Perceived gender dichotomies in public space in Husby.

A qualitative study about how locally anchored women with interest in feminist questions reflect upon gender and public space.

Ida Johnsson

2017

Student thesis, Bachelor degree, 15 HE
Social Work
Study programme in Social Work, Specialisation International Social Work
Degree Project in Social Work

Supervisor: Ann Kroon
Examiner: Fereshteh Ahmadi
Abstract:

The research aim of this study is to explore how locally anchored women with interest for feminist questions perceive and reflect upon the production and reproduction of gender dichotomies in public space in Husby. Moreover, space is flexible and part of a socio-spatial-dialectic which is both produced and reproduced through social interaction which contain power hierarchies. These dialectic notions and gender contracts have been utilized in this study in order to explore perceptions regarding production and reproduction of gender dichotomies. This is a qualitative study and data was collected through semi-structured interviews with locally anchored women in Husby with interest in feminist questions. The results revealed that patriarchal orders and fear of male violence, the city planning, habits, traditional gender contracts, lack of jobs and apartments, and intersectional tendencies were perceived by the interviewees as factors which influence production and reproduction of gender dichotomies in Husby.

Key words: power hierarchies, social interaction, public space, gender dichotomies.
# Table of content

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Introduction.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Relevance for social work and international social work</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Aim and research questions</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Background</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1 The million program.</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2 Husby</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Explanations of concepts</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1 &quot;woman&quot;, &quot;women&quot;, &quot;girl&quot;, &quot;girls&quot;, &quot;female&quot;, &quot;females&quot;</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2 &quot;public space&quot;</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3 &quot;The socio-spatial-dialectic&quot;</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.4 &quot;Gender dichotomies&quot; and &quot;Gender contracts&quot;</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.5 &quot;Power hierarchy&quot;</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.6 &quot;Intersectionality&quot;</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.7 &quot;Patriarchy&quot;</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.8 &quot;Discourse&quot;</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Previous research</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.1 Gender aspects in the physical planning</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2 Connections between women's fear and city planning</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3 Safety perspectives among adolescents with gender perspectives</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.4 Fear of crime in public space with gender focus</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.5 Gender codes in public space.</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.6 Similarities and differences of the previous research:</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.7 Previous research linked to choice of theoretical framework</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Theoretical framework</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.1 Socio-spatial-dialectic</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7.2 Gender system, gender contracts and space .................................................. 13
7.3 Connections between theoretical framework, research aim and application .......... 14
8. Methodology ............................................................................................... 14
8.1 Research design ......................................................................................... 14
8.2 Mode of procedure: .................................................................................... 15
9. Tools of analysis: .......................................................................................... 17
10. Validity and reliability: ................................................................................ 18
10.1 Credibility: ............................................................................................... 18
10.1.2 Transferability: ..................................................................................... 18
10.1.3 Dependability: ...................................................................................... 18
10.1.4 Confirmability: ..................................................................................... 19
11. Ethical consideration: .................................................................................. 19
11.1 Informed consent: ..................................................................................... 19
11.2 Confidentiality: ........................................................................................ 19
11.3 Consequences: ......................................................................................... 20
11.4 The role of the researcher: ....................................................................... 20
12. Results: ....................................................................................................... 21
12.1 Gender dichotomies in public space are shaped and reshaped both through power hierarchies and through social interactions. ................................................................. 21
12.1.2 Patriarchy and learned fear of male violence ........................................ 22
12.1.3 Habits, repetitive socializing patterns and role modelling ...................... 24
12.2 Gender contracts I relation to production and reproduction of public space .... 26
12.2.1 Traditional gender contracts yet diverse and intersectional tendencies .... 26
12.2.2 Lack of jobs, apartments and activities ................................................ 28
13. Discussion of results and analysis: ............................................................... 29
13.1 Summary of results connected to research aim and questions .............................................. 30
13.2 Critical reflection of results and analysis. ............................................................................. 30
13.3 The results in relation to previous research and theories ..................................................... 31
13.3.1 Power hierarchies and social interactions in relation to the production and reproduction of gender dichotomies in Husby’s public space ........................................................................ 30
13.3.2 Gender contracts in relation to the production and reproduction of gender dichotomies in Husby’s public space ......................................................................................... 33
13.4 Discussion of method ........................................................................................................... 35
13.4.1 Population and research design ......................................................................................... 35
13.4.2 Theories and pre-set categories. ......................................................................................... 36
13.4.3 Validity and reliability. ..................................................................................................... 36
14. Conclusions ............................................................................................................................ 37
14.1 Conclusion of results ............................................................................................................ 37
14.2 Conclusion of implications for Social work ......................................................................... 39
15. Further research ..................................................................................................................... 40
16. References ............................................................................................................................ 40
Appendix I ................................................................................................................................... 45
1. Introduction.

Last year during the B paper, a classmate and I interviewed Fryshuset’s branch *Lugna Gatan* in Husby which is an organization in Sweden that focuses on socially excluded youth and safety work in segregated areas. During the interviews an aspect surfaced which was not relevant to our aim, but highly relevant in itself: *Lugna Gatan* had some difficulties to reach or find the girls. According to the informants, girls were not present in the public space to the same extent as boys, and did rarely attend the youth clubs. Hence, an interesting aspect surfaced: lack of girls’ representation and social participation in public space in Husby. Moreover, there has been substantial amounts of media debates regarding Husby’s public space and women recently. One of the most acknowledged ones were Zehlia Dagli’s debate article in June 2015 where she subjectively argued that Husby and women living in the area were controlled by men, and that she felt monitored and not free to behave as she wished such as wearing a bikini in the swimming auditorium or growing vegetables in shorts. Moreover, Dagli (2015) expressed her frustration over that she could sense similar control in Husby as she did in the country that she once fled from. The reactions were many and diverse. One response came from two members of the intersectional feminist network *Streetgäris*, which meant that Dagli’s article was brave and important, however, that men’s control over women exist everywhere in Stockholm and not only in Husby (Sabet & Tahir, 2015). Also, the *Streetgäris* members meant that there are activities in Husby which are open for women and that Dagli’s experience is true, however, that women are not free from patriarchy in other parts of Stockholm either (Sabet & Tahir, 2015). Another matter which has been displayed in media is the upcoming feminist city planning of Husby centre. This plan will be implemented in order to encourage female participation in the public areas, and to increase women’s sense of safety in these (Lund, 2015). These debates are still alive and the topic is highly current. Just recently the Swedish television sent a news feature about women’s perceived exclusions in the public in Husby and how the feminist city planning will be implemented as a means to encourage more women, children and female entrepreneurs to participate in the public and shape its nature (SVT, 2017).

