threshold within all ten capabilities, it would seem that some capabilities mentioned by migrant women and representatives are seen as more relevant than others when discussing migrant women's perceived rights in their country of origin and in Sweden. The analysis will provide more insight into how thoughts concerning capabilities can be detected and analysed in the different interviews.

2.2 Method

The methods best applicable to this thesis are both a qualitative research interview and a qualitative content analysis. The former method will guide me through the different approaches of conducting an interview; how to ask questions, how to prepare and how to review and consider the interview material. The latter will provide the approach for categorisation of the interviews, these categories will in turn be analysed using the central capabilities theory.

2.2.1 Qualitative Research Interview

When interviewing individuals a word frequently used within the interview method is *life world*, which means a person's experience of their everyday lives and how they relate to them.³⁰ It is important to distinguish the difference between open interviews and more structured interviews. I have chosen to apply an open interview method, where the goal is that the interviewee herself is open and willing to talk about her life situation or her organisation.

²⁹ Nussbaum, 2011, p. 187.

³⁰ Dalen, Monica, *Intervju som metod*, 2., utök. uppl., Gleerups utbildning, Malmö, 2015, p. 15-17.

Further, the interview is built on a semi-structured base where the conversation is focused on certain subjects that I as the interviewer have chosen.³¹

In a semi-structured interview, there is a need for an interview guide. This guide helps to map out central themes and questions that aim to incorporate the most important field subjects in the interview study.³² The aim is to start with questions that are open and that make the interviewee feel comfortable, then progress into more central questions and finish off by opening up the questions again. In order to encourage the interviewee to open up about her organisation or her *life world* and speak freely, it is advised that the interviewer ask if she can explain and elaborate her answers to the questions asked.³³

The dialogue between the interviewee and the interviewer is not a normal dialogue between two persons in a conversation because it is the interviewees' experiences that are in focus. This means that it is important the interviewer's own viewpoint be held outside of the interview, in order to minimise influencing the interviewee.³⁴ Another aspect to keep in mind is the interviewer's understanding and pre-understanding of the phenomena that is to be studied, hence it is important that the interviewer is aware of her own pre-understanding in order to proceed with sensitivity and impartiality when analysing the interview material.³⁵

Further, it is important that the interviewer has the ability to listen and show genuine interest in the answers provided by the interviewees, while showing acknowledgement and giving room for pauses and reflection. The interviewer is advised to write down personal opinions and feelings after every conducted interview in order to minimise the impact of the interviewer's personal thought when interpreting the material.³⁶ I have written down in a notebook, important information and central themes, in order to track how the interviews are related to the questions and if there is anything in the process that can be improved.

It is important to consider boundaries when choosing interviewees. My four main boundaries have been that; the migrant women must have lived in Sweden for a minimum of 1 year, the organisations interviewed must work in close proximity with migrant women, the migrant women can communicate and understand Swedish and the women interviewed need to have a perception of what women's rights entail. I have also chosen to

³¹ Dalen, 2015, p. 31-35.

³² See Appendix "Interview guides".

³³ Dalen, 2015, p. 37-38.

³⁴ Dalen, 2015, p. 42-43.

³⁵ Dalen, 2015, p. 18.

³⁶ Dalen, 2015, p. 42-43.

broaden the boundaries to not just migrant women as interviewees but also female representatives from women organisations.³⁷

I have used the so called “snowball” method to find more interviewees, this entails telling individual migrant women who I have come into contact with that if they know someone who would be interested in participating they can contact me.³⁸

The quotations presented in my analysis have been chosen in accordance with a thematic method meaning that the central capabilities chosen from the theory have been the outline for finding relevant and descriptive quotes.³⁹

Before conducting the interview I have held a “test” interview, with an acquaintance, in order to see if the questions are understandable. In accordance with feedback I have made minor changes to the interview guides. Furthermore, I have tested the technical instruments that have been used for recording and in the telephone interview, prior to the interviews. All recordings have had high quality and only a few words have been difficult to explicitly hear in the recording, however, these words have not been of great importance since the context has been enough to gather an understanding of the interview.

2.2.2 Qualitative Content Analysis

To compliment the qualitative research interview method I have chosen to apply a qualitative content analysis.

After reading, re-reading and understanding the data, the analyst commences an inductive or deductive content analysis. I have chosen to use the latter type of analysis, the deductive analysis, based on key themes in the chosen area reducing the material helping to fit the chosen categories. The method is often applied to research where few or no previous studies within the theme, have been performed.⁴⁰

The data collected from interviews will be analysed based on five chosen central capabilities. These central capabilities have been detected during the interviews and provide specific areas for analysis based on the theory. It is a top-down approach looking at what is stated in the theory and analysing from this perspective.

³⁷ Dalen, 2015, p. 62-63.

³⁸ Dalen, 2015, p. 67-68.

³⁹ Dalen, 2015, p. 108.

⁴⁰ Elo, Satu and Helvi Kyngäs, ”The qualitative content analysis process”, *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, Vol. 62 (1), 2008, p. 109, 111.

I have chosen not to use a deductive method since it is normally based on earlier work such as theories, although the deductive content analysis is often used in studies of medical patients and seldom in research concerning social studies, it is applicable here due to the theory playing a main part in the analysis and categorisation of data. In contrast, inductive analysis is about analysing patterns in the data and creating themes from the data collected and develop a theory that could explain those patterns. Further, I have chosen not to use a quantitative content analysis seeing as this approach is based on mostly numerical data, like statistics. The interviews subject for analysis consist of spoken and transcribed words rather than statistical numbers making it clear that a quantitative approach is not an ideal (complimentary) method for this thesis. Qualitative research focuses on gathering an understanding of the underlying reasons, opinions and motivations of a text. It is also a method used to uncover trends in thought and opinion, which is what I aim to do.⁴¹

⁴¹ Elo & Kyngäs, 2008, p. 111-112.

3 Literature Review and Prior Research

The selection of prior research presented in this section is chosen based on variation but also relevance as an introduction to the field that I aim to enter. The literature highlights central aspects like the importance of women's narratives, the importance of understanding culture in connection to women's rights, the importance of intersectional consideration and the international failures to uphold and sustain women's rights. The prior research and its implications for my study will be further presented in the "Discussion" section of this thesis.

3.1 Women's narratives

Jill Cermele has studied the importance of women's narratives regarding resistance. These narratives focus mainly on violence against women. Her view is that if women tell stories about their resistance to violence they will become more culturally familiar and individually accessible leading to resistance emerging as an option in the face of assault. Further, she means that spreading stories about not just victimisation, but successful resistance, women can be seen as active objects rather than passive.⁴² Despite the fact that Cermele does not mention the resistance stories and their impact for migrant women or for women's rights, it would seem that the importance in her article is rather women's own narratives where they are seen as agents rather than passive victims.

Similar to Cermele, Sehin, Coryell and Stewart mention in an article about women in Afghanistan, the importance of narratives through interviews in these societies. They have conducted interviews with women in Afghanistan and rendered that there is a marginalisation of women in society as a consequence of governmental policies. Further, they write that, although the constitution guarantees equal rights for women and men, the interviews show that Afghan women are generally seen as burdens, as a result of patriarchal structures. In addition, the researchers report that women lack communications between themselves and the community, they lack sufficient education, they lack self-worth, they lack hope of change and so much more.⁴³ Although their article, like Cermele's, does not

⁴² Cermele, Jill, "Telling Our Stories: The Importance of Women's Narratives of Resistance", *Violence Against Women*, 16(10), 2010, pp. 1162-1172.

⁴³ Sehin, Oleksandra, Joellen Coryell & Trae Stewart, "Engendering Hope; Women's (Dis)engagement in Change in Afghanistan", *Adult Learning*, 28(3), 2017, pp. 91-98.

explicitly mention the purpose or aim of my study, it does mention aspects that are important to consider. One of these aspects is what they are *de facto* contributing to a perspective mentioned in my study, publishing women's voices that otherwise go unheard and they are pointing to the violation of women's rights by the structures that are suppose to protect them. This provides a perspective in my study, since the migrant women's perceptions, thoughts and narratives can provide a different perspective than that of the governments or constitutions.

