

Entrance into Swedish Children's Sports

Newly-migrated children's perspective

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ABSTRACT: Sweden has become a multicultural society over the course of the last few decades. Around two million of Sweden's nine million inhabitants have an immigrant background. Sport is a global phenomenon and is, as such, regarded as a tool for integration; however, at the same time sport is closely linked to national identity. The aim of this study is to enhance understanding of the sports-related experiences and desires of newly-migrated children, and how these can be met in Swedish sports clubs. We have interviewed six children, 10 to 13 years of age, from various countries with different experiences of organised sport. They were all newly-arrived and attended a transition school in a Swedish municipality. In the phenomenological analysis we discovered four key factors which appeared to be of importance for participation: possessing cultural understanding, possessing social networks, knowing the language and possessing necessary skills. In the discussion we stress that through

awareness, sensitivity and flexibility, sports clubs can approach children from various cultures that have different sport's needs. In the process of involving newly-migrated children in sports, it might be helpful to take the key factors presented into consideration, and reflect on how they could affect participation.

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Introduction

Sweden, like many other European countries, has become a multicultural society over the course of the last few decades. People from different parts of the world with different native languages, different religions and different cultural backgrounds have immigrated to Sweden. Around two million of Sweden's nine million inhabitants have immigrant backgrounds representing more than 200 different cultures (Johanson Heinö, 2011). Competitive sports is a global phenomenon and is, as such, regarded as a tool for the integration of the immigrant population (Peterson, 2000, 2010; Pfister, 2000; Walseth & Fasting, 2004; Swedish Sport Confederation [RF] 2005; Commission of the European Communities [CEC], 2007; Peterson, 2008; Lundvall, 2009), a meeting place where people of different cultural and ethnic backgrounds can meet and get to know, understand and respect each other on the basis of a shared interest in sport (Peterson, 2008). Sport is also supposed to have a positive effect on health, peace, education and democracy, and sport is regarded 'a right for all' (RF, 2005; CEC, 2007; Grujoska & Carlsson, 2007; Geidne, Quennerstedt & Carlsson, 2013). However, there is a limited amount of research on sports and what occurs when newly migrated children initially meet sports clubs.

Voluntary sports associations is the backbone, as well as the organising principle, of the Swedish – and Scandinavian – sports model, and has been underway for more than 100 years. It is defined, and defines itself, as a *folkrörelse*, a popular, or literally, people's, movement, and as such it carries the norms and values of Swedish society (Peterson, 2000). As a popular movement everyone is welcome to participate, irrespective of "nationality, ethnic origin, religion, age, gender, and sexual orientation, physical or mental disabilities" (RF, 2005, p.12), but research has shown that the degree of sport participation differs between groups based on these properties (Wagnsson, 2009; Geidne, Quennerstedt & Eriksson, 2013). It is recognized that sport in itself can form a barrier for participation (Walseth & Fasting, 2003; Elling & Knoppers, 2004; Skille, 2006b) as it is taken for granted that the Swedish hegemonic norms, traditions and values are understood and accepted by all participants. The main impression is that Swedish sport has problems in adapting to new cultures and different ways of thinking (Lundvall, 2007). The result can be stigmatization and feelings of oppression and marginalization (Möller, 2010).

Rizvi (2009) stresses that, as members of a locally as well as globally changeable world, we need to be able to create meaningful encounters with

people from different cultures, religions and ethnicity. Referring to Rizvi it appears important that sports clubs are able to create meaningful encounters between immigrant children and sports in order to facilitate integration.

The aim of this study is to enhance understanding of newly migrated children's experiences and desires as concerns sport, and how these can be met by Swedish sports clubs. The study was guided by two research questions:

- Which experiences of sports prior to immigration, and desires for sports in Sweden do the children have?
- Which key factors for integration through sports can be identified in the children's experiences and desires?

Sports in Sweden

Sports are highly valued in Sweden both by the State and by the population. Sport is the most popular leisure activity among Swedish children and youth and children can be active in club sport from the age of 5-6 years (Peterson, 2008; Wagnsson, 2009). However this becomes a structural problem if a child wishes to begin at the age of 11. There are seldom groups for beginners of that age (Carlsson, 2001; Svender, 2012). The majority, almost 90%, of Swedish children and youth participate in, or have participated in, organised youth sports. The largest group that has never participated in youth sports is girls with immigrant backgrounds (Peterson, 2008; RF, 2010).