Throughout history and up until recently, space has been interpreted as something solely geographical, neutral and passive without social dimensions (Molina, 2007: 10). However, today it is recognized that space is active and relative, and shaped and reshaped through social interactions which detach it from its historical passive connotations.
Moreover, social interactions are not neutral but influenced by power hierarchies and consequently space can be favouring or disfavouring for certain groups dependent on social status (Molina, 2007:10, 11).

One pioneer study about gender and space was concluded by Ardener (1993), and it denotes that spatial gender dichotomies are not only present in one or two places, but instead have universal tendencies and patterns. Ardener (1993) talks about space and social relationships as interdependent; certain social behaviours take place in certain physical space while that physical space is concurrently shaped through the social behaviours that take place within them. Moreover, Ardener (1993) writes that there are ground rules for social interaction and space. These ground rules are denoted as social maps which are created through power hierarchies in society such as patriarchy, and through social interaction (Ardener, 1999: 3). “Space defines the people in it, thus people define space” (Ardener, 1999:3). Moreover, such production schemes can be linked to gender. Massey (1994) means that space aspects and gender aspects influence the construction of one another in broad and intersectional manners. In clear, there is a dialectic relationship between the production and construction of gender and space (Massey, 1994: 177, 179).

Furthermore, with all this information about women and Husby at hand, this study will be dedicated to women with interest in feminist questions and the production and reproduction of gender dichotomies in public space in Husby. Additionally this study has important implications for the academic of social work, social work and international social work.

1.1 Relevance for social work and international social work.

The international federation of Social work (IFSW) has established a general universal code of ethics for social workers. For example, social workers should in their work strive towards encouraging social justice, social participation, dignity for each individual, and to combat discrimination and challenge oppressive structures (IFSW, 2012). Consequently, this study is highly relevant for social work practice and theories since it explores around the hierarchal and interactive nature of production and reproduction of gender dichotomies in public space which leads to spatial injustices for certain groups (Soja, 2009: 58). These spatial injustices and their production and reproduction are important entities to theorize around and address critically within the scholar and practice
of social work. It is imperative in order to promote individuals, regardless gender, class, ethnicity, age and other intersections, to be able to access, thrive and feel self-determinant and eligible in their environments. This study surfaces some women with interest in feminist questions’ perceptions and reflections, and hence their viewpoints are not neutral or representative for all women living in Husby. Nevertheless, these perspectives are still relevant since they encourage for more critical discussions regarding that gender dichotomies could be understood as a part of a dialectic process where dominant forces and social interaction interplay (Molina, 2007: 10). Furthermore, such critical discussions could hopefully inflict an interest and motivate social workers to undertake further studies within the subject and hence contribute to the knowledge base and understanding regarding social production of space (Lefebvre, 1991: 26). Finally, as Ardener (1993) argued early on, the tendencies that patriarchal ground rules and social maps dominate the production and reproduction of space are universal mechanism. Therefore this study is also relevant for international social work.

2. Aim and research questions

The research aim of this study is to explore how locally anchored women with interest in feminist questions perceive and reflect upon the production and reproduction of gender dichotomies in public space in Husby.

1) What kind of power hierarchies and social interactions are identified as productive and reproductive for gender dichotomies in public space in Husby according to the interviewees?

2) What types of gender contracts are experienced in Husby, and how do these relate to the production and reproduction of gender dichotomies in public space according to the interviewees?


First, a short background about Husby will be presented in order to create some understanding for the research context. Subsequently, some previous research will be presented and linked to the choice of theoretical departures. Thereafter, the theoretical framework for this study will be presented followed by a methodology part which displays detailed information about the research process, tools of analysis and reliability and validity aspects of the study. Then, the results will be presented and then discussed.
critically in relation to the analysis, theories and previous research. Next, the methodology will be discussed critically, and finally the results will be concluded followed by implications for social work and further research.

4. Background

In order to create an overview and understanding about the research context; Husby, some history, information and statistics will be displayed under the headings below.

4.1 The million program.

During the 60’s and 70’s The Million Program was enforced in Stockholm as a means to address the severe housing shortage that was prevalent at that time (Stockholmsläns museum, 2016). One million dwellings were established within a time period of ten years, 1965-1975, and the idea was that the new areas would function as small cities outside the city centre with services and conveniences (Stockholmsläns museum, 2016). The houses in the million programs were built according to a basic functional architecture and the city planning was in accordance to the ABC model which stands for work, housing and centre (own translation from ‘arbete, bostad och centrum’), which had the intention of forming new social and cultural livelihoods outside the centre of Stockholm (Stockholmsläns museum, 2016). The million programs were initially perceived positively and figured as a symbol for the Swedish welfare state and the Swedish folk home, nevertheless, instead of becoming small self-sufficient areas the million programs became segregated islands (Stockholmsläns museum, 2016). Today, many discourses, commonly led by media, describe suburbs and million program areas as marginalized and problematic, and instead of symbolizing the Swedish folk home they are nowadays more attached with connotations of segregation, poverty, criminality and social problems (Molina, 2007: 15, 16). Moreover, today the million programs are in need of both internal and external renewals, but this is still a process and different municipalities have different opinions whether the houses should be restored or shattered (Boverket, 2014). One of the million program areas which has and continues to undergo renewals is Husby, and one restoration idea for its centre is a feminist city plan which will be further brought up in the results part.
4.2 Husby