3.2 Women's rights and culture

Edieth Y. Wu, argues that males have historically influenced women's rights and exemplifies with dress-appearance. She claims that male domination over women is a result of social structures and institutions (including religious), rather than acts of individual men. She goes on to mention that patriarchy has many forms and that women should have the ability to self-determination, again using the example of dress-appearance. She means that gender specific restrictions should be treated as violations of women's human rights.⁴⁴ However, what is interesting here is not the specific example of dress-appearance, per se, but rather what the example represents in a larger context. It represents women's lack to the right of free choice; to be able to choose what they think is good or bad, without the influence of men or religion.

Along the lines of religion's impact on women's rights, Chua, Bhavnani and Foran write in an article about their criticism towards existing approaches to women's development, namely, their lack of consideration for culture. They argue that culture is best understood when perceived as the lived experiences and struggles of people in society; these experiences of "Third World women" provide clearer ideas for transformative development. Further the researchers criticise 'tradition' as a contrast to 'modernity' and the fact that poor countries are dependent on rich countries.⁴⁵ In accordance with the researchers that expressed the importance of women's narratives so does this article. Although the article's main focus is culture and seeing its positive impact on women's development rather than negative, it ultimately stresses that lived experiences of women are the best ways to understand what women need for a transformative development.

⁴⁴ Wu, Edieth Y., "Cross-Cultural Patriarchal Demands on Women's Dress-Appearance", 33 *WOMEN'S RTS.*, Vol.33, 2012, pp. 169-193.

⁴⁵ Chua Peter, Kum-Kum Bhavnani & John Foran, "Women, culture, development: a new paradigm for development studies?", *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 23(5), 2000, pp. 820-842.

3.3 Migrant women and borders

In contrast to earlier mentioned research, Peroni concentrates on the human rights violations suffered by *migrant* women. Peroni argues that migrant women are subject to three types of borders (formal, normative and practical) that make them outsiders or lesser members of society. She claims that these boundaries are sustained by societal assumptions of sexuality, family and culture that constitute laws responses to migrants; she describes these as “structural intersectionality”. Further, she mentions the notion that human rights analysis should focus on what could be wrong with society rather than the individual. Migrants are not naturally vulnerable it is the state that puts them in these positions. Formal borders are understood as state norms and practice, practical borders arise from migration (e.g. lack of social networks), and normative borders are built on normative expectations (e.g. monogamous, heterosexual). Lastly, Peroni implies that it is the State that is responsible for creating, reproducing or reinforcing these disadvantages experienced by migrant women.⁴⁶ Peroni, highlights migrant women’s disadvantages as a result of state policies, this is an important aspect when considering the purpose of my study. Migrant women are not vulnerable in nature but become vulnerable due to state policies and borders, thus interviews with women could provide perspectives for the Swedish government to consider, in areas where they have policies inflicting disadvantages and borders on migrant women.

Lindqvist and Wettergren also highlight the disadvantages experienced by migrant women, however, with connection to migrant women in psychotherapy in Sweden. In their article they present interviews conducted with migrant women and these women’s will to be recognised and have a sense of belonging. They mention migrant women who have a lack of connection to Swedes which results in feelings of exclusion and non-belonging.⁴⁷ Apart from the researchers’ focus on psychotherapy, that may not be relevant for my study, they do however discuss an important aspect, migrant women’s lived experiences in Sweden. The fact that migrant women feel disconnected from society, is a failure of societal structures, the failure being not attempting to eradicate borders that otherwise entail interactions with Swedes (e.g. such as employment opportunities).

Continuing on the theme of migrant women’s rights, Roggeband discusses the importance of migrant women’s organisations. She observes the fact that the Dutch

⁴⁶ Peroni, Lourdes, “The borders that disadvantage migrant women in enjoying human rights”, *Netherlands Quarterly of Human Rights*, 36(2), 2018, pp. 93–110.

⁴⁷ Lindqvist, Mona and Åsa Wettergren, "Migrant women’s negotiation of belonging through therapeutic relationships", *International Journal of Migration, Health and Social Care*, 14(1), 2018, pp. 41-54.

government sees migrant women as the responsibility bearers for the integration of their communities, since they are seen as the pillars of their families. At the same time the state portrays the migrant women as victims of patriarchal Muslim culture, thus these women are portrayed as victims and agents of change. Roggeband continues in explaining organisations position in relation to migrant women, as building networking bridges and providing women with safe places to convey the type of integration they want. Further, the researcher explains that organisations contest negative policy and public discourse about migrant women by bringing women's own perspectives into the public sphere.⁴⁸ This prior research shows the importance of migrant women's organisations as meeting places for women to discuss their views on society and their (alleged) oppressing culture in order to show true perceptions of problems, rather than those problems articulated by the state. This sphere also helps to develop knowledge about one's rights and possibilities to escape violent partners or through organisations develop better language skills.

3.4 The intersectional perspective

The last prior research I have chosen to present is Atrey's view on the intersectional question concerning women's progress, the idea is to analyse if women's movements and women's human rights have improved the conditions of women in an intersectional manner, meaning not just based on gender but other disadvantages (e.g. race, religion, age, disability etc.). Atrey discusses in her research article the implications of the lack of intersectional consideration in the Dalit feminist discourse in India. She criticises Martha C. Nussbaum for not taking into consideration intersectional aspects, when Nussbaum claims that women's situations have improved via CEDAW⁴⁹. Further, Atrey criticises CEDAW for not always taking account of intersectional discrimination and thus minimising the transformative potential of the convention. To conclude, the message Atrey conveys is that in order to detect a true transformative progress in the development of women's human rights and the women's movements, the discussion must account for intersectional transformation, in order to be truly successful and inclusive.⁵⁰ This research shows the importance of considering intersectional discrimination when evaluating the development of women's rights. This is interesting in my

⁴⁸ Roggeband, Conney, "The Victim-Agent Dilemma: How Migrant Women's Organizations in the Netherlands Deal with a Contradictory Policy Frame", *Journal of Women in Culture & Society*, 35(4), 2010, pp. 943-967.

⁴⁹ Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women.

⁵⁰ Atrey, Shreya, "Women's Human Rights: From Progress To Transformation, An Intersectional Response to Martha Nussbaum", *Human Rights Quarterly*, 40(4), 2018, pp. 859-904.

study due to Sweden's internationally recognised account for women's rights, perhaps the interview study I conduct will present aspects of discrimination of migrant women on an intersectional level in connection to their access to rights.

4 Analysis

I have chosen to separate my analysis into categories based on Martha C. Nussbaum's theory on central capabilities. Based on the interviews I have chosen to analyse them from five different aspects mentioned in Nussbaum's approach. The categories are "Bodily integrity", "Sense, imagination and thought", "Practical reason", "Affiliation" and "Control over one's *material* environment". Each category will be divided into three parts providing the perspective of individual migrant women, providing the perspective of representatives from women organisations and a theoretical reflection. I find it important in a methodological sense to make this distinction in order to not confuse the reader and distort the different interviews.

The theory of central capabilities provides categories in accordance with the method of qualitative content analysis, in the sense that the capabilities are central themes that can be detected in the interviews.

In order to minimise ethical risks all interviewees are anonymous, this means that those interviewed will be named; *Woman 1*, *Woman 2*, *Representative 1* and *Representative 2*. *Woman 1* and *2* are individual migrant women, *Representative 1* and *2* are female representatives from two separate women organisations in Sweden.

Lastly, the perceptions collected via the interviews will be exemplified with a few quotations; I have attempted to divide the quotes among interviewees as evenly as possible. I have myself translated the chosen quotes, from Swedish to English, the original quotes can be found in the "Appendices".