Most immigrant children experience their first contact with Swedish sports activities through the mandatory school subject Physical Education and Health [PEH]. Higgins and Dale (2013) emphasise the importance of sports promotion in school, especially for children with no or little knowledge of sports from their country of origin. Especially immigrant girls, the group that are least involved in club sport, are very satisfied with PEH (Carlsson, 2001). The connection between obligatory school sports and voluntary club sports has been strong since compulsory school attendance was first introduced in Sweden (Olofsson, 2007), and the physical education teachers, many of whom were involved in club sport, were seen as a natural links to club sport (Carlsson, 2001). Club sports are also directly involved in schools that offer sports as part of their educational programmes (Olofsson, 2007).

Youth club sports in Sweden are managed on voluntary basis. Many parents become coaches for their children. The State supports club sports financially, in 2012 to the tune of approximately MEUR 200 (Norberg, 2013). In the 1980's, when the membership in club sport started to decrease, Swedish Sports Confederation (RF) made efforts to involve children and youth with immigrant background (Carlsson, 2001). That effort was supported by the State that provided sports clubs with special funding named *Handslaget* (the Handshake), which for instance aimed at involving more children and youth in sports, especially girls and children with immigrant backgrounds (RF, 2005).

Identity and sports

Moving to another country is a complex process. When individuals meet a new society, a new language and have to create new social networks, their attitudes and identity are affected (Zacheus, 2010). The identity is interwoven in social practices and personal history. It is the individual's basic way of being in the world, shaped by how daily lives are lived and by the layer of experiences and the understanding the individual obtains from participating in different social contexts (Wenger, 1998). The identity can therefore be regarded as a social construction (Castell, 1999). For a migrating child, the new culture and way of living starts a negotiation between the current identity and the new context (Eriksen, 2004). The concept 'identity work' can define how the identity is challenged and negotiated when the individual enters a new context (Andersson, 2002; Strandbu, 2005; Walseth, 2006b). Multiple identities can be created in order to suit different contexts (Walseth, 2006; Zacheus, 2010). Identity becomes a multi-dimensional construction (Chen, 2010; Day, 2002; Norton, 2000; Rymes & Pash, 2001). An identity of sport is constructed in relation to parents, team mates and the community (Palmer, 2009). Fundberg (2012) stresses the discrepancy between the individual's view of themselves as 'the identity by choice' and the identity the environment might impress upon an individual as 'the ascribed identity'. The ascribed identity may be in conflict with the individual's identity of choice and can result in a different level of recognition on and outside the sports arena (Fundberg, 2004, 2012).

Sports and integration

There are but a few studies on integration through sports in Sweden (Norberg, 2002, Fundberg, 2012), and no study has been focusing on children's and youth's experiences of sport prior to participation in Swedish sport clubs. Studies show that immigrant children and youth want to be involved in sport, and their experiences of and relations to sport are similar to native Swedish participants (Fundberg, 2012), but on average immigrant children enter club sports later (Carlsson, 2001). Immigrant boys are mainly involved in football while girls mainly play basketball (Carlsson, 2001; Fundberg, 2012). These sports are internationally well known and can be accepted by parents (Fundberg, 2002, 2012). Siblings and friends are also important for participation (Carlsson, 2001). In international studies, researchers also emphasize that the sports clubs need to possess deeper knowledge of other cultures (Walseth, 2004; Schinke, McGannon, Battochio & Wells, 2013), and a readiness to listen to individual participants, as interpretations of common religions and cultures can differ widely (Palmer, 2009). However, sports coaches might have problems understanding the lived experiences of participants (Spaij & Jeanes, 2012). The evaluations of the Handshake project confirmed that many projects enhanced a view of 'us' who are integrated and 'them' who are supposed to be integrated, instead of reducing the differences (Peterson, 2008). The leaders in local youth sports clubs, often parents and/or adolescents interested in sports, are generally not prepared to meet, understand or involve participants with other cultural, ethnic and/or religious backgrounds (Pfister, 2000; Fundberg, 2012). Immigrant boys participate as much as boys with native Swedish backgrounds, especially in football, and are often more passionate (Fundberg, 2004, 2010; Lundvall, 2007; RF, 2010). However, they are not always welcomed when attending club sports; in fact, immigrant children have quit sports as a result of the treatment by coaches (RF, 2010). Swedish as well as immigrant girls in general are less involved than boys in sports (Lundvall, 2007). Girls from families belonging to the Muslim religion are least involved (RF, 2010). Skille (2006a) refers to a lack of sports identity when he tries to explain why some immigrant girls do not want to participate in sports, "As they have never participated in sport, they do not view themselves as sports girls" (p. 12).