Husby is a part of Järvaområdet in the north-west of Stockholm. It is located on the metro’s blue line and it takes 18 minutes to reach Stockholm’s city centre with public communication. Moreover, the area is located next to Järvafield which is a large natural area with forests and green fields, and the city planning is in accordance to the ABC model which was mentioned above. Some facilities in the area are schools, kindergartens, shops, library, sport and swimming auditoriums, restaurants, pharmacy and dentist and health clinics. According to public records, approximately 12,000 individuals live in Husby (Stockholm’s stad, 2017), and the 101 multiple dwellings are either rental or purchasable apartments. The area is situated adjacent to the global science metropole Kista however it has been described as Harlem in comparison to its neighbour where services, working places and business thrive (Listerborn, 2005: 249). There are various social problems in Husby, and one of them is unemployment. According to 2015’s statistics 3, 5 % of the women and 6, 1 % of the men in the age group 20-24 were openly unemployed, and 9,7 % of the women and 8,2 % of the men in the age group 25-54 were openly without work as well (Stockholm’s stad, 2017). These unemployment rates are very high if comparing them to the whole city of Stockholm with its approximately 923,500 inhabitants where 1, 9 % of the women and 3 % of the men are openly unemployed in the age group 20-24, and 3, 2 % of the women and 3, 1 % of the men in the age group 25-54 (Stockholm’s stad, 2017). Furthermore, the area is commonly associated with the Husby riots which occurred in 2013 where youths in various suburbs in Stockholm revolted, set cars on fire, threw rocks and mutinied against authorities as a response towards for example police violence, segregation, lack of jobs and due to social and economic polarizations (de Los Reyes, et.al, 2014: 14, 15).

5. Explanations of concepts

5.1 “Woman”, “women”, “girl”, “girls”, “female” and “females”.

These concepts are utilized throughout this thesis, however in this specific research context these concepts encompass anyone identifying as female, either bodily, non-bodily or psychologically.

5.2 “Public space”
This term is frequently in this study, and the definition of such in this specific context is in accordance to the national encyclopaedia (NE): public space is “part of the built environment that is accessible for the public” (own translation from ‘del av bebyggelsemiljö som är tillgänglig för allmänheten’) (NE, 2016). This refers to both indoor and outdoor built environment. Moreover, this thesis will focus on outdoor built environments.

5.3 “The socio-spatial-dialectic”

This notion is a part of critical spatial reflection and it describes that space is shaped and reshaped through social interaction; the space influence social interaction, and social interaction influences the space. Moreover that such interaction is not neutral but penetrated by power hierarchies (Soja, 2012: 57).

5.4 “Gender dichotomies” and “gender contracts”

These concepts are utilized throughout this study, and both of these are based upon Hirdman’s (1988) gender system. This system describes that gender roles are socially constructed as opposites, and that certain norms are attached to these gender contracts. For example, this system creates contracts which denote what responsibilities each gender have, distinct behaviours, in which space they belong and that women exist as “the other” in relation to men.

5.5 “Power hierarchy”

This term is defined as the hierarchical order that exists between groups, and which also determines how much power and social status respectively group has (Jämställ, 2014). For example, on a general and structural level women have less power than men, however white women commonly have more privileges than non-white women. Therefore, power hierarchies also contain intersections.

5.6 “Intersectionality”

This theoretical perspective and analytical tool is utilized to survey and unfold how dominant power hierarchies create various kinds of oppressions due to for example gender, ethnicity, class, age, religious beliefs, sexuality and bodily functions, and how these intersect in the formation of social hierarchies in societies (SOU, 2005: 41).
Moreover, Tolvhed (2010) argues that intersectional perspectives should not solely be utilized to label groups as either oppressed or privileged, but also as means for criticising these socially constructed hierarchies and deconstructing them.

5.7 “Patriarchy”

This concept has been utilized within feminist research to describe the structural social system in societies which assign power, decision making and superiority to men while women are constructed as inferior. Moreover, patriarchy is deeply rooted and internalized in individuals’ everyday life (jämställ, 2014).

5.8 “Discourse”

This notion is defined as compiled collections of ideas and values with attached rules which are maintained through various social institutions and norms in society. Moreover, these compiled collections of ideas also create and maintain hierarchies between groups and individuals, hence, power and discourses are highly interwoven (Johansson & Molina, 2002: 263).

6. Previous research

In this section, a selected choice of previous studies will be presented in order to introduce some knowledge within the field of gender and public space.

When reviewing the published literature considering women and public space in Sweden, two major reflections surfaced which have had implications for the selection of previous research in this paper. 1) Most published academic material regarding women and public space comprise theoretical reflections and discussions by professors such as Molina (2007), Johansson and Molina (2002), Andersson (2005), Larsson (2005), Friberg (2005), and Massey (1994). 2) These materials were published during the mid-90’s up until 2007, and then the literature seem to have shifted focus towards more specific study aims with for example intersectional analysis or towards specific religious groups. These aspects have been taken into consideration in the selection of previous research, and all literature without first handed empiricism have been dismissed. Nevertheless, the time aspect has been reflected upon somewhat more openly and has not been considered as reason for total rejections. Since contemporary published articles still refer to studies conducted during the previously mentioned time span, the author of this paper has interpreted those
to still have relevance in the research field regarding women and public space. Additionally, the somewhat lack of contemporary studies which investigate women’s perceptions concerning gender dichotomies in public space in Sweden can also be interpreted as a further motivation for additional research to be undertaken in this field in order to update it.

6.1 Gender aspects in the physical city planning.
Friberg & Larsson (1997) conducted a study within the research project “gender perspectives in synoptic planning” (own translation from ‘genusperspektiv i översiktlig planering’) in order to explore gender perspectives in the physical city planning. The motivation for this study sprung out of an awareness about the hardships for women to voice their needs concerning physical planning and to influence the outcomes of such. In order to explore this, face to face interviews were conducted with female city planners in order to investigate how these perceived the interplay between gender identity and city planning. Diverse results emerged regarding whether the city planners thought that the formation of cities were gender neutral or contained gender power aspects (Friberg & Larsson, 1997: 34-35). Many informants did not want to link their personal gender to their work, and tried to neutralize gender divisions in city planning by not wanting to acknowledge these (Friberg & Larsson, 1997: 35). However, the results revealed implicit gender aspects even if the informants did not explicitly denoted such, for example the private sphere and close surroundings were discussed as femalely coded whereas the public was discussed as gender neutral and a place where humans over gender titles seemed important (Friberg & Larsson, 1997: 34, 35). However, Friberg and Larsson (1997) interpreted these results as confirming the hardships in addressing gender aspects and gender injustices in the physical planning. By not talking and acknowledging gender differences the less privileged gender’s needs are hard to encompass and to lift in the physical planning, and hence the male norm solely becomes more neutralized in the physical planning of space (Friberg & Larsson, 1997: 35).