4.1 Bodily Integrity

Nussbaum's capability "Bodily Integrity" is explained as people's capabilities to move freely, to be secured against violence in general, sexual and domestic and have choices in matters concerning reproduction.⁵¹

Individual Women

In the interviews with individual migrant women it was clear that they both felt that women had little control over their bodily integrity at their country of origin. Both women described

⁵¹ Nussbaum, 2011, p. 33.

feeling limited when they were in their country of origin and mentioned that some women continue to feel limited in Sweden. Although I did not explicitly ask the women how they perceived their rights in the form of bodily integrity, it inevitably surfaced during the interviews and seemed quite unavoidable. When asking *Woman 1* about her perception on women's access to rights in Syria she answered:

I grew up in a society where all women are struck and it's natural... you know? So I've seen my mother, my sisters in the same way and same situation. So it has become normal and I even thought that I am better than them, since he seldom hit me.⁵²

In this quote the woman in question is referring to her family situation at the country of origin. She also talked about domestic violence with her ex-partner, whom she has separated from during her time in Sweden. Additionally, she mentioned that the violence that she experienced became something normal since the women in her surroundings also experienced it.⁵³

In connection to the capability of bodily integrity, both women mentioned their perceptions of the roles that families had at their country of origin. *Woman 1* continues and explains that a male family figure (father, brother, partner) has always made decisions for her; in turn she questions her own ability to decide over herself even in Sweden. When asked the same question the second woman, *Woman 2*, answered that there are different levels of self-determination in families, but that the families make most decisions until a woman is married.⁵⁴

When asked if there are differences in access to rights between women with migrant background and a women with a Swedish background, *Woman 1*'s perception was that women with a non-Swedish origin do not dare to report domestic abuse. She claimed that she had feared that she would not "survive" without her male partner; she would have no one left to help her. However, she described that after some time in Sweden she was able to leave her partner and gain self-determination, which made her feel strong.⁵⁵

Female Representatives

In the interviews with female representatives the issue of bodily integrity was discussed with both women, just like the interviews with individual women the issue was discussed in

⁵² Interview 1: see Appendix "Original Quotes", *Quote 1*.

⁵³ Interview 1.

⁵⁴ Interview 1 & 2.

⁵⁵ Interview 1.

relation to domestic relationships and family. Both representatives perceived certain migrant women to be below a threshold within the capability. As in the case of individual women I did not ask an explicit question about bodily integrity, despite this the issue was brought up. When I asked *Representative 1*, if she perceived that migrant women have a different access to rights than Swedish women, she answered with a scenario:

You are allowed to say “no I do not want to have sex with you anymore, I can’t take it, I don’t want to, I don’t like it, so stop”. They [i.e. the women] were very startled and surprised “oh, but it is our duty to satisfy our men, it is written in our religion, how am I suppose to say no?”⁵⁶

This quote is part of a scenario that the representative described to me, about a discussion that surfaced during a study circle. The discussion concerned a law that was passed in 2018, law on consent⁵⁷, the representative claims that no one knew about the law or what it meant. In addition the migrant women attending, were shocked when they learnt that sexual interactions with their husbands are not compulsory. Further she said that this discussion shows that migrant women in Sweden are unaware of their rights.⁵⁸

In connection to the capability of bodily integrity, both representatives speak about the role that honour plays in certain cultures and how this affects family and domestic relationships. When I asked *Representative 2* if persons at the organisation have a perception about which rights, women with a migrant background, find most important. She said that during the past fifteen years women have come to Sweden from societies where they have not had any power, where the family’s power is everything. In addition this power very often connected to patriarchal structures and the family’s honour.⁵⁹

Similar honour related subjects emerged during the interview with *Representative 1*, she spoke of the shame that migrant women impose on men if they leave them or are raped. The family’s and husband’s honour are in jeopardy and this problem is prioritised ahead of the women’s psychological and physical well-being. Further, she claims that this has a lot to do with certain cultures and that Swedish politicians have to take better stands towards honour related violence.⁶⁰

⁵⁶ Interview 3: see Appendix ”Original Quotes”, *Quote 2*.

⁵⁷ See ’Årsredovisning för staten 2018: Skrivelse 2018/19:101’, Sveriges Riksdag, *Website*, 2018.

⁵⁸ Interview 3.

⁵⁹ Interview 4.

⁶⁰ Interview 3.

Theoretical Reflection

Judging from the quotes and answers both from individual women and female representatives, it is evident that most perceive that they themselves or migrant women around them have been placed below an ample threshold level of the bodily integrity capability. These women are treated without human dignity, in their country of origin but also in Sweden due to the continuation of power relations.

According to Nussbaum, people are worthy of the same respect and regard as others and her capacities contribute to a “worthwhile human life”. She also claims that it is important that in order to have an empirical view of the views on cultures one needs to research the views of minorities. In addition it is important to remember that people make different choices, that they should have the freedom to do so and that they will most likely make choices based on their cultural, ethnic, religious identities etc. Also it is a woman’s crucial right of bodily integrity to refuse her husband intercourse.⁶¹

However, judging from the interviews, free choice may be important but if certain migrant women’s choices are so closely aligned with culture, patriarchal systems and fear, there must be boundaries for the roles that these aspects play in those choices. Some choices may be too influenced by people’s surroundings, meaning that in the end the choices are not free at all.

Nussbaum writes about John Stuart Mill’s comparative of restrictions governing discriminatory regimes and the governance of marriage, to slavery.⁶² This comparison is something that can be compared to how certain discriminatory traditions govern migrant women’s capability to reach above an ample threshold of bodily integrity.

In accordance with the central capabilities theory, women’s inequality is a justice and development issue, since it holds back the productivity of many nations. The family is not a private sphere off-limits to social justice and the approach insists that interventions in the home are justified when the rights of a family member are violated.⁶³

In summary, the interviews show that migrant women’s capabilities concerning bodily integrity must be improved and that their free choice to leave domestic violence and avoid boundaries in their families, is a step towards approaching an ample level of bodily integrity.

⁶¹ Nussbaum, 2011, p. 24, 32.

⁶² Nussbaum, 2011, p. 141.

⁶³ Nussbaum, 2011, p. 146-147, 66.

4.2 Sense, imagination and thought

Nussbaum's capability "Sense, imagination and thought" is explained with the provision of the capability to sense, imagine and think "truly human", in a manner cultivated by education. The idea is to use imagination and thought in order to experience and produce events of one's choice (literary, musical, religious etc.). One should be able to use one's mind with a guarantee for freedom of expression and with respect for free political and religious exercise.⁶⁴ I did not ask the interviewees explicit questions about imagination, thought or sense, since these types of questions are in my view difficult to formulate. But certain things that the women said can certainly be analysed from this perspective.

Individual Women

During the interviews with individual women, regarding their capability to sense, imagine and think, they both spoke about their education and thoughts that they had surrounding issues in the societies at their country of origin (Syria). Both women had perceptions about freedoms and thoughts concerning their situations here and there, like when I asked *Woman 1* about her perception on what to do to help women understand that they have rights, in Sweden, and she answered:

I think that the newly arrived people get a lot of information especially if they apply for asylum. But in my situation, when you come with marriage... if you decide not to go to school it's alright, but they [i.e. the newly arrived] are almost compelled. Do you see? Go to courses, knowledge about diseases, how to use protection, how to use protection in sex. I haven't had access to this before. But now, since I go to school, I know all the information.⁶⁵

Judging by the quote this woman believes that her situation (as a "marriage" migrant) is different to those who come to Sweden as asylum seekers, since they have a different access to education. She claimed that asylum seekers are almost forced to attend school and therefore have access to information concerning reproductive health, which she previously has not had. She did not have access to education concerning reproductive health in Syria, nor at the destination country, because her husband has not allowed her to attend school in Sweden. Now that they are separated she can go to school and learn things she did not have access to. This shows the importance that education has for claiming rights, it also shows that she was

⁶⁴ Nussbaum, 2011, p. 33, 35-36, 107.