Other studies point to club sport's deficiencies in adapting to Muslim girls' culture, religion and/or family as reasons for rejection (Skille 2006a; Walseth & Fasting, 2004). Gender-mixed groups, dress codes, hesitation about sleeping away from home, moral integrity, identity as women and do-

mestic work are examples of barriers to Muslim girls' participation in club sports (Cortis, 2009; Fundberg, 2012; RF, 2010; Walseth & Fasting, 2004; Pfister, 2000, Skille, 2006a; Strandbu, 2004). The image of the immigrant, especially immigrant girls, as deviant can function as a contrast to what is regarded as 'normal' behaviour in sport and might blur individual personal qualities of the participants (Fundberg, 2000). Power relations in terms of dominance of existing traditions can also form a barrier to integration (Skille, 2006b; Walseth, 2004; Lundvall, 2007, 2009, Schinke et.al, 2013).

Research on sports as a tool for integration has mainly focused on how immigrants' cultures and/or religions have formed a barrier to participation in sports (Cortis, 2009; Fundberg, 2012; Lundvall, 2007; Walseth & Fasting, 2003; Skille, 2006a; Strandbu, 2004). People from different ethnic groups have different taste for sports activities and there was a tendency that ethnic groups stuck together when performing their sports of preference (Higgins & Dale, 2013). Children's participation in an ethnic sports club makes it easier for the parents to control the children and many participants find it more relaxed to participate in ethnic sports clubs (Spaij, 2012). The social capital between individuals with different cultural backgrounds is not always bridged by sport and does not always create bonding (Walseth, 2004). The interethnic bridges between team mates are often limited to the sports field (Spaaij, 2012). Still sports participation can create feelings of belonging (Walseth, 2006b, 2008). Zacheus (2010) stresses that immigrants can create double identities, one that takes pride in ethnic roots and another identity that is open towards new cultures, a view that is supported by Hertting and Alerby (2009). The scope of this article is, however, focused on the children's experiences and on relating them to the sports clubs. In the next section we focus on methodological issues.

The Process of Data Collection and Analysis

The government bill (Norberg, 2013) on the financial support from the Swedish State to sports stressed the importance and obligation for sports clubs to adopt the child's perspective, which is also emphasised in Swedish sports policies (RF, 2005). Carlsson (2001) refers to the policy documents, and argues that in order to make club sports available, it is important for the sports movement "to listen to the children and try to understand their expectations" (p. 79). One way to methodologically approach the child's perspective and experience is using the phenomenology of the life-world

as a point of departure, focusing on lived experiences (van Manen, 1997). Life-world phenomenological research is about turning to the meaning of lived experiences. Research begins in the lived experience, but understanding requires that these are situated in cultural contexts. The complexity of the life-world must be taken into consideration and to understand it in its full expression, methodological creativity is required (Bengtsson, 2005). The life-world approach is, however, qualitative in that closeness to the lived experience is central, and creativity is therefore limited to qualitative methods (van Manen, 1997; Bengtsson, 2005). Since focus in this study is on the children's voices and lived experiences, we find a life-world phenomenological approach appropriate.

Selection

Since the primary interest was to study children's desires and experiences of entering sports, we initially decided to conduct a two-step study, involving two data collection occasions with the same children. In the first step, we invited 20 newly-arrived children to make drawings (Hertting & Karlefors, 2013) and in the second study, eight months later, we invited six of the children from the original population of 20 for interviews. This paper deals with the interview data.

The study was conducted at a municipality transition school for introduction into Swedish society, where all newly-arrived children, from preschool to upper secondary school, begin their education with a special focus on language learning. The school is often the first point of contact that parents and children have with the Swedish educational system. When the children are considered linguistically mature, they transfer to regular schools in their local communities. The school hosts approximately 120 children who, depending on their age and background, spend approximately six months to two years at the transition school.