6.2 Connections between women’s perceived fear and city planning.
Listerborn (2002) conducted an extensive doctoral paper with the aim of studying the connection between perceived fear and safety with the implementations of projects and programs which strive towards decreasing fear and enhance safety for women in the public city. The study comprises three parts where the author first reviewed research
discourses of fear, then policy and program discourses and finally local projects (Listerborn, 2002: 4). The last part includes a case study with 20 informants working as for example architects, civil servants, and police in either Tynneryd or Bergsjön in Gothenburg (Listerborn, 2002: 13). In summary, the results display that women’s fear in the public city differ in research discourses dependent on which perspectives and which voices that are heard, and the public is both portrayed as a dangerous and empowering arena for women (Listerborn, 2002: 216, 217). Nevertheless, in the case study women over men got personal and described their personal fears in public space whereas men talked about women as more vulnerable in public space. However, in their professional roles gender inequality was hard to embody since the informants seemed to be uncomfortable to acknowledge gender inequalities. For example, many architectures did not want to acknowledge themselves as being part of or contributing to unequal structures (Listerborn, 2002: 214). Therefore, some discourses and informants argue that architecture is power neutral and that unsafety and fear stems from lack of resources, social exclusion and lack of abilities to influence their surroundings (Listerborn, 2002: 223). Here, Listerborn (2002), argues for the importance to not separate the social and physical since they both interplay. Finally, four discourse directions were identified; 1) the liberating city, 2) The victimized female, 3) the good neighbourhood, and 4) the assimilating city, and all of these exist simultaneously (Listerborn, 2002: 282). For the future, Listerborn (2002) encourage research, policy and programs to include perceptions and needs of individual women in order for these to be heard and to feel safe, in combination with educating city planners, researches and policy makers about power hierarchies and structural gender inequalities. For example, women with resources that can take the car home at night might not experience the same needs as women without similar opportunities, and hence various perspectives are important to encompass (Listerborn, 2002: 283).

6.3 Safety perspectives among adolescents with gender perspectives.

Johansson, Laflamme and Eliasson (2012) conducted a study at the Karolinska institute and aimed at surveying adolescents’ safety perceptions in public space with gender perspectives. The study was conducted through focus group discussions with boys and girls at ages 15-16 which lived in Uppsala and Stockholm. The most predominating results were that both boys and girls feared being physically violated, however the guys referred to fear of gang fights whereas girls referred to rape, sexual assaults and cat calling
The biggest difference between girls’ and boys’ fears were that the guys talked about themselves as more equal to their potential predators whereas both the guys and the girls themselves denoted girls as being more vulnerable and victimized (Johansson et. al, 2012: 82). This surfaced a gender power inequality, and both genders suggested that in order to not be violated it is important to not show fear in the public since that might target them more. Some girls explicitly denoted that if they showed vulnerability such as displaying discomfort when being cat called by guys, the harassment usually increase. One limitation in the study was that the sampling only constituted of young individuals from resource strong areas with high socioeconomic-status (Johansson et. al, 2012: 84).

6.4 Fear of crime in public space with gender focus

Heber (2007) conducted a doctoral paper aiming towards including a literature review over present research regarding fear of crime in Sweden, how individuals in an interview study perceived fear of crime, and finally how media portrays fear and crime discourses. In this passage, the first and second part of the study will be encompassed since these results are relevant for this paper. In her first part, Heber (2007) concludes that research have traditionally analysed women and elderly as more vulnerable to crimes than men in the public realm. Also, that women mostly fear being raped, and that such fear origins from social learning which encourage girls and women to feel vulnerable, to be careful and to maintain a constant risk calculation to avoid crimes (Heber, 2007: 60). Oppositely, most research have portrayed men as being encouraged to be brave, risk taking and embody a macho role (Heber, 2007: 61). Fear of crime has also been linked to environments, situations and hours (Heber, 2007: 73). Public space is more commonly perceived as threatening, and associated with fear than the private one. Additionally, narrow and dark neighbourhoods are perceived as more dangerous, whereas open city planning with sense of inclusiveness decrease sense of vulnerability (Heber, 2007: 75-76). Heber (2007) conducted an in dept interview study in her second part with the aim to investigate how the informants reflected upon fear and crime. In order to maximize variety, informants with various genders, ages, ethnicities, home towns and socio economic status were chosen (Heber, 2007: 117). The results were broad and both adhered to and differed from the established research field. For example, they displayed that the informants felt more afraid in general in public space after dark, and that there were tendencies towards perceptions that young women were more vulnerable in general
(Heber, 2007: 118-123). Moreover, suburbs and youth gangs inflicted fear of crimes, and physical strength in general seemed to be interpreted as an advantage to be less vulnerable to crimes. In the conclusion of the study, Heber (2007) established that both male and female participators perceived fear of crimes in similar ways and that more gender similarities than differences surfaced.

6.5 Gender codes in public space.
Forsberg (2005) conducted a study with cultural geography students in Stockholm. The students were asked to go out in the city, take pictures and code various urban space as either female or male. Three conclusions could be drawn from the photo experiment; 1) public space is not only a physical vacuum, instead it is active and influenced by present and previous social interaction, 2) That the relationship between space and gender shift dependent on the hours, and finally 3) dependent on the interpreter different space will be interpreted differently (Forsberg, 2005: 20, 21). Some conclusions were that both men and women were present in the public space, however that women seemed to have errands there such as shopping whereas men socialized more in it (Forsberg, 2005: 22).

6.6 Similarities and differences of the previous research:
The selected studies have various relations to the research aim of this study, and even though they contain variety and different perspectives most of these have three features in common: 1) they all contain explicit or implicit aspects which implicate that public space, both/either in its physical and/or social form, have different implications for men and women. 2) They all contain aspects which highlight that men and women seem to have different perceptions and needs from the public space. 3) Women are commonly produced and reproduced as more vulnerable in relation to men and the public space especially after dark. However, Heber’s (2007) study differs and argues that there are more similarities than differences regarding women’s and men’s fear of crime in public space. Moreover, all studies vary in their time and context, sampling and scholars. Even so, the author of this paper believe that a selection of such broad nature can expand the discussion of the results and embody many different perspectives. Finally, as mentioned in the introduction part to this passage it was difficult to find first handed empirical studies which dealt with gender, public space and production and reproduction of such in a Swedish context, and hence this aspect influenced the selection as well.
6.7 Previous research linked to choice of theoretical framework.

