

Let the Right One in: Sports Leaders' Shared Experiences of Including Refugee Girls and Boys in Sports Clubs

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Abstract: This study investigated how gender and sports capital are expressed in sports leaders' talk about sports for young people with a refugee background. Empirical data were derived from four focus group interviews representing 21 sports club leaders in Sweden. The leaders defined boys and girls as distinct groups but also as groups within which there are differences. Compared with the boys, the girls were presented with lesser possibilities to participate in sports. According to the leaders, the differences in the group of girls rested on that the sports culture in the girls' country of origin, which may be more or less permissive for girls to be engaged in sports, whereas differences within the group of boys were understood in terms of bodies and mentalities.

Keywords: gender, sports capital, sports leaders, migration

Introduction

In the last few years, the Swedish government has increased the funding for sport initiatives directed towards children and youngsters. Some of these initiatives have been aimed at providing these target groups possibilities for more sports within the school context by using external actors from the sport movement (Regeringskansliet, 2017). Other initiatives have served the purpose of integrating the new arrivals in Swedish society through their participation in sports (Riksidrottsförbundet, 2016). The present study focused on one of these state-funded integration efforts that has received extra grants to create opportunities for new arrivals to be introduced to sports clubs (Socialdepartementet, 2015).

Politicians in Europe seem to share a strong belief in sports as an integration arena (Agergaard, 2018). This trend was evident in Sweden in 2015 when the great refugee wave reached the country, and around 160 000 people came to seek shelter. Among them were 70 000 children and young people, half of whom were unaccompanied individuals (Migrationsverket, 2016a). The increasing migration induced the government to investigate how society could contribute to integration, and civil society was seen as a potential site. The Swedish Sports Confederation/Riksidrottsförbundet (RF) thus received an increased grant in the same year to create opportunities for new arrivals to engage in sports club activities (Socialdepartementet, 2015), which implicitly target sport leaders as central integration ac-

tors. The RF (2016) commented that ‘the Government recognises the power of sports and has allocated grants to enable the sports movement to integrate the new arrivals’.

Often, sport is viewed as something positive for all children and youngsters, for both the individuals and the society, and the specific efforts described hold a strong normative notion of sport as an almost unquestionable means for supporting the holistic development of all children and young people. Nonetheless, research has emphasised the historical connection between sports and masculinity, which has led to the dominance of sports role models, thereby negatively contributing to a lack of female role models (Meier, 2015). As Szto (2015) puts it, ‘sport itself is a product of power relations’ (905). In a study of girls’ debuts in alternative sports programmes organised in collaboration between the school and the sports movement (Carlman & Hjalmarsson, 2018), the girls described that the leaders normalise gender oppression and thereby uphold gender stereotypes. The boys were described as acting as if they are superior in relation to the girls and ascribing certain physical and personality characteristics to the girls. Other studies have discussed sports as an arena on which young participants might suffer emotional harm (Stafford, Alexander, & Fry, 2015) and on which destructive leadership might develop (Jacobs, Smits, & Knoppers, 2017). The idea of the almost emancipatory potential of sports was shown through a sports projects aimed at supporting certain groups, primarily girls, in different aspects (Hayhurst, Giles, Radforth, & The Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre Society, 2015). Although such efforts are probably based on the best intentions, they also hold notions of boys and girls as distinct groups, which contradicts our understanding of femininities and masculinities as being created, recreated, and challenged in talk and other actions. Furthermore, we argue that the valuation of children and youngsters’ sports capital is crucial for their comprehension of sport as a context accessible for them and for their willingness to participate. This study investigated how gender and sports capital are expressed in sports leaders’ talk about sports for young people with a refugee background in the context of sports clubs which recently have received extra government grants to create opportunities for new arrivals to be introduced to sports clubs. Informed by Smith, Spaaij, and McDonald (2018), we state that sports leaders are very important for creating structures enabling the integration of participants with a refugee background.