⁶⁵ Interview 1: see Appendix "Original Quotes", *Quote 3*.

not granted the access to the capacity of sense, imagination and thought based on education, by her husband.⁶⁶

When I asked the *Woman 2*, if she thought that culture had an influence on women's access to rights she answered:

It influences, if you have different education. Those who live in the rural areas, don't go to school, there are no rights. No rights at all, especially in rural areas. One man marries several times.⁶⁷

The quote refers to her perceptions of Syria and she closely links education with rights. Meaning that in her view, rights and education correlate and where there is a lack of rights for women there is a lack of education. Additionally, this quote shows that she thinks that the existing rights for women in Syria were not equally distributed to all women of society.⁶⁸

Similarly to *Woman 2*, *Woman 1* talked about what avenues education can open for her, learning Swedish and meeting new people at language cafés.⁶⁹ These different avenues also help to develop one's way of thinking, by meeting new people, sharing thoughts and discussing things like daily activities, religion, relationships and so on.

Female Representatives

When interviewing female representatives from women organisations they also stressed the importance of education for migrant women and what it entails for the development of their thoughts. When I asked Representative *1*, if she thought that migrant women from other countries received help to understand what rights they have access to in Sweden, she said:

SFI⁷⁰ schools are owned by self-employed and the owners themselves have problems with the integration process. They themselves are... most of them, not all but many of them are religious themselves and have their religion and influence the school. They themselves... can't work with integration, they can't work with equality, they don't know themselves. So therefore, unfortunately the influence [i.e. by women] is very, very small until they have come into society, jobs and work environments.⁷¹

The quote refers to when migrants have been granted a residence permit and start education at SFI (Swedish for migrants), in Sweden. The representative claims that the schools and it's

⁶⁶ Interview 1.

⁶⁷ Interview 2: see Appendix "Original Quotes", *Quote 4*.

⁶⁸ Interview 2.

⁶⁹ Interview 1.

⁷⁰ See, 'Kommunal vuxen utbildning i svenska för invandare', Utbildning info, *Website*, 2017.

⁷¹ Interview 3: see Appendix "Original Quotes", *Quote 5*.

education are influenced by culture, in a negative aspect, meaning that migrant women are not introduced to the Swedish society until they have entered the society and received jobs. She goes on to say that this can take years.⁷²

Representative 2 spoke about what impact learning Swedish has, for example that illiterate migrant women are able to walk into a shop and read the labels on products. She also claims that education is a tool for work opportunities that triggers thought and a will among migrant women to become educated.⁷³

Theoretical Reflection

As we can see in the first quote *Woman 1* makes a connection between reproductive health and education. Decisions on issues concerning reproduction, is something that Nussbaum includes in the capability of bodily integrity.⁷⁴ This implies that without education and thoughts that derive from that education, thoughts surrounding reproduction and choices therein would not exist. According to the central capabilities theory this woman would not live a humanely dignified life and in order to do so she must have access to education that helps cultivate the sense, imagination and thought capability. All interviewees seem to deem that education is important and that the lack thereof is unacceptable.

One could consider that the husband that did not let his wife go to school in Sweden, in the first quote of this section, is responsible for keeping his wife from her capacity to sense, imagine and think. However, Nussbaum claims that the primary duty falls upon the government, to ensure an ample threshold of capabilities for its citizens through law and public policy.⁷⁵ So according to the central capabilities theory it would seem that the state has failed to secure basic entitlements for migrant women and thus put them below an ample threshold. In accordance with the second quote, the government in Syria has failed to secure an even distribution of an adequate threshold amount of entitlements (concerning education) to everyone, including women.

Lastly, *Representative 1's* quote shows that religious influence on education can entail that migrant women's freedom of thought are entrenched. This means that the Swedish authorities have yet again failed these women, considering that they have not managed to cultivate these women's freedom of thought.

⁷² Interview 3.

⁷³ Interview 4.

⁷⁴ Nussbaum, 2011, p. 33.

⁷⁵ Nussbaum, 2011, p. 168.

4.3 Practical Reason

The third capability that I will discuss on Nussbaum's list of central capabilities is "Practical reason", this capability entails people's ability to form a conception about what is good and critically reflect in the planning of one's life.⁷⁶ I find that this capability and the one above are difficult to separate; they have similar aspects, namely thought and reflection. However, I have decided to address this category from primarily migrant women's capability to critically reflect over their lives, rather than how to cultivate their thoughts in general.

Individual Women

While interviewing the two migrant women, both of them showed signs of critical reflection and perceptions of what is good and not. In order to analyse from the perspective of this particular capacity I will analyse the migrant women's capability to reflect rather than their perception of other migrant women's capabilities to reflect. The issue of other women's ability to reflect is not something that has been brought up in the interviews and therefore I have not included this aspect. When I asked *Woman 2* about what she thought of her access to rights in Sweden and in Syria she answered:

In Syria we had no rights, you can't compare it. People think I exaggerate, but no. We had no rights [...] I am happy that I live in Sweden now. Even if it's difficult with the language, getting use to, starting from the beginning. It's nothing compared to Syria. I feel like I have rights and that I can start my life.⁷⁷

This quote clearly shows that *Woman 2* has an ability to reflect critically over her situation both in Syrian and in Sweden. She claims that she feels like she has rights in Sweden and that it is nothing compared to Syria, where she had no rights. She even goes on to say that the two are like night and day when it comes to rights, where Syria is night and Sweden is day. *Woman 2* also mentioned, during the interview, that she knew about rights in Sweden before she moved here and knew that there was a big difference because she had read about the country.⁷⁸

However, *Woman 1* did not know about women's rights in Sweden and said instead that she has been in other countries such as Palestine and Lebanon. In the interview

⁷⁶ Nussbaum, 2011, p. 34.

⁷⁷ Interview 2: see Appendix "Original Quotes", *Quote 6*.

⁷⁸ Interview 2.

with this woman it is clear that she has reflected upon the rights of women in these countries and that she perceives them as having the capacity to choose and decide what they want to do. She also reflects on the fact that maybe it is culture that influences the rights of women, since she perceives it to differ between countries.⁷⁹

Female Representatives

When I spoke to female representatives they both mentioned migrant women's capability to practically reason about their life situations. When I asked *Representative 2*, if she thought that migrant women had certain rights that they thought were more important than others, she replied:

We talk about human rights here and we have a course in human rights and it awakens many thoughts and questions. But we must put them in context, otherwise it becomes abstract "yes, it's great fun that people [i.e. women] received the right to vote in Sweden..." But in what way does this concern me [i.e. migrant women].⁸⁰

The representative in question talked about how the courses they provide through the organisation are adapted in order to provide a context to which migrant women can personally connect. Consequently, this context gives these women an opportunity to critically reflect over their situation and provides them with ideas about how to plan their lives. Additionally, *Representative 2* also mentioned that she thinks that a challenge to migrant women and their perception of rights is that they live in segregated societies in Sweden, where traditions and clan structures are persistent. She also spoke about the fact that during gatherings with migrant women they agree with her when she says that if women had more prominent positions in society, there would be less conflicts.⁸¹ These examples spoke for the organisations efforts in attempting to lift women above a certain threshold within the capability of practical reason, i.e. critical reflection and a conception of what is good.

During the interview with *Representative 1*, she talked about the fact that it takes a long time for migrant women to adjust to (for them) newly discovered rights. The example she uses is that; if the regime in Iran were to be overthrown, it would take a long time for women to realise that they would not be punished for not using a (religious) veil.⁸² This means that women have difficulties adjusting when it comes to practical reasoning, if

⁷⁹ Interview 1.

⁸⁰ Interview 4: see Appendix "Original Quotes", *Quote 7*.

⁸¹ Interview 4.

⁸² Interview 3.

something has always been and women are then granted the freedom to choose, it is not evident that they will conceive this as something doable.