The target group of the study was newly-arrived children between 10 and 13 years of age. The time they had spent in Sweden varied, but by reason of the context of the transition school, we considered all children as newly arrived. When the interviews were conducted, the children had been at the school for periods of between eight months and almost two years.

This paper deals with the interviews of six children from the transition school about their experiences of, and desires to participate in, sports in Sweden. The selection was based on three conditions. First, the children

should still attend the school. Second, the children had to be sufficiently proficient in Swedish to be able to hold a conversation with us. Third, we wished to have diversity among informants concerning gender and former experiences of sport. This rendered in a selection of three girls and three boys, still attending the school, with sufficient language skills and diverse former experiences of sport from their countries of origin. The children's names in the article are fictional. Two children, Kim from China and Maya from Thailand, had practiced competitive sports in their country of origin, Geoff from Indonesia and Mustafa from Burma had experiences of playing sports with friends, while Annia from Somalia and Saga from Afghanistan had no experiences of sports from their countries of origin. Mustafa wanted to become a professional football player and this was not possible in his country of origin while Annia, who had no experience of sport activities at all, could not participate for other reasons, such as the dress code.

The interviews

In phenomenological research, interview stories and anecdotes from the lived experience are central (van Manen, 1997). It is about creating a conversational relationship, where the whole lived experience of the studied phenomenon is as close as possible. In order to come close to the lived experience during the interview, we took the picture that the child drew in the first study as a starting point and initiated a conversation about experiences and desires for sports in Sweden. Especially when interviewing children, it is recommended to start the interview openly, in order to alleviate anxiety and to build a trustful relation (Docherty & Sandelowski, 1999; Kortelouma, Hentinen & Nikkonen, 2003), which is also in line with the phenomenological tradition (van Manen, 1997). After informed consent from parents was obtained, the interviews with the children were conducted during school hours in the form of semi-structured interviews using an interview guide.

We interviewed each child in a familiar room at the school where they felt safe. Each interview lasted approximately 25 minutes and was recorded and transcribed. The duration of the interviews were decided by each child's focus. Kortelouma, Hentinen and Nikkonen (2003), means that long interviews should be avoided due to the children's limited ability to concentrate. The female researcher interviewed the three girls while the male researcher interviewed the three boys. The choices of location and of interviewer were made to create a feeling of safety for the children (Kvale, 2007). We also

took notes about body language, and other particular events during the interview. This was important, since it could affect meanings and since we conducted the interviews separately and analysed them jointly.

Data analysis

The inductive data analysis was inspired by van Manen's (1997) hermeneutic phenomenological method. The phenomenon in this case was children's experiences and desires as concerns entrance into Swedish youth sports, and the process of analysis was guided by an understanding of this phenomenon. The starting point of the analysis was the aim "to enhance understanding of newly migrated children's experiences and desires as concerns sport, and how these can be met by Swedish sports clubs". According to van Manen (1997), this process should not be regarded as governed by certain predetermined rules, but rather involves allowing the phenomenon to appear precisely as it is; a free act of "seeing". Nonetheless, during the analysis, consideration of difficulties in interpreting the material was highlighted. The children's responses might have been affected by their varying abilities in the Swedish language or by the power relations created by us as researchers (Kvale, 2007). Using the participants' stories is giving the children an opportunity to define their background by themselves (Wigg, 2008), allowing them to describe their 'identity of choice' (Fundberg, 2012) related to sports participation.

Our process of analysis began with transcribing all of the interviews, and then reading them before the first discussion of the results. Reflections were then made on the children's interviews, and similarities and differences were noted and discussed. All interviews were then studied by asking 'what does this say about the children's experiences and desires about sports in Sweden?', and patterns were identified which constituted the base for the preliminary aspects. The aspects were then compared and discussed. This selective and detailed discussion, with reflections on these aspects, resulted in a first understanding of what it is that constitutes the nature of children's experiences and desires of sports in Sweden. The analysis continued with a focus on individual sections, as well as the whole of the interviews, in order to better understand patterns of meaning. This process resulted in four themes, which represent both similarities and great variety among the children's responses (see themes and aspects in Table 1). To enhance validity, quotations were identified and used when describing the results.