The Swedish Government’s grant was primarily aimed at integrating new arrivals, but based on the experience gained in the study, the project also came to include children and young people who had been here longer than 2-3 years, that is, individuals no longer targeted by integration efforts or included in the definition of new arrivals (Migrationsverket, 2016b). Therefore, the term refugee or refugee background is used in this study. It refers to ‘a person who has fled a country, because of a well-founded fear of persecution on the grounds of race, religion, social belonging to a specific group or political persuasion, of which he/she is a citizen, and who cannot or will not return to the said country because of the fears mentioned above’ (UNHCR, 2018). A refugee background functions as an umbrella term and encompasses all children and adults who have been forced to leave their country of origin irrespective of how long they have been in Sweden. From the start, the project was called an integration project. Later, the initiative came to be called the inclusion project instead. Therefore, in this article, the term inclusion will henceforth be used when talking about the project. Nevertheless, when the text handles processes of how young peo-

ple with a refugee background be a part of sports clubs, the concept integration is used. Integration is conceptualised as ‘multidimensional social-relational processes that are bound up in power asymmetries, and evolve as changing trajectories’ (Agergaard, 2018, p. 25). To see sports integration as a social-relational process marked by power asymmetries puts focus on the dynamic between who the individual is (e.g. willingness and previous experience to play sport) in relation to the condition they encounter in Swedish sports clubs (e.g. sports leaders’ attitude) (Agergaard, 2018).

Review of Literature

For a relatively long time, research has questioned how inclusive sports are because girls with immigrant backgrounds¹ are underrepresented in Western sports (Thul, LaVoi, Hazelwood, & Hussein, 2016; Walseth & Fasting, 2004). Elling and Knoppers (2005) claim that sports not only function as a site of integration but also can lead to exclusion and discrimination as access to sports is influenced by normative conceptions of gender and ethnicity. The interplay between norms of gender and ethnicity can influence young individuals’ choice of physical activity negatively as well as positively.

A Norwegian study (Strandbu, Bakken, & Aaboen Sletten, 2017) found no difference in sports activity between ‘immigrant boys’ and ‘Norwegian boys’ and that both groups were generally more active than girls. In addition, girls with an immigrant background participated to a lesser extent in sports activities than ‘Norwegian girls’. The authors concluded that girls with an immigrant background has a considerably lower probability to partake in sports than boys with an immigrant background and Norwegian young people in general.

Cultural or religious reasons have aggravated girls’ opportunities to engage in sports. According to Anderson et al. (2019), sports activities are not adapted to girls with certain religions or cultural backgrounds. Walseth and Strandbu (2014) studied Pakistani girls’ sports activities in Norway and found that some girls had parents or siblings or other people in their social circle that thought that sports were not suitable for girls. Cultural or religious norms forced girls to choose between sports and their faith. Agergaard (2016b), in her Danish study of Muslim girls, found that it was not religion per se that prevented girls from sports and physical activities. Instead, there seemed to be different cultural interpretations of the religion between families and geographical areas. At the same time, the girls had to relate to more overriding gender structures. Certain individuals in the family or the local community generally opposed the idea that girls should play football more than the idea that Muslim girls should not engage in sports.

Similarly, Thul et al. (2016) observed that even if research has highlighted specific obstacles for girls engaging in sports, there is variation within this group and the opportunity to practise sports is influenced by factors such as religious practice, socio-economic status, age, and place of residence. There is reason, then, not to generalise research results regarding the group girls with an ‘immigrant background’. However, Strandbu et al. (2017) showed that even when parents’ educational level, family’s financial situation, and religious affiliation are considered, the probability that ‘immigrant girls’ would partake in sports was considerably lower than that for Norwegian youth in general and for ‘immigrant boys’. The

authors claim that explaining the differences between ‘immigrant girls’ and other youth groups requires deeper knowledge.

Agergaard et al. (2016a) emphasised that when certain groups are singled out as problematic, structural factors such as barriers to physical activity are neglected. For example, Fundberg (2017) argued that ‘immigrant girls’ do not feel welcome or comfortable in the Swedish sports world and suggested that changes be made in the sports world to accommodate them.