Theoretical Reflection

According to Nussbaum one of the most important capabilities is practical reason, she argues that it organises all other capabilities. If one can critically reflect, one has the opportunity to choose and order other functioning's corresponding with other capabilities.⁸³

This means that women, who have access to an ample threshold of practical reason, can make choices in relation to other capabilities and sustain an ample threshold level of central capabilities. If migrant women have access to rights but do not have the opportunity to reflect over what this means to them, they are not living a humanely dignified life. With practical reason comes the freedom of choice and if women have rights and if they have the choice to act upon their capabilities based on this reasoning, they are living lives with human dignity.

Nussbaum also mentions the importance of duty and that organisations have a shared responsibility to secure the capabilities of all the worlds citizens.⁸⁴ This can be exemplified with *Representative 2's* quote, where she mentioned that the organisation has courses where women are able to critically reflect on their life situations, which is something that helps migrant women reach above the practical reason threshold.

While interviewing the individual women it was clear that they had capabilities to critically reflect on what is good and bad. Both perceived that their access to rights, as women in Syria, were inadequate and improved in Sweden (even though it took time for *Woman 1*). This implies that the Swedish authorities have succeeded in securing migrant women's capability to practically reason, by cultivating critical thinking and conceptions of what is good.

Nussbaum goes on to say that even though religion deserves state protection, it does generate difficult dilemmas, especially from an equality viewpoint. According to Nussbaum's approach, states must respect religious traditions but the protection of central capabilities comes first and could impose on certain religious areas.⁸⁵

To summarise, this would mean that states should respect the religions of migrant women but also make sure that this does not entrench on them reaching an ample

⁸³ Nussbaum, 2011, p. 38.

⁸⁴ Nussbaum, 2011, p. 117, 201.

⁸⁵ Nussbaum, 2011, p. 147.

level of practical reasoning (and other capabilities), if it does entrench, these women are living lives without human dignity.

4.4 Affiliation

The fourth central capability I have chosen from Nussbaum's list is "Affiliation", which involves the capability to recognise and show concern for other human beings while being able to imagine the situation of another. It also means having social bases of self-respect, being treated as a dignified human being whose worth is equal to others and ensured provisions of non-discrimination (on the basis of race, sex, religion etc.).⁸⁶

Individual Women

During my interviews with individual migrant women both expressed a general concern for other women, in Syria and women that they know who have come to Sweden. When I asked *Woman 1*, about the fact that it took her years to have access to an understanding of what rights she had in Sweden, she said:

Yes but if I am incarcerated at home, how am I supposed to know? If he shuts me – and so many like me – inside. So many that I know now, that come from Syria and one of them she [i.e. friend] is sitting there, so many are shut inside at home they are not allowed... she [i.e. friend] says to me "can you buy me a phone and I will give you the money?" I said to her "why doesn't your husband do it?" [friend said] "He said that I am not allowed, I want a new phone and he doesn't want me to buy one". She has lived here for four years [...] I don't know... I feel sorry for her, she can't do anything.⁸⁷

In this quote she talks about a friend (migrant women) of hers whom she claims does not have the choice of self-determination, her husband decides what and if she is allowed to purchase items for herself. She also describes that women she knows in Sweden, that originally come from Syria are denied access to their basic entitlements such as bodily integrity, being allowed to move freely. Additionally, *Woman 1* mentioned in the interview that she thinks that it is more difficult for women who have more children than her (she has one) to decide to leave relationships where their husbands "take care" of them but at the same time shut them inside. She means that these migrant women do not dare leave their husbands, even in

⁸⁶ Nussbaum, 2011, p. 34.

⁸⁷ Interview 1: see Appendix "Original Quotes", *Quote 8*.

Sweden where they are able to, and therefore she feels sorry for them due to the fact that they cannot choose for themselves.⁸⁸

During the interview with *Woman 2* I asked if she has experienced that migrant women have problems with their access to rights in Sweden, she said that many that come to Sweden are still controlled by their male partner. She also adds that women that get divorced are almost conceived as *whores* and migrant women are afraid that people will talk behind their backs so they do not dare to divorce.⁸⁹ This shows that she has engaged with other migrant women and has shaped a conception of their situations.

Female Representatives

Both representatives mention aspects that can be connected to the capability of affiliation. They mention relations between migrant women and the understanding that they have for these migrant women and their situation. Since they work in close proximity with migrant women they are both able to partake of discussions between migrant women and their personal reflections concerning their situations. When I asked *Representative 1* if she thought that there was anything that the Swedish society could do to help migrant women realise their rights, she said:

I understand that some migrants seek the company of their fellow countrymen and this is also a problem, that one remains [i.e. in certain patterns]. One must dress like the collective, collective wishes, one must speak as the collective wishes, one must be educated according to the collective's wishes. So therefore one never liberates oneself from this trap.⁹⁰

In this quote the representative shows the capability of affiliation, perhaps because she herself is a migrant and is familiar with problems that migrant women face. She shows understanding for difficulties surrounding liberation from an oppression trap. She also spoke about her own fear as a migrant woman and exemplified with when she went to classes at SFI and she did not dare to talk and joke with men in her surroundings in fear of retaliation from her husband. She means that she understands that these kinds of thoughts are difficult to remove.⁹¹

When I asked *Representative 2*, if she experienced that migrant women who have fled conflict have a different approach to women's rights in Sweden she said:

⁸⁸ Interview 1.

⁸⁹ Interview 2.

⁹⁰ Interview 3: see Appendix "Original Quotes", *Quote 9*.

⁹¹ Interview 3.

[...] but at the same time you are not alone in this experience, daring to process this [i.e. the experience] in the group and also understanding that I am not the only one that has experienced this. She also came from Iraq, she also came from Syria, she came as a quota refugee from Vietnam once [...] ⁹²

The representative said that traumas and the ambivalence (concerning if these women are allowed to stay in Sweden or not) influence their approaches to their situation. Further, she said that migrant women need to be helped to understand that they are not totally alone in their experiences; this is done through social interactions with others who have experienced similar traumas or situations.

She also talked about the difficulties Swedes have understanding the situations of migrant women, due to the fear of interfering in a different culture or offending somebody. However she claims that this negatively affects migrant women and equality, since “we” do not dare question the rights of migrant women that derive from traditions. ⁹³

Theoretical Reflection

In accordance with the central capabilities theory, affiliation (just like practical reason) plays an important role since it pervades other capabilities. A person should be respected as a social being and their relationships should be considered in public policy and in relation to other capabilities. ⁹⁴

Nussbaum mentions in her approach that affiliation is a *fertile functioning*, meaning that it is a capability that tends to promote other capabilities. ⁹⁵ The individual migrant women seem to be able to grasp an understanding of the situations that other migrant women in similar situations are going through. They realise that it is difficult for others and therefore have an ability to imagine how it is for others. The affiliation they have to other women can help to generate both practical reason and thoughts concerning other capabilities (bodily integrity, senses – deriving from education) if these women discuss such matters in connection to women’s rights. If they discuss matters concerning their rights with each other, knowledge about possibilities and choices may spread, and help migrant women to reach an ample threshold of capabilities.

This leads us to the perception of female representatives concerning affiliation. The first representative, mentioned in this section has the ability to personally recognise

⁹² Interview 4: see Appendix “Original Quotes”, *Quote 10*.

⁹³ Interview 4.

⁹⁴ Nussbaum, 2011, p. 39.

⁹⁵ Nussbaum, 2011, p. 44-45.

situations in which migrant women live and show concern for them. Whereas the second representative presented descriptions of how the organisation provides possibilities for discussion and for affiliation that lead to the realisation that these women are not alone in their experiences. This realisation helps to reflect over one's own life and access to rights, consequently triggering practical reasoning.

To conclude, Nussbaum uses the life story of Vasanti, a woman living in India and her access to capabilities, as an example throughout her book. She mentions that one of Vasanti's especially fertile capabilities has been, affiliation, where having links to other people who regard her as an equal provides her with an ingredient to live a humanely dignified life.⁹⁶ This example with Vasanti can be connected to the experiences that migrant women have access to through *Representative 2's* organisation, where women can create links to women from similar backgrounds that regard each other as equals.