The three previously mentioned commonalities within the previous research (1) they all contain explicit or implicit aspects which implicate that public space, both/either in its physical and/or social form, have different implications for men and women. 2) They all contain aspects which highlight that men and women seem to have different perceptions and needs from the public space. 3) Women are commonly produced and reproduced as more vulnerable in relation to men and the public space especially after dark), have connections with the theoretical framework chosen for this study. Inspired by previous research and articles written within the field, the theoretical framework for this study aims at embodying the flexible hierarchal and interactive nature of the production and reproduction of gender dichotomies in public space. Moreover, focus on internalized gender contracts have been included in the theoretical framework in order to shed light on the socially constructed differences that exist between men and women’s status, behaviour and spatial belonging (Hirdman, 1988).

7. Theoretical framework

The theory given for this study is that space is socially constructed and has been shaped and continues to be shaped under the influence of social interactions which make space relative realities; “(Social) space is a (social) product” (Lefebvre, 1991: 26). These ideas will be embodied by the socio-spatial-dialectic concept (Soja, 2012). Moreover, another theoretical departure that has been utilized in this study is Hirdman’s (1988) gender system and the dialectic construction of space and gender (Massey, 1994).

7.1 Socio-spatial-dialectic

The socio-spatial-dialectic is a part of critical spatial reflection which describes space as shaped and reshaped through social interactions; the space influence social interaction, and social interaction influences the space (Soja, 2012: 57). However, space and social interactions are not neutral but influenced by power hierarchies. Therefore, social interaction nor spaces are neutral, and in a dialectic manner they shape and reshape one another. Since space is shaped through power and social relations, it can have both positive and negative outcomes for different groups in the production and reproduction of space dependent on social status (Soja, 2012: 57).
All societies contain various social and power hierarchies, and in Sweden the white heterosexual male ranks highest and constitutes the norm from which others diverge in different intersectional manners (Johansson & Molina, 2002: 263). Moreover, to create certain “others” which diverge from the constructed norm is an effective tool for maintaining power. Johansson and Molina (2002) conclude that some implications for further spatial research would be additional focus on the time and place specific aspects and on an intersectional analysis of gendered socio-spatial-dialects. Another important aspect is to embody both the social and physical notions of production and reproduction of space (Listerborn, 2002: 223). This means that power hierarchies do not only influence space through social interactions, but also trickles down in physical planning and building of cities. Moreover, According to Molina (2007), the socio-spatial-dialectic comprises hierarchies and intersections such as class, gender and ethnicity which further influence the production and reproduction of space.

7.2 Gender system, gender contracts and space:

Hirdman (1988) writes about gender system and gender contracts, which shed light on the significant active dichotomy that exists between the socially constructed female and male gender roles. Furthermore, the gender system is constructed and reinforced by both dominant structures such as politics and culture, and through socially internalized behaviour which exclaim men as superior, and women as “the others” (Hirdman, 1988: 57). Moreover, the gender system creates meaning and order for individuals and direct distribution of tasks, attributes and space according to gender. These gender divisions are shaped and reshaped in a dialectic manner through socially accepted gender contracts which vary over time, place and situation (Hirdman, 1988: 58). These contracts have commonly encouraged men to be public, mobile and free whereas women have been more controlled and bound to child birth (Hirdman, 1988: 55). In western societies, women have customarily been in charge of and connected to the immobile private space which have influenced both the construction of gendered dichotomies in relation to space, and the construction of space through gender roles and identities (Massey, 1994: 179). However, research within geographical feminism have concluded that gender contracts diverge dependent on time but also on place which highlight that there is not one typical female gender role or identity prevalent everywhere but that they fluctuate dependent on local cultures in places, time and personal experiences (Massey, 1994: 178, 179).
Therefore, “Women as the others” (Johansson & Molina, 2002: 271, 277) and minor in contrast to males need to be approached beyond an idea of one homogenous female group.

7.3 Connections between theoretical framework, research aim and application

The theory given, that space is socially constructed and part of a socio-spatial-dialectic surfaces the flexible and active nature of space, and that it is shaped and reshaped through power hierarchies and social interaction. However, the research aim of this study is to explore how locally anchored women with interest in feminist questions perceive and reflect upon the production and reproduction of gender dichotomies in public space in Husby. In order to apply the socio spatial dialectic in a gender context, it was important to also include notions about socially constructed gender roles. This was made possible by utilizing a gender theory as well, and therefore Hirdman’s (1988) gender systems with focus on contracts were chosen. This theory was chosen since it both highlights the active dichotomization of two socially constructed genders in societies, but also that these are flexible and varies broadly over time and place which highlights possibilities for changes. Moreover, Massey’s (1994) notions that gender and space also have a dialectic relationship further links the theoretical notions of this study together, and basically all of them conclude that gendered space is socially constructed and reconstructed and not something static. Furthermore, in order to be transparent and clearly apply these theoretical frameworks into the research process and analysis they have been summarized and conceptualized into two pre-set categories which will be further described in the methodology section.

8. Methodology

This chapter will present and address the methodological aspects of this study: the research design, mode of procedure, sampling, research process, analytical tools, validity and reliability and ethical considerations.

8.1 Research design

The aim and attached research questions of this study embody individuals’ experiences and perceptions about certain phenomena and processes, therefore a qualitative research design was chosen. Moreover, since both aim and research questions seek to acquire individual interpretations, data has been collected through semi-structured interviews.
Moreover, semi-structured interviewing is a technique used for in-dept understanding of a certain phenomenon, and a general interview guide with open-ended questions was prepared in advance. Also, this technique allows for additional probing on interviewees’ utterances which means that the interviewer is free to follow up and dive deeper into thoughts and reflections that the interviewees express during the conversation (Bryman, 2012: 212).