Sports Leaders and Integration

Individual leaders play an essential role in including participants with different cultural backgrounds. Jeanes, O’Connor, and Alfrey (2015) found in their Australian study that leaders tend to maintain old club structures, which makes it difficult to develop new and inclusive environments for young people with a refugee background. The study also revealed that some leaders encountered barriers to integration but still tried to integrate the young sports practitioners in the old structures. Similar results were found in the Canadian study by Tirone, Livingston, Miller, and Smith (2010), showing that leaders had problems in adapting activities to suit individuals with an ‘immigrant background’ and that the leaders did not know how to proceed.

On the basis of a Danish context, Agergaard (2011) discussed how public initiatives, similar to the Swedish government’s resources earmarked for inclusive sports projects, result in non-profit organisations ‘performing’ welfare politics. Agergaard argued that public authorities deliver financial resources and guidelines that affect the running of sports club activities, and that sports clubs become actors in a welfare project that must be monitored and measured. In Agergaard (2011) and Agergaard, Michelsen la Cour, and Treumer Gregersen (2016), sports leaders were described as balancing between the role as the local leader, catering to the interests of the local members, and the role of integrating and fulfilling political goals.

In Sweden, non-profit sports clubs organise sports for children as well as for adults, and participation is voluntary for practitioners and leaders. The leader has a great influence on how the sport is practised in the local clubs (Redelius, 2016). Leaders and their convictions, conceptions, and ideas of integration impact the integration efforts concerning young people with a refugee background, not least when it comes to assessing their current sports skills, which were developed in their country of origin.

Theoretical Frame of Reference

The theoretical frame of reference for this study was informed by Bourdieu’s concept of capital. Bourdieu viewed society as built of different social fields with their own history and logic. A social field is a relatively autonomous social arena with its own discourse and within which a struggle for resources is ongoing (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). For Bourdieu (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992), the specific logic and practice of the field determine

the capital required. This means that an individual's position in the field depends on the volume and structure of the capital that the individual can mobilise. The present study approached Swedish sports clubs as a social field.

Smith et al. (2018) used Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital as a tool of analysis to study migration and participation in sports and physical activities. Cultural capital involves language, education, and understanding of social norms in the new country. The authors highlight that the relationship, or the clash, between the cultural capital that 'immigrants' bring to the new country and the capital highly valued in Western world sports can create barriers to participation and negative experiences for participants. In the fields, there is also field-specific capital. Bourdieu (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992), for instance, studied education, research, and physical capitals to describe the importance of the body in society and how the size and form of the body are attributed different values in different fields.

We used the concept of sports capital to describe the field-specific capital in force in Swedish sports clubs with the understanding that the organisation and practice of sports among young people are, to a great extent, governed by historical traditions of what is recognised as valuable in athletics—a form of sports capital. Sports capital was used in this study to analyse the types of capital that emerge when leaders talk about including young refugees in their clubs. The resources the refugee children bring are thus not universal, but vary in strength depending on the resources they bring to the club, which create different barriers and possibilities to be included in the sport. Young refugees' opportunities to practise sports in Sweden depend on how their capital is valued by, for instance, leaders.

Smith et al. (2018) emphasised the importance of being able to understand how the accessibility varies between social orders such as generation, education, and gender, through the Bourdieuesian concept of capital. The present study focused on the gender aspects displayed in the leaders' descriptions of young refugees. We used the concepts of femininity and masculinity to understand the sports leader's gendered expressions of boys and girls involved in the sports activities. Connell (1987) argued that the pattern of relations between men and women on a societal level is to be described in terms of the gender order, which is defined as 'a historically constructed pattern of power relations between men and women and definitions of femininity and masculinity' (p. 98). To uphold the gender order, it is crucial to uphold the dichotomy and the making difference between women and men. Yet, Connell (1999) claimed the need of not focusing on the differences and instead focusing on the social relations between and within the groups of women and men. There are several positions of femininities and masculinities. The dominant masculine position is the hegemony of masculinity, which is based on what is seen as normal and desirable at a certain time and might be viewed as notions about ideal skills and characteristics, which both women and men have to relate to. The masculinity 'which is most honoured, which is most associated with authority and power and which—in the long run—guarantees the collective privilege of men' (Connell, 2008, p. 133) is attributed a higher value than other masculinities. Connell (1987) articulately emphasised femininity as the female similarity to the hegemony position. Because of that, emphasised femininity is defined on the basis of subordination and adjustment to men's interests; it cannot be regarded as hegemonic. Still, in line with the argument about the hierarchical order of several masculinity positions, the emphasised femininity functions as a norm-making ideal that other femininities have to relate to.