4.5 Control over one's environment – Material

The last central capability that I have chosen to analyse is a section within the "Control over one's environment" capability, named "Material". Nussbaum describes the section as the capability of being able to hold property and have property rights on the equal basis with others. It also entails the capability to seek employment on an equal basis with others, exercise practical reason in work and enter meaningful relationships of mutual recognition with other workers.⁹⁷

Individual Women

In relation to the control over one's environment capability, both women speak about their access to rights of property and employment. However, there is a slight difference in what these women refer to, I will start with two quotes from *Woman 2*. She mentioned her access to employment, when I asked if she experiences that all women despite where they come from have the same rights in Sweden, she replied:

Many don't answer me when I apply for jobs, because I have a different name, not because I am a woman but because I am a Syrian woman.⁹⁸

⁹⁶ Nussbaum, 2011, p. 99.

⁹⁷ Nussbaum, 2011, p. 34.

⁹⁸ Interview 2: see Appendix "Original Quotes", *Quote 11*.

Her perception was that many employers have not answered her applications because she has a different name; this is referring to the fact that she has a Syrian name meaning that she is convinced that employers do not respond due to her Syrian origin and not just her sex.⁹⁹ When I asked the same woman if she perceived that culture influenced women's access to rights, she said:

For one [i.e. woman] to live in an apartment alone in Syria doesn't exist.¹⁰⁰

This quote shows that *Woman 2's* perception is that women in Syria have no rights to hold property alone and this is due to the importance of having a male presence in decision-making. In this view women do not have the rights to hold property on an equal basis with men.¹⁰¹

However, during the interview with *Woman 1* she said that she feels that she has rights to decide over her property in Sweden, because she does not have to ask her (male) partner anymore. In accordance with *Woman 2's* quote, *Woman 1* mentions that she now (in Sweden) has the opportunity to live alone, which she did not have in Syria. In a tone of liberation, *Woman 1* also mentioned that women do not need a man in Sweden they have the opportunity to be independent.¹⁰²

Female Representatives

When I interviewed female representatives from women organisations they both mentioned aspects that can be analysed from a "control over one's *material* environment" perspective. Yet, it was clear the *Representative 2* was persistent throughout the interview, regarding her perception that employment played a large part in the process of migrant women's understanding of their rights and becoming humanely dignified. When I asked *Representative 2* if she thought that people had preconceptions about migrant women's prior work experience or prior education, she answered:

What happens is that we have women that maybe are too competent, that are maybe cleaning or working at a hospital and that creates lock-in effects for those women that might not have those competencies, where are they suppose to go? How am I suppose to motivate a

⁹⁹ Interview 2.

¹⁰⁰ Interview 2: see Appendix "Original Quotes", *Quote 12*.

¹⁰¹ Interview 2.

¹⁰² Interview 1 & 2.

woman that might have nine years of primary school education to seek further [education] when she sees that her colleague from the same country – who is an engineer – cleans? I mean hello!¹⁰³

This quote derives from a context where the representative was in the midst of describing different projects the organisation coordinates. She stated that it has become clear to her that migrant women in Sweden are not reaching their full potential since they are not being treated in accordance with their capabilities. When less educated migrant women see that well-educated migrant women are being treated unfairly, their motivation to apply for further education fades. Additionally, *Representative 2* mentions that within the organisation they perceive that having access to employment and making migrant women self-sufficient helps their integration in society. Their goal is to match migrant women's competences with the required competences of employers. She also mentions the importance employment has for social relations and the effect this has on migrant women's abilities to reflect over their lives.¹⁰⁴

Representative 1 chose instead to mention women's access to property rights. She claims that countries that have Sharia laws are governed by the idea that women and children are the property of men, this means that if a woman would like to divorce she would not have the right to their property or possessions. In summary, the representative claims that women living in countries with Sharia laws do not have control over their environment, which means that they are placed below the capability threshold.¹⁰⁵

Theoretical Reflection

In accordance with Nussbaum's central capabilities approach, both *Woman 2* and *Representative 2*, perceive that migrant women in Sweden are not treated according to their occupational abilities, therefore they are not being treated on an equal basis with others. They are robbed of the opportunity to be placed above an ample threshold level.

Nussbaum exemplifies with India in her theory and mentions that women in abusive relationships have exit options and bargaining power. When a husband knows his wife can leave him because she has employment opportunities and control over property she is less likely to be ill treated by her partner.¹⁰⁶ Although this example is specific for women in India, it could be compared to the situations of migrant women. It is possible to gather, from

¹⁰³ Interview 4: see Appendix "Original Quotes", *Quote 13*.

¹⁰⁴ Interview 4.

¹⁰⁵ Interview 3.

¹⁰⁶ Nussbaum, 2011, p. 8.

the interviews, that both representatives and migrant women see an importance in having employment opportunities and see an importance in having control over one's environment.

It is also evident, judging from the perceptions derived from the text, that affiliation, control over one's material environment and practical reasoning evolves from having access to employment. If migrant women in Sweden have access to employment they have access to affiliation (creating meaningful relationships) and this in turn helps to develop practical reasoning, meaning the ability to conceive what is good and critically reflect over ones life. In conclusion, it would seem that judging from the interviews that the Swedish government has done well in securing migrant women's capabilities to hold property (in contrast to Syria and nations with Sharia laws). However, regarding equal employment opportunities the government needs to do better in order to place migrant women above an ample threshold in the "control over one's environment capability", to secure human dignity.

6 Summary and Result

The first category shows that the interviewees spoke of the capability to secure bodily integrity. The main examples of challenges to this capability have been expressed as domestic violence, the family's role as decision makers, patriarchal structures, honour and perceived dependence. These challenges affect migrant women's ability to reach above an ample threshold of bodily integrity, preventing them from living a humanely dignified life. Since the authorities and governments of the world's nations are the primary duty bearers, according to the approach, it would seem that judging by the interviews there is a need for improvements regarding access to entitlements of bodily integrity, not just in Syria but also in Sweden. There is a need to make sure that women are free to make decisions based on their bodily integrity, without fear of repercussions and without negative influence from their surroundings.

Second, the ability to sense, imagine and think is perceived as an important aspect in terms of education. Not only is education perceived as helping to develop knowledge of rights and in turn activate women as agents in employment, education is also seen as a meeting place. However, the access to education is perceived as limited in the individual migrant women's country of origin, but does also occur in Sweden due to the male partner's role as decision maker. When women are shut inside it is difficult for women to evolve their imagination and thoughts, the Swedish authorities must make sure that access to education is equally distributed among all (including migrant women). Also, the Syrian authorities would need to see over equal distribution in areas of education, in order for all citizens to be able to live humanely dignified lives.

Thirdly, the interviews show the ability of the individual women to critically reflect over their pasts and see the good in their lives. The practical reasoning capability has been cultivated and secured by the nation (Sweden), which is an essential part of cultivating other capabilities and to live a life with human dignity. Also, the organisations work effectively towards nourishing migrant women's abilities to practically reason, through discussions and in accordance with their duty to aid the nation in securing capabilities.

The fourth capability, affiliation, is also stressed as an important aspect in the central capabilities approach. The analysis shows that both individual women and female representatives believe there are reasons to improve the situations of women living in Sweden, this is shown through their ability to connect and imagine the situations of migrant women. However, the interviewees claim they know of situations where women are treated

inadequately and this shows that they have an understanding for these women's situations and the fact that they need improvement.

Lastly, the interviewees see control over one's material environment as an important aspect of women's rights. The female representatives perceive control over one's material environment as important for generating self-determination and independence. The individual women perceive their right to control over their material environment, as almost non-existent in their country of origin. However, Swedish authorities must take into consideration lock-in effects that are created when developing policies concerning employment.

7 Discussion

In this section I will discuss this thesis in connection to the purpose of the study, the research questions, prior research and further research.

To begin, the purpose of this study was to; show certain individual migrant women's perceptions of women's rights at their country of origin (Syria) and destination (Sweden), to show female representatives of Swedish women organisations perception of migrant women's rights in their country of origin and in Sweden, and what these interviewees perceptions entail by looking through the lens of Martha C. Nussbaum's theory on central capabilities.