8.2 Mode of procedure:

The search for empirical data took place on the search bases SocIndex and Libris. These bases are accessible for students at the university in Gävle through the library’s webpage. The words searched for was “women public space”, “gendered public space” and “women safety public space”. These search words generated many articles and studies however mostly conducted abroad or with irrelevant connections to this specific research context. Since the absolute aim was to find Swedish articles, the key words were translated into Swedish as well. Through these searches, “Trygg stad” (Listerborn, 2002) and “Adolescent’s perceived safety and security in public space- a Swedish focus group study with a gender perspective” (Johansson, Laflamme & Eliasson, 2012) were found. However, the latter one was not accessible in its full form and therefore the author finally accessed the complete version through a contact at Karolinska universitetet. Moreover, Forsgren’s study was accessed through a book called “Speglar av rum” which is an anthology with many academic contributions regarding women and public space. Through this anthology, the author got acquainted with references to a study called “En jämställd stad” by Friberg and Larsson (1997) which was also selected as a previous research for this study since it explores around the actual formation of public realms with focus on gender. Finally, the author has also spent a substantial amount of time going through other bachelor and master thesis papers, and through this review Heber (2007) was frequently utilized in order to lift aspects of gender and fear of crime in for example public space. Therefore, this study was read and chosen for this paper as well.

The sampling for this study was chosen purposively, which refers to a sampling method where interviewees are chosen based on their experience and understanding of the research topic, which was imperative in this study (Bryman, 2012: 418). Moreover, the interviewees were selected according to a mix of convenience and snowballing which mean that informants were either in the researcher’s close environment (H1, H2, and H3)
or found through recommendations and connections (H4) (Bryman, 2002: 194, 196). The sampling contains of four locally anchored women with interest in feminist questions. Locally anchored in this study refers to having local knowledge about Husby in the sense that the units regularly take part of its public space, and either live, have recently lived or presently work or pursue other activities in the area and should have done so during minimum a three year period. As the research aim denotes, this study aims at exploring perceptions of locally anchored women with interest in feminist questions and hence the sampling was chosen accordingly.

H1: resides within the age group 30-40, and identifies as female. She moved to Sweden from Madrid 6 years ago and has for the past 2, 5 years been living in Husby. She recently relocated to Akalla which is situated adjacent to Husby, but she still has some regular activities in Husby and take part of its public space. She is studying at university level and is interested in social movements such as feminism and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) questions.

H2: resides within the age group 30-40, and identifies as female. She was born in Sweden and has been living in Husby for about 3, 5 years. She is studying at university level. H2 is interested in social movements such as intersectional feminism.

H3: resides within the age group 40-50, and identifies as female. She has both been living in Turkey and in Sweden, and moved to Husby 19 years ago. H3 is working. Moreover, H3 is active in various local female empowerment organizations, and is engaged in questions regarding honour culture.

H4: resides within the age group 40-50, and identifies as female. She was born in Sweden. She does not live in Husby yet has been working there for a little over three years with for example the feminist city planning.

The investigation process’ first step was to undertake a literature review and to find sufficient entrance points. Thereafter, the theoretical frame work was chosen and further conceptualized into pre-set categories which guided the formation of the interview guide. Thereafter, the four participants were interviewed individually. The interviews were conducted in Swedish and were 30-50 minutes long, and comprised around 23 open ended questions (Appendix I). However, some of the questions were related and hence many of the interviewees’ answers encompassed more than one enquiry at once which made some...
questions excessive. Furthermore, the interviews were consensually recorded. When all four interviews were conducted, the material was thoroughly transcribed and firstly analysed with theoretically based pre-set categories as lenses, and subsequently the selected units were searched in order to establish themes under each pre-set category. Successively, the analysed results were given to the informants as validity checks, and finally the report was written and concluded. Finally, a more critically discussion of the mode of procedure is presented in the discussion section.

9. Tools of analysis:

The analysis has been inspired by a mix of the directed content analysis approach, and thematic analysis. The directed content analysis can be applied when a study is built upon previous research and theories and seeks to add additional knowledge to an already established research field (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005: 1281). This analysis approach is applied in harmony with its name; the transcribed material is analysed through the lenses of the chosen theoretical frameworks (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005: 1281). In this study, the theoretical frameworks were formed into two pre-set categories which directed and guided the data analysis. The two pre-set categories were the following:

1. Gender dichotomies in public space are shaped and reshaped through power hierarchies and social interactions.
2. Gender contracts in relation to production and reproduction of gender dichotomies.

The first category aims at embodying the socio-spatial-dialectic, the second one aims at embodying the gender system which are the chosen theories for this study.

Firstly the transcribed material was searched in accordance with the pre-set groupings in order to select relevant text units, and this was conducted by marking all units belonging to category 1 with colour pink, and all units belonging to category 2 with green. Subsequently each grouping was analysed again in order to find themes. This process was inspired by thematic analysis which means that the selected material was read thoroughly and repeatedly, and sought for re-occurring patterns which formed themes which were relevant for the research aim and questions (Bryman, 2002: 528-530). In order to motivate the themes, they have been backed up with direct quotes from the interviews. Moreover, it is noteworthy to mention that the citations in the results are translated from Swedish to
English, and there is a risk that information get lost when translated (Brinkman & Kvale, 2015: 169). In order to address such matters, a respondent validity check has been utilized in order to encourage credibility. This is further described under the validity and reliability section.

10. Validity and reliability:

Since this study is qualitative and data was collected from a purposively sampling it does not aim towards generalizability but towards in-dept understanding about a specific study object in a specific context (Bryman, 2012: 418). Moreover, validity and reliability concepts originally stem from quantitative research, and therefore alternative concepts have been suggested in order to examine whether qualitative studies are trustworthy. Some alternative concepts which are utilized to examine trustworthiness in qualitative studies are; credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Bryman, 2002: 353-355). These four criteria have been used in this study as validation checks.

10.1 Credibility:

In order to address credibility in this study, the research process has followed general research guidelines. Moreover, a respondent validity check has been utilized, which basically mean that all informants have accessed the results before the study was submitted (Bryman, 2002: 353). The respondent validity check creates an opportunity for the participants to confirm, refute, alter or add information and comments to the research findings (Bryman, 2002: 353-355).

10.1.2 Transferability:

This study is highly specific concerning sampling, time and context which must be taken into consideration when evaluating transferability. In order to enforce clarity regarding such specificities there is an absolute ambition to deliver thick descriptions and details about the studied phenomena, processes and contexts throughout the report in order to create transparency between researcher, informants and readers (Bryman, 2002: 355).