The theoretical starting point described above enabled us to analyse leaders' how gender and sports capital are expressed in sports leaders' talk about sports for young people with a refugee background. We used the gender concept to analyse conceptions of masculinity and femininity.

Our intention was not to analyse what Agergaard (2018) described as integration through sports in terms of how young refugees can create various forms of capital in sports, which can contribute to integration. Rather, our study focused on the intersection between the leaders' ideas and convictions about sports and how they assess the opportunities for boys and girls with a refugee background to be included in Swedish sports clubs on the basis of the sports capital they had on arrival. The concept of capital was thus central to the analysis of how the new arrivals' resources are recognised and valued as well as for the structures they encounter in Swedish sports clubs

Empirical Data and Analysis

This article is part of a project aiming to study how the government's extra funding to the sports movement to integrate new arrivals was realised in sports clubs. The main study is based on analyses of sport project applications, focus group interviews with club leaders, and individual interviews with young refugees. This sub-study was based on four focus group interviews with 21 sports club leaders (2 x 6, 1 x 5, 1 x 4) from 18 clubs. Three clubs requested having two representatives. According to Dahlin-Ivanoff and Holmgren (2017), a common recommendation for focus groups is 6-12 interviewees, but they suggest that 4-8 interviewees is a more suitable group size and that participant engagement is more valuable to the result than the number of participants. Contact information of sports leaders/sports clubs was provided by the regional sports confederation. The 18 clubs shared the common denominator of having received extra financial support to work with the inclusion project. This made it possible to invite participants with relevant experience of integration efforts. The sample represented several sports and different types of clubs (small and big, urban and rural, team and individual sports). Of the 21 respondents, six were women and fifteen were men (see Table 1). The leaders first received a written letter of information via post and email and were then contacted by phone.

Focus groups contribute information based on the collective experience that gradually develops in the group interactions (Dahlin-Ivanhoff & Holmgren, 2017). Nevertheless, presentation of data from complex discussions can become over-simplistic. According to Barbour (2008), a primary challenge in analysing focus group data involves reflecting upon and utilizing the interactions between participants while considering group dynamics. Focus groups can overemphasize consensus over individual voices in the group. On the other hand, we do not assume that all members necessarily share these views outside of the specific situation created by the focus group discussion. We see the interviewing as a way to identify general discursive repertoires in speech within particular social settings (Tanggaard, 2009). As respondents in the focus groups, the leaders was in a social setting there they represented foremost their sports club and but also the Swedish sport federation. When conducting research interviews, it is possible for the researcher to learn from the negotia-

tions in the discourses and between different voices generated in a particular interview setting. In other words, rather than simply seeking to identify the views of the various participants, attention must be paid to the context in which the comments are made (Barbour, 2008). Thus, the analysis identified patterns in the data and variations in the discourses, and explored their complexities. An example of a result that emerged from the negotiations between different voices and discourses was that the leaders defined boys and girls not only as distinct groups, but also as groups within which differences exist.

However, we are aware of that the result can be explained by referencing the shared characteristics of the sample (Barbour, 2008). One important aspect is gender. First, the groups contain more men than women. However, that is not, *per se*, problematic when analysing the result, because they talk in a context as representatives for their respective clubs and sport. Therefore, it is more important to shed light on the fact that the sample is dominated by masculine-coded sports. The discussions in the groups could perhaps have revealed other patterns and variations in the discourses, such as those regarding more feminine-coded sports (e.g. gymnastics and dance) (Wright, 2018). Feminine-coded sports are historically perceived as sports that not are assumed to require strength, power and speed, namely traits that are associated with masculinity (Coakley, 2014).