Table 1. *Representation of aspects and themes relevant for understanding newly migrated children's experiences and desires of sports, and how these can be met by Swedish sports clubs.*

<i>Theme</i>	<i>Aspects</i>
Possessing cultural understanding	Understanding national sports culture Cultural understanding from the community of sports
Possessing social networks	Lack of local social networks outside school Good social networks in school Longing for friends in sports
Knowing the language	Parents and children's limited language skills Body language as an asset
Possessing relevant skills	Sport skills as an asset Avoidance when lacking skills

Results

The six respondents' possessed different experiences of sports when they arrived in Sweden. As mentioned above, Kim and Maya had experiences of competitive sport when they arrived in Sweden. Mustafa had an ambition to become a professional athlete, but in his country of origin he had no access to competitive sports. Geoff had been playing games and sports such as football with his friends in his country of origin. Saga and Annia met sporting activities for the first time in the mandatory school subject PEH in the transition school. On the basis of the children's different backgrounds in sports, the interviews will deal with their opinion of sports and their desire to participate. From the interviews we can discern four key factors which, from the children's experiences, appear to be of significance for participation in club sports: Knowing the language; Possessing cultural understanding; Possessing social networks; and Possessing relevant skills. The key factors are described in detail below, without any relative order of precedence.

Possessing cultural understanding

Even though some of the children have participated in club sports in their countries of origin, they do not know what to expect of club sports in Sweden. Geoff, who had 'tried out' for a Swedish sports club, was not allowed to participate at once.

Here in Sweden I want to play in a football team in my leisure time. I have been in contact with a club here in which my friend plays. I was not allowed to start right away; the club says I need to practice more first.

Swedish sports are supposed to be accessible to all, but Geoff did not reflect on this point, he just accepted the decision of the coach. Geoff had also understood that the football culture in Sweden was different to that in Indonesia. He said:

In Sweden you need to be able to pass the ball more than in Indonesia, where you just kicked it hard.

Kim used to play table tennis with his father in a park, but in Sweden there is no equipment in the parks and in the winter it is impossible to play outdoors.

I used to play with my father in a park. I did not play very well in school, so I practised with my father.

Table tennis is accessible in a different context in Sweden, which he has to understand and be familiar with. Saga and Annia, with no former experience of organised sports had less interest in participating in club sports for various reasons such as clothing codes, the presence of boys and domestic responsibilities. Saga says:

My family is working. My mother and my father are working and I stay at home, my sister Sara is sick... so I must stay home.

When Saga is asked if she would like to play basketball, she reflects that there is too much snow outside, and of the inside she says:

No, too many boys. I want to stay home, read and play on the computer.

But Saga and Annia played in the schoolyard. Family relationships seem to have an effect on sports participation. With many siblings to play with, Annia expressed less need for physical activity in a sports club. She was physically active playing with her siblings.

The key 'Possessing cultural understanding' has two directions. One direction deals with the respondent's understanding of Swedish sports, the other deals with the opposite direction, the understanding youth sport clubs possess of the respondent. From a Swedish perspective, Geoff's experience that he was not allowed to participate in the football team at once is controversial as "Sport for all" declares that sports should be available for everyone. Saga did not want to play basketball because of the presence of boys and of the dress code. However, while both Saga and Annia were physically active in their leisure time, participating in youth club sports was, at this point, too far from their identity.

Possessing social networks

The children in this study socialised with other children from the transition school who were also on the margins of society. None of these children had any friends outside school, so they played with their siblings or played on the computer after school. The children, as well as their parents, lacked knowledge about how to get connected with sports clubs. Maia wanted to play badminton with girls but did not know how to find a club to play with. Kim's only friends were his classmates at the transition school, but they lived in different parts of town:

After school I do not meet any friends, I read the news on the computer, play guitar, read books and paint. My friends live in other parts of town, I see them in school.

Since sports clubs for children often are local, friends with a connection to the local society are important for the children's introduction. However, friends are also important for participation, getting an invitation and a feeling of belonging. Saga said:

It is not good to go alone.

As she did not have any Swedish friends, there was no one to accompany her. Without friends she was not interested in participating, but if the interviewer, who she knew, invited her to join a team she would come:

I will always come with you.