10.1.3 Dependability:

In order to address dependability in this study, clarifications regarding the research process, its various phases and choice of methodology have been displayed as detailed as possible (Bryman, 2002: 355). Nevertheless, since there has been no colleagues or fellow-researchers at hand, comments from the supervisor of this thesis and a critical friend have
served as auditing guidance. The critical friend method contains the involvement of another person, someone honest, engaged and interested, that can read and give inputs in general regarding the results and interpretations with objective eyes (Patton, 2004: 668). The critical friend in this study has an academic background and is acquainted with the author in a way which encouraged interest and openness. However, total impartiality of the critical friend is very difficult to assure and hence the supervisor had played a major role as well.

10.1.4 Confirmability:

This study lingers towards the acknowledged notion that no research is fully objective and no investigator is a tabula rasa (Bryman, 2002: 355, 356). Moreover, since the researcher live in Husby it would be non-transparent to claim total objectiveness. Therefore, the investigator have adopted a conscious and reflexive stance regarding position as a researcher which have been beneficial in order to limit pre-conceived ideas and biases actively. Most importantly, the research have still been conducted in good faith (Bryman, 2002: 355, 356). This can be confirmed since the study and its procedures are built upon theories, previous research, and academic sources.

11. Ethical consideration.

11.1 Informed consent

The information about the research’s purpose was delivered to the informants either orally or in written through e-mail. This feature is essential within research in order for participants to fully comprehend what they are partaking in (Kvale & Brinkman, 2015: 93). The informants were also informed that participation was voluntarily and that they could withdraw at any time unconditionally. Also, the informants took part of the final result and analysis before submission and had the opportunity to reject, alter or add on to these. Information about withdrawal and access to results are essential components in order to achieve informed consent and transparency (Kvale & Brinkman, 2015: 93). In order to assure that the informants fully contented to participate they signed a consent form before the interviews were conducted.

11.2 Confidentiality

In order to maintain confidentiality, detailed information about the informants have not been revealed in the report (Brinkman & Kvale, 2015: 94). To decrease chances of
recognisability each participant was allocated a code name, was put in an age group and labelled as either working or studying. Moreover, all participants accessed the descriptions of themselves before the paper was submitted, and each one consented with what the researcher had disclosed. According to Brinkman & Kvale (2015), it is ethically correct to inform participants how they are described in the text and to obtain consent from these. Moreover, since this study do not explore around illegitimate matters or reveal results that could induce legal consequences, there are no ethical illegal dilemmas regarding protecting the informants’ identities (Kvale & Brinkman, 2015: 95).

11.3 Consequences

It is important to balance benefits and consequences of a study against one another, and consider whether participants could suffer from partaking (Brinkman & Kvale, 2015: 95-96). In this distinct study, the participants have been positive towards the study and expressed that its aim is important and good, and they have participated willingly and been informed throughout. However, as raised by both Kvale & Brinkman (2015) and the informants, it is important to reflect upon that studies might affect how certain groups are perceived in general. In order to avoid that the results from this study could have generalizing and homogenising effects upon women in Husby it is emphasized throughout the study that the research aim and results solely embrace the interviewees’ perceptions, reflections and experiences regarding gender dichotomies in public space.

11.4 The role of the researcher

The role of the researcher has been reflected upon throughout the research process. The absolute goal has been for the researcher to preserve empathy and humbleness in relation to participants and to the study subject in order to generate knowledge in ethically correct manners (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015: 97). For example, respect for the interviewees’ integrities have been taken into consideration and the method has been carried out accordingly during the entire research process (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015: 20). Moreover, the researcher has looked over the results many times and compared them with the transcribed material in order to assure that the knowledge produced in this paper reflect the participants’ reflections and perceptions (Brinkman & vale, 2015: 97). However, according to Brinkman & Kvale (2015), the researcher’s integrity and pre knowledge influence the research and results and hence it is important to constantly be respectful, delicate and reflexive. Moreover, the whole paper has been reviewed several
times, been critiqued and amended over a period of time which has encouraged the researcher to be more ethically aware and to be additionally transparent and fair.

12. Results:
In order to create a clear overview, the results part will be presented firstly through a summarized chart which display the pre-set categories and their attached themes. Subsequently, the themes will be connected to the theories in order to display the analysis. The themes were established through patterns in the interviewees’ answers which emerged during the thematically inspired analysis which is described in section 9.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-set categories</th>
<th>Themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender dichotomies in public space are shaped and reshaped both through power hierarchies and social interactions.</td>
<td>- Patriarchy and learned fear of male violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- The request for more gender equal influence on the physical planning of Husby’s public.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Habits, repetitive socializing patterns and role modelling.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender contracts in relation to production and reproduction of gender dichotomies.</td>
<td>- Traditional gender contracts yet diverse and intersectional tendencies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Lack of jobs, apartments and activities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

12.1 Gender dichotomies in public space are shaped and reshaped both through power hierarchies and through social interactions.
This pre-set category and attached themes are related to how both power hierarchies and social interaction (the socio-spatial-dialectic) shape the production and reproduction of gender dichotomies in Husby according to the interviewees.
12.1.2 Patriarchy and learned fear of male violence.

Some places which re-occurred and are perceived as manly coded by the interviewees are the square in front of ICA, the space outside quick shop and the space outside the local pizzeria. Moreover, these areas have frequently been summarized by the informants as the centre. In the centre, some groups of male teenagers and young male adults are described to uptake and inhabit the centre especially during the afternoon and evening both physically and verbally by standing in groups, not giving space to by passers, and driving motorcycles ruthlessly where people walk. Moreover the same group of men are talking and screaming loudly which create an atmosphere as if they own the place according to the interviewees.

Yeah it was like cool guys ehm and they sat and took space and sometimes with their motorbikes, talked loudly, did not really move when others tried to pass by, and yeah like consumed space! (H2)

It does not feel good because you do not belong to this, to this group that has occupied the space, eh, and somehow that makes it more private than public and then you do not feel welcome to be there (H4).