All interviews were conducted at the university by the first author and started with the leaders being briefed on project purpose and design and the interview procedure (Kvale & Brinkman, 2014). They gave written consent after being informed about purpose and implementation. The interviews focused on the leaders' experiences of inclusive efforts within the sport context. The role of the interviewer was primarily aimed to create a dynamic discussion and to ensure that the discussion centred on their experiences of working with the inclusion project. An interview guide was also used in case the participants needed help to stay on course. The guide included questions such as the following: Can you describe your experiences of working with children with a refugee background? What are your experiences of the young people's encounter with your sport? What were your thoughts during the inclusion project? Interaction and discussions were vibrant and intensive, so they took place with limited participation of the interviewer. Sports and integration turned out to be a highly engaging subject for the leaders. Each interview lasted for one and half hour. The interviews were recorded on an Mp3 player and transcribed. The transcribed material was read several times while notes were taken. To get an overall understanding of the leaders' discussions and their common perspective required staying close to the transcriptions. Based on the thematic analysis (Braun & Clark, 2006), the analysis was a recursive process in which the analysis moved between raw data (recording and transcriptions) codes and themes. The analysis was horizontal and vertical throughout, that is, within each group and between the four different groups. First, all data were coded. The transcriptions contained many data, and all were not relevant to our study. Next, we searched for codes (see the examples in Table 2). These types of codes were used to interrogate the relationship between other codes and coded excerpts, to identify patterns in the data. We were careful to avoid taking sentences and opinions out of context. The example excerpt show an overall discourse that emerge in the analysis about the difficulty of including girls and assumed attitudes towards girls as not sporty subjects in their countries of origin (in this case, the attitudes of the girls' families).

Table 1. The Interviewees.

Group	Gender	Sport
Group 1	Male	Boxing
	Male	Equestrian
	Male	Soccer
	Male	Bandy
Group 2	Male	Karate
	Male	Karate
	Female	Sport for all programme
	Male	Soccer
	Male	Martial art
Group 3	Male	Handball
	Female	Soccer
	Female	Handball
	Female	Athletics
	Male	Athletics
	Male	Athletics
Group 4	Male	Soccer
	Female	Soccer
	Male	Soccer
	Male	Soccer
	Male	Soccer
	Female	Soccer

Furthermore, searching for patterns and linkages between codes revealed broad themes concerning the study purpose and research questions. The selected themes focused on overarching issues (see the selected themes in the Results section). This meant that all groups did not necessarily say the same things but that different discussions provided different aspects on a theme.

Table 2. Example of Data Extract and Codes.

Data extract	Coded for
They want to see; they really want to see that it is girls here, that girls are allowed to do sports. But, I felt a little bit that I had to be approved by the families. Because I have no unaccompanied, all the girls were with their families. And I think that was why they have to stop coming to the training.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Difficult to integrate girls 2. The importance of the family to integrate girls

The analysis rested on the study's theoretical frame of reference. Bourdieu's concept capital and Connell's view on femininity and masculinity were used as analytical tools to generate new knowledge based on the empirical material in the problem area (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992).

Because the specific logic and practice of the field determine the capital required, the interview situation was viewed as conveying both subjective experiences and how broader social structures affected these experiences. Analysis of the interviewees' utterances and

what they described must consider and discern the structural background of utterances (Bourdieu, 1999). Thus, the assumption was that the themes emerging in the analysis described efforts to integrate boys and girls with a refugee background and reflected what constitutes valued sports capital and what is not valued.

The study was reviewed and approved by Karlstad University's Research Ethics Committee.

Results

The result is presented on the basis of the three main themes yielded through the analysis: 1) Acculturation into the logic of the Swedish sports system; 2) Culture-bound girls with no potentials for sport; and 3) Boys' conditional potentials for sport. The results are presented with a selection of quotations. The focus group method is not a compilation of the statements of the different participants, but a comprehensive picture of a common understanding, a perspective that is more than an individual statement (Dahlin-Ivanof & Holmgren 2017). Hence, following Fielden, Sillence, & Little (2011), when excerpts from a discussion with several participants are provided, a new voice are denominated as * and starts on a new line. Individual quotations are presented partly because they reflect the opinion of the group and their discussions and not because an utterance is particularly important.