Judging by the interviews and the application of the central capabilities approach, when analysing the interviewees' perceptions of migrant women's rights, it would seem that a few central aspects are highlighted. The chosen five out of ten central capabilities categorise the interviews in themes of "Bodily integrity", "Sense, imagination and thought", "Practical reason", "Affiliation" and "Control over one's environment- Material".

All participants have spoken of challenges to migrant women's rights both at country of origin and in Sweden. These challenges should not be taken lightly, but be seen as areas for improvement. This could lead to securing the rights that migrant women need to live a humanely dignified life. The results and quotes presented show that although Sweden is a nation with a high GII ranking, it has areas in need of improvement, which are exemplified in this study via the interviews.

Nussbaum's central capabilities approach has served an analytical purpose in this thesis. Her theory has helped to analyse perceived rights from the perspective of provided capabilities, which through the interviews, show perceived breaches in migrant women's access to an ample level of capabilities (within the five I have chosen). Although, Nussbaum claims that it is important to consider an ample threshold within all ten of her capabilities, she does also put her approach forward as a contribution open for revision and re-thinking. I argue that the most important capabilities in this study (judging from the interviews) are the five categories chosen in connection to the method of qualitative content analysis.

I would also like to mention that Nussbaum has not reflected on migrant rights in her book and her version of the capabilities approach, something that I think is an important and lacking aspect. It would be interesting to read her approach on migrant's rights, with an exemplification in line with her example of Vasanti's life. The lack of consideration for intersectional inequalities is also something that I deem problematic in her approach;

something that Atrey has critiqued her for in her research. The intersectional dilemma plays quite a large role in this study; women are often placed below the threshold within the studied categories, but also perceive this problem to be something that is influenced by the migrant women's cultures, religion and origins.

The authors mentioned in the prior research, in the women's narrative section, write of the importance of women's narratives. In similarity to them, I have chosen to interview women in hope to surface aspects from a micro-level. By interviewing female representatives I have also hoped to provide a helicopter perspective of what their perceptions on migrant women's rights are. The researchers that mention the importance of narratives, also show aspects that could be analysed from a central capabilities perspective, namely aspects that resonate with Nussbaum's ideas of duty, affiliation, practical reason and bodily integrity.

In Wu's research she concentrates mainly on patriarchal structures and how they are expressed through dress-appearance. In my study, I have tried to take distance from patriarchy and rather analyse migrant women's perceived access to rights in connection to central capabilities. This means that although Wu makes a point exemplifying women's lack of choice when analysing dress-appearance, I provide depth to this theme with the use of Nussbaum's theory. Instead giving reflection to questions such as: do migrant women have the right to free choice?

Those researchers that lie closest to my study are Lindqvist, Wettergren Roggeband, and Peroni. Peroni explains the boundaries that women experience as a result of state policies; this is something that I have approached in my analysis. I mention that migrant women perceive certain challenges in the access to their rights and therein their access to an ample threshold within certain central capabilities. However, I add to the research an aspect of borders expressed as perceived challenges faced by migrant women on a micro-level through interviews rather than through presenting cases (as Peroni does).

Lindqvist and Wettergren are the only researchers mentioned in the prior research that study migrant women in a Swedish context. The researchers present women's lived experiences expressed during psychotherapy. They point to experiences, such as feeling disconnected from the Swedish society and the feeling of belonging. The experiences mentioned in their research are also experienced by the interviewees in this study. However, the women's perceptions in this study are not collected in therapy sessions or analysed due to their feelings. They are instead involved in open questioned interviews that are analysed based on their *perceptions* of rights in society, rather than their *feelings* regarding rights.

In Roggeband's research she discusses the importance of women's organisations as network builders and forums for discussions. As articulated by the female representatives in this study, their women organisations work toward informing and successfully integrating migrant women into society. This resonates well with Roggeband's claim that organisation's work is important for the integration of women. However, I focus on these organisations' and migrant women's perspectives in order to detect perspectives of challenges associated with rights, faced by migrant women.

When reflecting on my contribution to the research field, I hope to give a more micro-levelled view on the perceived rights of migrant women at their country of origin and in Sweden. Through applying Nussbaum's theory I have attempted to show certain aspects that correlate with the duties of governments and provide areas for reflection, where access to capabilities are inadequate and also what capabilities can be perceived as adequately reached. Moreover, my study has given rise to questions concerning; which areas states and governments can do better in and in which areas they are succeeding in providing entitlements and adequate levels within the chosen central capabilities. These questions are however only answered in connection to the specific interviews conducted in this study, for a more conclusive view, I advise researchers to continue interviewing organisations working in close proximity with migrant women, but perhaps most importantly, interviewing migrant women themselves. Interview studies such as mine, provide real persons perspectives on perceived access to rights.

Although my ambition for this study was to interview many more migrant women, about specifically their perceptions of access to rights, it was unfortunately not possible in terms the size and format of this thesis. However, I believe that the research I have conducted provides new insights into how both migrant women and female representatives of Swedish organisations perceive migrant women's rights at their country of origin and in Sweden. This is something that from the perspective of a capabilities approach is important in order to detect; to what extent migrant women are living humanely dignified lives and to what extent duties to sustain their abilities to reach above an ample threshold within the (chosen) central capabilities are being fulfilled.

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Appendices

Interview guides

Since the conducted interviews have been held in Swedish I have chosen to present them in the original language and format. The interview questions posed to the individual migrant women are about their perception of women's rights in general, perceived differences between women's rights in their country of origin and Sweden, perceived rights differences between men and women, conflict's influence on women's rights and cultural influence on women's rights.

The interview questions posed to women organisations are about their work within their organisation, how they work to strengthen women's rights and how they perceive migrant women's view on women's rights and differences between country of origin and destination (Sweden).

Individual Migrant Women

Inledning:

- Upplever du att det finns **kvinnliga rättigheter**, om ja vad skulle de kunna vara?
Förtydligande: rättigheter som är speciellt (viktiga) för kvinnor, rättigheter på jobbet, rätten att bestämma själv, rätten att rösta, rätten att gå utbildning, rätten till hälsa, personlig säkerhet, lika skydd inför lagen och rätten till jämlikhet inom familjen.

Jämför - Ursprungsland och Sverige:

- Hur upplevde du tillgång till **rättigheter som kvinna i X ursprungsland**?
Eventuellt: Utveckla i förhållande till de rättigheter du nämnde ovan.
- Hur upplever du din tillgång till **rättigheter som kvinna i Sverige**?
Eventuellt: Utveckla i förhållande till de rättigheter du nämnde ovan.
- När du kom till Sverige **upplevde du en krock mellan tillgång till dina rättigheter** som du hade innan och de du har i Sverige?
Förtydligande: Om du inte upplevde skillnad vad var likt? tycker du att du fick "hjälp" att förstå skillnaden?

- Upplever du att det finns en skillnad **mellan mäns och kvinnors rättigheter**, i Sverige och ursprungslandet?
- Är det **lättare att få tillgång till rättigheter** för kvinnor i Sverige?
Förtydligande: På vilket sätt likt/olikt?
- Upplever du att **alla kvinnor har samma tillgång till rättigheter i Sverige** oavsett var man kommer ifrån?
Förtydligande: alltså har du som spenderat en stor del av ditt liv i ett annat land samma rättigheter som kvinnor som bott i Sverige hela sina liv

Påverkan på rättigheter:

- Upplever du att din tillgång till rättigheter som kvinna **förändrades när det blev konflikt** i X ursprungsland?
- Tror du att **kultur (t.ex. Religion, Språk osv) påverkar** tillgången till rättigheter i X ursprungsland? Påverkar rättigheter i Sverige?

Avslut:

- Det var alla frågor, är det något du känner att du vill **tillägga**?

Women Organisations

Inledning:

- Vad **jobbar ni på organisationen främst med**? Vilka frågor arbetar ni mest med?
- Upplever ni på organisationen, att kvinnor med flykting/migrantbakgrund **har vissa rättigheter som viktigare än andra**?