Mustafa belonged to a team, but his relationships with his team mates were limited to the sports activity and he wanted to have someone from the transition school with him:

I would like to have other friends from the language school at the practice to increase my confidence.

At this point he did not have any close friends on the team and missed the feeling of belonging. As all our respondents went to the transition school they had no one in their surroundings that could entice, persuade or invite them to participate in sports. Mustafa wanted to have some friends from the language school on his team, but even though he had not he continued to play. So far he had not made any friends among his teammates.

Knowing the language

Sport in itself has a global language, both a body language and a game-specific verbal language. This global language helps participants to understand each other in the game. Mustafa describes how he observes the exercises, when he does not understand the coach's orders.

I sometimes find it difficult to follow and understand what the coaches say in Swedish and I find it difficult to ask for clarification.

Mustafa thinks that if the coach spoke slower it would be easier for him to understand and follow. The parents' language skills are also of importance for the child's opportunities to attend a sports club.

My father doesn't know Swedish so well and I think it is very difficult for him to help me.

Kim referred to how difficult it is to get information of and from sports clubs when language skills not are sufficient. At the same time it is important for the children to be able to use their mother tongues in new, and maybe strange, surroundings. Annia described how she was outdoors playing with her siblings:

We are outdoors throwing snow balls, running and speaking Somali.
No one else understands Somali

She could speak a language that only she and her siblings could speak and she expressed a feeling of pride.

The global language of sports is useful for understanding and communicating on the sports field. Knowledge of the majority language is of importance to understand what is happening around the sports field – being part of both the inner and outer ‘lives’ of the team. Speaking your own native language can create a feeling of exclusivity and pride and that is also important.

Possessing relevant skills

Mustafa was a better football player than Geoff, even though he had no former experience from organised football practice in a club. Because of his skills he was on the football team. Skills seems to be a form of capital in sports, they represent the body and the sport-specific language. Skills seem to be a key to the entrance to youth sports even though “Sports for all” declares that everyone is welcome. In Geoff’s case, his lack of skills was a reason to refuse him participation. Lack of skills may also be a reason to reject participation. Maia did not like basketball:

Sometimes I play basketball and poff (points to her head) headache. I don’t like playing basketball.

Annia’s and Saga’s experiences of sports came from the PEH lessons in school. Saga had been using a skipping rope and playing blind man’s buff in her country of origin. Running errands was Annia’s former experience of physical activity. Annia was asked if she participated in the swimming lessons. She answered:

Today the girls swim. I have fever, I have pain, I cannot participate today, I will take a walk, I watch the lesson, I have pain here, I have pain in my foot, I cannot swim.

When the interviewer stressed the importance of swimming skills in a country as Sweden with a lot of water she replied:

There is not so much water in my country.

Annia was “sick” and had pain, during swimming lessons even though they had gender-separated lessons and ‘burkinis’ at her school. One interpretation is that she refused to participate because she was not used to the special characteristics water has, the temperature, the resistance and the floating ability. Sports activities are executed in accordance with rules and technical ability. With no or little experience of this type of movements it is harder to be accepted into a sports club. The more experience a child has of sports from their country of origin, the easier it is to participate in the new country.

Discussion

The aim of this study was to enhance understanding of newly-migrated children's sports experiences and desires and how these can be met by Swedish sports clubs. Being a phenomenological analysis, the ambition is not to generalise. Instead, we seek to illuminate specific aspects of these experiences in order to highlight and problematize the complexity of the phenomenon (van Manen, 1997; Vagle, 2009). Each key factor has a distinct direction but they are, at the same time, somewhat overlapping. However, we have emphasised internal validity, which means making conscious decisions from basic assumptions, designing, gathering, interpreting and reporting empirical findings (Kvale, 2007; Miles & Huberman, 1994). This requires, according to Whittenmore, Chase and Mandle (2001) authenticity and integrity, which has been of importance in this process. However, there are limitations of the study. Firstly, six respondents is a small number, but based on the premises for selection this was the conditions for the study. Secondly, language could be seen as a limitation, and indeed, if the children had a possibility to speak their mother tongue it would render richer descriptions. However, these children were more skilled in Swedish than one perhaps could imagine, and enough linguistically mature to have conversations about their experiences and wishes for sport participation in Sweden. Internal validity is a prerequisite for transferability (Guba & Lincoln 1981; Polit & Beck, 2010), which means that the accuracy of the results can be transferred to other, but similar, contexts than the one currently studied. Despite the limitations in this study, the findings may be applicable to, and have currency in other similar contexts, an argument supported by for instance Kvale (2007) and Yin (1994).