Acculturation into the Logic of the Swedish Sports System

The interview discussions addressed the relation between young refugees and organised sports club activities in Sweden. The predominant conception in these discussions was that there is a unique system for sports in Sweden to which young refugees must adapt. This was, for instance, expressed in the following terms:

*I think that, well you could say that Sweden has a unique system for clubs and associations

*Yes, that's right

*And we brainwash our kids into the system from age six, sort of

*Yes, three years!

*Yes, but it's a natural part of the upbringing. This is how it works in a club. This club system does not exist anywhere else, it seems. So, if a fifteen-year-old person arrives in Sweden, that person is ignorant of the system

These quotations indicate that young people growing up in Sweden are acculturated into the sports system from an early age, thus learning the knowledge, norms, and cultures that harmonise with practising sports in clubs in Sweden. 'Swedish associations' or 'the sports movement' were emphasised as unique and requiring certain social and cultural resources and athletic skills to participate. In this context, it was mentioned that young refugees were not familiar with the requirements to engage in sports in Sweden. This was seen as a general challenge applying to both boys and girls. The result, however, showed that the leaders' ideas about refugee boys' and girls' possibilities to practise sports differed. The leaders thought that girls and boys come to Sweden with different social, cultural, and physical re-

sources and that these are more or less unsuitable for sports activities in Sweden. These resources or lack of resources will further be presented in the subsections *Culture-bound girls with no potentials for sport*; and *Boys' conditional potentials for sport*.

Culture-Bound Girls with no Potential for Sport

A pervading perception among the leaders was that considerably more boys than girls participated in the inclusion projects. This was partly because boys outnumbered girls in the target group, partly, as they said, that it had seemed more natural for the boys than for the girls to start engaging in sports in Sweden. The leaders observed that organised sports in Sweden can be perceived as unfamiliar and new, primarily to refugee girls. Generally, girls were seen as having less potential to take up sports than boys. As reflected in the quotation below, the view seemed to be that including girls required more of an attitude change than including boys.

Yes, but of course there seems to be a difference between boys and girls. Boys are more assertive, and you notice, sort of, that where they come from they have been able to be like that. Nothing new. You'll have to approach girls in a different way. It requires extra understanding.

To a great extent, the girls were described as a group having very little experience of sports and physical activity and lacking in athletic abilities. In the leaders' descriptions, girls came across as inexperienced in and ignorant of sports. They were, for example, not very fit athletically:

But that the girls from Afghanistan don't get much exercise is of course understandable. They're not allowed. A lap around the hall and they were exhausted. Their tongues were hanging like ties on them.

This kind of utterances were used to describe what the leaders understood as the girls' experience of physical ability and a lack of motor abilities:

It's more uncommon, it seems to me, that the girls have been physically active in their countries of origin. If you say: "hit straight," they hit to the right and think that they have hit straight. They have practised very little, it seems, not everyone but very many. I think you can see that.

It was also highlighted that girls lacked experience and knowledge of sports in a wider sense. This did not involve whether they had practised sports, but a lack of understanding of top-level sports and famous soccer players. The girls were said to be devoid of the references that leaders and other active people have and take for granted.

Well, you know, if you say 'Ronaldo' then you know that you are upfront. If I should say to my girls: "You're Ronaldo" sort of [...] you know, they haven't touched a ball since they came to us. 'What the heck are you talking about?' you know.

The issue of whether the girls' potential for sports varied depending on the country of origin was a topic in the interviews. The leaders seemed to subscribe to the idea that the traditions of some countries hinder girls from being physically active and practising sports.

Because I notice that there are quite a few sports cultures where they come from. I see that those from Afghanistan and Somalia aren't familiar with sports in the same way that those Syria and Iraq are, for instance. So, the girls from Syria, Iraq, and Iran are easier to engage. They know a bit about how it works. But in Afghanistan, they are very tradition-bound, more difficult to get into contact with.

This situation was linked to religion, and Muslim girls were depicted as a problematic group posing special challenges:

Yes, if you generalise grossly, but I sense it. I don't know if you have the same experience. In particular, Muslim girls, to generalise even more grossly.

These utterances indicate that the leaders hovered between views based on similarities within the group of Muslim girls and differences within this group due to their country of origin. According to the leaders, girls' position within sport cultures in their countries of origin affect their views of themselves as athletic subjects.