Förtydligande: Upplever ni att kvinnor tycker att vissa rättigheter är viktigare än andra i egenskap av att vara kvinnor, ge gärna exempel.

Jämförelse, Ursprungsland och Sverige:

- Hur uppfattar ni på organisationen att kvinnor med migrant/flyktingbakgrund **upplevde sin tillgång till rättigheter i X ursprungsland**?
Förtydligande: Som kvinna i X ursprungsland var kvinnors rättigheter tillgodosedda, hur upplever ni att kvinnor har haft det? Exempel på länder?
- Hur uppfattar ni på organisationen att kvinnor med migrant/flyktingbakgrund **upplever sin tillgång till rättigheter i Sverige**?

Förtydligande: Som kvinna från X ursprungsland tror ni att deras rättigheter som kvinnor är tillgodosedda, hur upplever ni att kvinnor har det i Sverige?

- Tror ni på organisationen, att kvinnor med migrant/flyktingbakgrund **upplever en krock mellan tillgången till kvinnors rättigheter i Sverige och i X ursprungslandet?**

Förtydligande: På vilket sätt är det likt/olikt? Om kvinnor uppfattar en krock tror ni att de får "hjälp" att förstå deras rättigheter i Sverige? Om ja, på vilket sätt?

- Hur arbetar ni på organisationen för att **stärka dessa kvinnors rättigheter?**

Utveckla: Vilka samarbetar ni med? Ex. andra myndigheter, kommun, frivillig organisationer. Vilka svårigheter finns det i det arbetet?

- Uppfattar ni på organisationen, att kvinnor med migrant/flyktingbakgrund upplever en skillnad **mellan mäns och kvinnors tillgång till rättigheter i Sverige och X ursprungsland?**
- Upplever ni på organisationen att kvinnor med migrant/flykting bakgrund tycker att det är **lättare att få tillgång till rättigheter för kvinnor i Sverige?**
- Tror ni på organisationen att kvinnor med migrant/flyktingbakgrund **upplever att alla kvinnor (oavsett var man kommer ifrån) har samma tillgång till rättigheter i Sverige?**

Förtydligande: alltså upplever kvinnor som spenderat en stor del av sina liv i ett annat land, att de har samma tillgång till rättigheter som de som är födda/uppvuxna i Sverige?

Påverkan på rättigheter:

- Hur upplever ni på organisationen **att konflikt påverkar** kvinnor med migrant/flyktingbakgrunds tillgång till rättigheter?
- Ser ni på organisationen att **kultur (ex. Religion och Språk) påverkar** kvinnors tillgång till rättigheter i X ursprungsland och i Sverige?

Avslut:

- Det var alla frågor, är det något du känner att du **vill tillägga?**

Original Quotes

Since I have written my study in English, I have chosen to translate the quotes. However, I find it important to include the original quote, in Swedish, in order for the reader to gain access to the original version if desired. I have therefore provided the original quotes below in this appendix.

Quote 1 – Woman 1

Alltså jag växte upp i ett samhälle där alla kvinnor blir slagna och det är vanligt... förstår du? Så jag har sett min mamma, mina systrar på samma sätt och samma situation så att det har blivit som vanligt och jag tänkte till och med att jag är mycket bättre än dem för att han brukade sällan slå mig.

Quote 2 – Representative 1

Du får säga ”nej jag vill inte ha sex med dig längre, jag orkar inte, jag vill inte, jag gillar det inte, alltså stopp.” De [dvs. kvinnorna] var mycket häpnade, mycket förvånade ”aha, men vi har uppgift att tillfredsställa våra män, det står i vår religion, hur kan jag säga nej?”

Quote 3 – Woman 1

Alltså jag tycker att dem ny ankommande människorna de får mycket information speciellt om de söker asyl. Men i min situation när man kommer med giftermål... så om man bestämma att inte gå till skolan är det okej, men de [dvs. de nyanlända] är nästan tvungna. Förstår du? Att gå på kurs, veta om ja, alla sjukdomar. Hur ska man skydd, hur ska man använda skydd när man har sex. Allt detta har jag inte haft fått innan. Men nu för att jag går till skolan så vet jag all information.

Quote 4 – Woman 2

Det ska påverka, om de har olika utbildning. De som bor på landsbygden, går inte i skolan där finns inga rättigheter. Inga rättigheter alls, speciellt på landsbygden. En man gifter sig med flera gånger.

Quote 5 – Representative 1

SFI skolor är egenföretagare som äger och dem som äger SFI skolor dem själva har problem med integrationsprocessen. Dem själva är... De flesta, inte alla men många av dem är själva religiösa och har sin tro och påverkar skolan. Dem själva... kan inte jobba med integration, de kan inte jobba med jämställdhet, de kan inte själva. Så därför, tyvärr påverkan [dvs. på kvinnor] är väldigt, väldigt liten tills man har hunnit komma in i samhälle och arbete och arbetsmiljö.

Quote 6 – Woman 2

I Syrien hade vi inga rättigheter, det går inte att jämföra. Folk tycker jag överdriver, men nej. Vi hade inga rättigheter [...] Jag är glad att jag bor här i Sverige nu. Även om det är svårt med språk, vänja sig, börja från början. Det är ingenting jämfört med Syrien. Jag känner att jag har rättigheter och att jag kan börja mitt liv.

Quote 7 – Representative 2

Vi pratar ju om mänskliga rättigheter här och vi har en kurs i mänskliga rättigheter och det väcker mycket tankar och frågor. Men vi måste sätta dem i kontext, annars blir det någonting abstract ”ja, men det är jätteroligt att man [dvs. kvinnor] fick rösträtt i Sverige...” Men liksom på vilket sätt rör det mig [dvs. migrant kvinnor].

Quote 8 – Woman 1

Ja men om jag är instängd hemma, hur ska jag veta? Om han instänger mig och så många som jag. Så många som jag känner igen nu, nu som kommer ifrån Syrien och en av dem hon [dvs. kompis] som sitter där, så många de är instängda hemma de får inte... hon [dvs. kompis] säger till mig ”kan du köpa en mobil till mig och jag ger dig pengarna” jag sa till henne ” varför gör din man inte det?” [kompis sa] ”Han sa jag får inte göra det, jag vill ha en ny mobil och han vill inte att jag ska köpa det.” Hon har bott här i fyra år [...] Jag vet inte... jag tycker synd om henne, hon kan inte göra någonting.

Quote 9 – Representative 1

Jag förstår att en del invandrare söker sig till sina landsmän och det här är också ett problem, att man stannar kvar [dvs. i vissa mönster]. Man måste klä sig som kollektivet, kollektivet önskar, man måste prata som kollektivet önskar, man måste utbilda sig som kollektivet önskar. Så därför befriar man sig aldrig från den här fällan.

Quote 10 – Representative 2

[...] men samtidigt är man ju inte ensam om den här upplevelsen, att våga bearbeta den [dvs. upplevelsen] i gruppen och också förstå att jag inte är den enda som har upplevt detta. Hon kom också från Irak, hon kom också från Syrien, hon kom som kvotflykting från Vietnam någon gång i tiden [...]

Quote 11 – Woman 2

Många svarar inte mig när jag söker jobb, för att jag har ett annat namn, inte för att jag har är kvinna utan för att jag är en syrisk kvinna.

Quote 12 – Woman 2

Det händer inte att man [dvs. kvinna] bor själv i en lägenhet i Syrien.

Quote 13 – Representative 2

Det som händer är att vi har kvinnor som kanske är över kompetenta, som kanske städar eller jobbar på sjukhus och som skapar inlåsnings effekter för dem kvinnor som kanske inte har dem kompetenserna, alltså var ska dem ta vägen? Hur ska jag motivera en kvinna som kanske har nio års grundskola till att söka vidare, läsa vidare när hon ser att hennes kollega från samma land – som är ingenjör – städar? Alltså hello!