In the analysis of the six children's experiences and desires, we discovered four key factors of importance for their participation; knowing the language, possessing cultural understanding, possessing social networks and possessing relevant skills. The key factor *Possessing cultural understanding* supports the findings from Higgins and Dale (2013) that the ambition to participate in sports as well as which sports to attend differs by reason of cultural background. Both in school and in daily living, the immigrant child has to process and try to understand many new impressions and meet them through his/her identity work (Walseth, 2006). While four of the children expressed a wish to attend a sports club, two of the girls in our study with no former experience of sports did not express any wish to participate. The girls' lack of experience may be one explanation for their avoidance (Skille, 2006a), the moral integrity that girls from some countries have to relate to, according to Pfister (2000), might be another. Their identity work towards attending sports had not begun. The subject PEH in school was their introduction to physical activity and sports, which also is shown by Higgins and Dale (2013). However, research shows that PEH classes experience difficulties in involving children without experience of club sport (Londos, 2010). For the immigrant child without competence and knowledge of major norms in PEH, feelings of incompetence may result (Barker et. al, 2011). As children can start practising sport as early as at the age of five in Sweden, a newly-arrived child at the age of eleven might need to compensate for its sporting friends' years of practice if there are no beginners groups (Svender, 2012). From a child's perspective and with a sensitive adjustment to the children, PEH may be a useful tool for introducing immigrant children to sports activities and club sports.

Knowing the language and *Possessing social networks* seemed to be other key factors for sports participation. While attending transition school, contact with Swedish-born children is limited. Attendance at a transition school creates a smooth start, but a kind of isolation from Swedish social life is an unavoidable consequence. The ambition of teaching the children the Swedish language before they enter a regular school is well intentioned, but one negative consequence is that socialising with native Swedish-speaking friends takes longer. The lack of knowledge of the Swedish club sports system, as well as lack of language skills, restrained the children in our study from sports participation. As a result it appeared that three of the children had become quite physically inactive since they arrived in Sweden. A more proactive attitude from sports associations could relieve this problem.

The key factor *Possessing relevant skills* may be discussed from two different perspectives. The two girls without any desire to enter club sports were practising 'spontaneous sport' such as playing with siblings and friends, an activity that has become more infrequent as organised sports have grown in Sweden (Engström, 1999). As the girls had no former experience of sports we can assume that they did not see themselves as sporting girls (Skille, 2006a). They were, however, physically active in other ways, a result that is confirmed in other studies (Fundberg 2012; Dogra, Meisner & Ardren, 2010). This raises the question: how can sport meet the need for movement and exercise from traditionally underrepresented groups? Perhaps sport for children and youth can be organised in more diverse ways in order to be more open to children when they arrive in Sweden, Possessing relevant skills is also about coming late into club sports, which is a problem for Swedish born as well as for immigrating children and youth.

Our respondent's stories reveal four important key factors for participation in club sports. We have emphasized Rizvi's (2009) argument that integration is a mutual process, and having mutual cultural understanding is crucial. In order to avoid feelings of marginalisation and lack of appreciation (Möller, 2010), it would be valuable if sports associations could find new ways to approach immigrant children and youth and consider every child's lived experiences (Spaaij & Jeanes, 2012) when they enter club sport. Our respondents' stories provide information about sports participation from the newly migrated children's perspective. They expressed interest in sports, exercise and movement. Within sport their interests differ, and this study discovered interconnected key factors that may be of importance in order to respond to different interests.

Sport in itself can form a barrier to integration (Walseth, 2004; Lundvall, 2007). In accordance with Fundberg (2012), power relationships needs to be re-directed, and the hegemonic discourse discussed, in order to enhance understanding for non-Swedish cultures and thinking. In this, it might be helpful to take voices of the children in this article into consideration, and examine how these could affect participation. Through awareness, sensitivity and flexibility, the sports clubs can approach children's images of sports from different cultures and utilize them in the integration process. It would be stimulating for both sports and all the children who want to be part of sports, regardless of their background.

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