I think that it's about that they can't see themselves as people who go to training, so we disguised it a bit at the beginning to make them feel that they dare or feel comfortable going to the hall. And then, when they get a taste of it, it's life and death. Football is enough, kind of.

In other words, the girls as well as their families have come to Sweden with experiences and norms of girls from their countries of origin.

It's more a question of trying to patch this group of girls together who have never been in any sports context. The situation as such is pretty difficult to handle, you know. The "now I'm going to play football and go all in" and then lacking understanding at home or at school or perhaps her brother laughs at her when she says she plays football.

Taken together, the leaders described that the girls bring few sports resources to Sweden, which makes it difficult for them to take advantage of the sports offerings here. However, the analysis showed that the leaders' encounters with the girls in the inclusion project also challenged their perception of refugee girls as non-sport practitioners. There were instances in the discussions when the girls were not represented as a passive group 'holding back' but as active and resourceful. The leaders had met many refugee girls who wanted to engage in sports if someone showed them that they could partake. A leader said, 'I have seen that it's not as problematic as I thought before, actually. Most of them want to if they are asked'. Other leaders described their experiences with the girls in a similar manner:

* We do have boys with an refugee background from an early age, but hardly any girls, until a girl, who admittedly had been to school for one or two years, made the first step and wanted to play football. Cool. And then the others dared too. [...] And then it spread, and now we have quite a few little girls.

* Yes, I recognise that all too well. A girl came and told her friend, who told her cousin, who told her cousin.

The discussions often centred on the importance of showing that girls can do sports and that it is not 'harmful'. Yet, there was nothing to indicate that the clubs represented had developed formal strategies in order to recruit more girls with a refugee background. When other activities were organised the long-term goal, however, was apparently that the girls should adapt and be integrated into the regular activities, and when it worked, it was seen as a successful inclusion project. Still, one of the leaders told that the club he represented had created a 'girl group' for the sole reason to integrate refugee girls in the club. This effort was successful, but when the leaders tried to integrate these girls in the regular activities that were not aimed for girls with a certain background, the girls did not participate anymore.

Boys' Conditional Potential for Sports

Unlike the girls, refugee boys were described as having experience of sports and physical activity. The leaders claimed that the boys had both technical and motor skills. Instead, the leaders discussed the boys' shortcomings regarding their understanding of the organisation of a sport. According to leaders, the boys apparently had previous experience of sports and physical activity but had not practised sports in the way it is organised in Swedish sports clubs.

There were no indications, in the leaders' accounts, of notions that refugee boys came from countries where traditions and sports culture had hindered them from acquiring physical skills. However, the leaders discussed the boys' shortcomings in relation to their bodies and mentality; for example, certain behaviours and certain bodies were related to the boys' countries of origin.

*But the big challenge, I thought, was to turn them into a bigger bunch. Because technique and speed and so on they have in abundance. But at the same time, they are, well 95% have very weak bodies, so they don't have, they weigh nothing. In a dogfight with the older Swedish guys they just went like this, they flew up into the air.

*Yes, all, more or less, those from Somalia and Eritrea.

*Yes, they use straws unlike the Afghans who sort of have dynamite heads. There's a huge difference.

*They are short too.

As shown, the leaders' expressions were formed in relation to the norm of the ideal Swedish boy with certain physical and mental skills. The boys with a refugee background are, with one exception, ascribed as being weaker. One leader said, 'It seems that Afghans have more self-confidence. My impression is that they are tougher'. In other utterances, the 'toughness' was described when they talked about a boy who had broken his jaw and did not complain or a boy whose collar-bone broke and he did not show pain.

In addition, the analysis showed that conceptions of what sports are can create tensions and challenges, which can lead to conflicts between the boys' wishes and the club's activities. The leaders described how the refugee boys themselves think they are skilled football players, for instance, and were capable of playing in certain highly ranked teams while the leaders were more doubtful if they had the knowledge required. A leader said: 'And sometimes they are really good, but they are not really good every time ... but they think, I'm nearly the best'. Taken together, these findings indicated that the boys as a group were described as lacking sports capital desired in the Swedish context. Still, some of the boys, with a background in certain geographical regions, were described as having the potential to develop as athletes.

Discussion

The results showed that the leaders view the young refugees as a group lacking sports capital required for participating in sports club activities in Sweden. The findings should, however, be understood in the social and cultural context of the study, implying the possibility that other resources and assets are recognised in other cultures and types of sports. It is im-

portant not to make substantial links between the resources and abilities that the leaders described and sports participation automatically. This reflects the argument by Smith et al. (2018) that if 'immigrants' cultural sports capital does not correspond with the cultural capital valued in traditional Western sports, barriers and negative experiences are created.

The specific field logic determines the capital required (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). The field concept suggests that the leaders in the study are part of a greater social context. The leaders' discussions about refugee girls and boys are not isolated from ideas and ways of thinking of organised club sports in Sweden. Integration efforts are understood in relation to the clash between young refugees and the historically shaped Swedish structure of sports for children and young people. The results indicate the differences in how leaders value refugee young people's potential to be included in Swedish sports clubs, and that the logic of the sports field creates different conditions for their sports activities. These conditions are, to a significant degree, presented to be influenced by their experiences of sports in their countries of origin.

Boys and girls were described as distinct groups, with the boys having more potential for sports than girls. This finding reinforces a common stereotypical image of refugees as non-athletic and underrepresented in organised sports (e.g. Strandbu et al., 2017). On the other hand, the leaders described boys and girls as groups with inherent differences. The differences between girls regarding their physical skills were understood in relation to the assumed differences in attitudes towards girls as sporty subjects in their countries of origin. Girls were described in a manner that seems not responding to the emphasised femininity position, with implicitly due to the leader's reflection, hold healthy bodies and physical fitness. The differences between the boys were understood as a matter of perceived bodily and mental variations due to their geographical background. The descriptions of boys with prominent mental and physical capital harmonised with the traditionally prevailing masculinity norms in sport, such as strength, energy, and swiftness, referring to a typical male athlete (Coakley, 2014). The expectation that men should be 'masculine' according to this norm means that there is an implicit expectation that women should be 'feminine' by virtue of their 'differentness' in relation to the perceived 'masculinity' and men's bodies. Male coded abilities and qualities constituted the norm.

With reference to Connell's (1999) reasoning about different masculinity positions, we argue that in the leaders' discussions, certain boys from certain countries, who were considered as having masculine-coded qualities, have more favourable conditions for sports because they seem to fit the club sport norm of male athletes' physical and mental qualities, thus actualising the hegemonic masculinity position. This implicitly imposes a condition for other boys' and girls' sports practice and how they are perceived as sporting subjects, due to 'female' and 'male' being different, although women and men are neither opposite nor homogeneous groups (Connell & Pearse, 2015). We are aware of the risk of reinforcing stereotyped notions of gender and refugees. With the purpose to nuance such gender notions, we have consciously chosen to present data that actualize not only gender distinct ideas but also variations within the groups of boys and girls. Further, we consider the need of acknowledging the stereotyped views of refugees that the leaders express as a way of identifying aspects that might obstruct the purpose of integrating the new arrivals in Swedish society through their participation in sports.

Agergaard et al. (2016a) highlight that when public authorities provide funding and directives that influence the club's activities, sports leaders must balance their role as the local leader catering to local members' needs and the role to implement and fulfil political objectives. As Bourdieu (1991) states, 'the sport practitioners' field is an arena of struggle [...] over the monopoly of determining the legitimate definition of sports practice and its legitimate function' (1991, p. 201). The leaders in this study seemed to be caught in a conflict of running the traditional and regular activities in their clubs and of meeting the government's expectations on sport as an integration arena. Research has shown that leaders and clubs tend to maintain old structures and find it difficult to develop and adapt activities to increase integration (Jeans et al., 2015). Therefore, it should be vital to invest in projects challenging leaders' conceptions of what Swedish sports are and how the organisation of sports can support the inclusion both of young people with a refugee background and young people in general.

Note

- 1 The cited studies define 'immigrant background' as a person born abroad or with at least one parent born abroad.

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