The informants highlight that these behaviours and male governance feel for example uncomfortable, annoying, unsafe and exclusionary which in different ways affect their movements, sense of belonging and security in these places. According to the interviewees, an internalized fear of male violence inhibits and reinforces female absence and discomfort in the centre, and additionally after dark. This fear of men and especially men in groups after dark is explained by the interviewees as something they were taught from an early age. This fear and precaution affect their choices and movement habits in public space in various ways; some take additional precaution whereas others reflect and are aware of it.

Like, what if someone attacks you and such typical stuff that we grow up with and, we should always be afraid over that something might happen if it is dark or night, and maybe Husby does not really decrease that feeling (H1).

Moreover, almost all the informants bring up that these young men in Husby have never attempted to harass either one of them personally. However, only their large scale
presence, load voices and ruthless driving could be a potential threat and reason for discomfort, annoyingness or lack of perceived safety.

They have never threatened me either, but it is just the feeling that they could be a threat, it is the feeling that they are gathered there in itself that is a threat for me (H3).

The interviewees disclose that they for example avoid passing the centre or call a friend to accompany them from the subway after dark in order to avoid potential harassment. However, H4 also discusses that men statistically are more likely to be subjected to public crimes, but that such facts do not seem to hinder guys to be out in Husby.

12.1.3 The request for more gender equal influence on the physical planning of Husby’s public.

The architecture of Husby’s public space is described by the informants as narrow, dark, unsafe or not planned well in order to inflict senses of safety. This city planning does not encourage the informants to consume public space since there is already a patriarchal order and an internalized fear of male violence. However, the informants unanimously mean that women are entitled to public space, and even though it might take time to change rooted gender roles and spatial belonging, the men have to get used to share the public space with women.

Because the public is for everyone, not just the men… They have to get used to seeing us women in the centre as well! This is why we had for example the knitting graffiti, just to claim the space and show that we are also allowed to be here! (H3)

Moreover, the interviews reveal that one concrete activity that is currently worked on in Husby is a feminist city planning which has been initiating in collaboration with active feminists and other local women living in Husby. The project was initiated after a request from members of the intersectional feminist network Streetgäris, and first step was to define a feminist city planning and its implications. H4 explains that some cornerstones for the feminist city planning in Husby are that it should be carried out in collaboration and through dialogues with inhabitants in the area and hence distribute the decision power on more people.

This was something that was requested by young women here in Husby and we started, or we thought that we should listen to these women and we wanted to find out what a feminist
city planning is so we hosted five workshops together with researchers, architects, inhabitants from Husby and officials, and after these five workshops we felt like yeah this might be something for us to embody/…/ for us here in Husby a lot revolved around inviting and working with the inhabitants in Husby when forming ideas for the planning because we think like this; when you work in more patriarchal manners then it is a few that decides for many, but to abandon such and work more feminist where the power is distributed on more people” (H4).

Some interviewees also brought up the necessity to encourage more female entrepreneurs so that more businesses are run by women in Husby centre. According to H4, currently it is only two out of 25 companies that are non-male owned in Husby. H1 also discusses that more female driven businesses could increase female representation in Husby’s public space. Today the male owners attract their male friends which consequently lead to more male bodies present in the public. H1 means that if women owned shops and attracted their friends in similar manners that could reverse the perceived male dominance in Husby.

Any stores at all, for example, there is usually there by the angora eh what is it called, they usually sell fruit and vegetables there but it is always men that work there and it commonly happens that only one is working, but there is three or four friends that sit there and maybe it would be good if women worked there because it is very public and so, what kind of stores do not matter as long as it is women that work in them (H1).

However, the actual enforcements of this city planning takes time according to H4 since many different authorities own land and properties in Husby, and much work has so far been dedicated on creating dialogues and meetings between stakeholders. However, the informants welcome a more gender equal city planning warmly.

12.1.4 Habits, repetitive socializing patterns and role modelling.

The informants mean that it is problematic that men dominate the centre since the public space should be for everyone and that everyone should have equal access to it. Some aspects of social interaction which the informants highlight are the repetitive patterns and role modelling. According to the interviewees, the young men that occupy the centre have always been there, and as long as they are there they will continue to dominate, and then other younger boys see them and might adopt the same habit of consuming Husby centre. On the other side, women do not occupy the centre, and as long as they do not the space
will lack female representation. Subsequently, there are not female role models out in the centre which younger girls can look at, identify with and imitate.

Say that these guys stand there and hang out and then eh the younger boys see it and then they think, they become like the visual role models eh and then maybe one wants to hang out with these little older cooler guys and that will create new macho guy hangers, whereas the girls do not want to hang there because they do not identify themselves like, the guys are not their role models, if we derive from the perspective that guys rather hang out with guys, and girls rather hang out with girls (H2.)

Hence, a sort of viscous circle can be identified regarding production and reproduction of gender dichotomies in Husby centre according to the interviewees. Moreover, the informants talk about the importance of asking girls and women what they want from the public space in Husby before making any conclusions about such, and that changing processes might take time.

I think it is because it has become one of this, what is it called, it has always been like this and therefore it will continue, so it will be challenging to change so that women start to claim space because I think it is established the way it is now, so it just continues to be so.. Of course it can be changed but it takes time (H1).

There is an agreed perception among the interviewees that more females need to be present in Husby’s public space in order to increase women’s sense of belonging and security. For example, social networks such as Lugna Gatan is active in the area and strive towards including youths in the area and prevent deviance. However, the Lugna Gatan workers are mostly men, and hence there is a request for more female agents which could be role models, increase non-male representation and make the space more gender inclusive.

12. 1. 5 Analysis

Patriarchy and fear of male violence, women as “the others”, patriarchal city planning, habits, repetitive socializing patterns and role modelling were emerging themes. This analysis was based on the interviewees’ perceptions and on the socio-spatial-dialectics’ exclamation that space is both shaped and reshaped through social interaction which is influenced by power hierarchies (Soja; 2012: 57). The interviewees perceive that a patriarchy dominates Husby centre which inflict senses of insecurity, non-belongingness and irritation among the participants when they have to pass by the centre. Also, the interviewees discuss that there is a repetitive socializing pattern where men are more
present in the public and hence model such behaviours to younger boys. However, women
do not have the same public presence and do not model such behaviours to younger girls.
Moreover, the informants reveal that they have been taught to be careful out in the public,
avoid to walk alone and watch out for men in group especially after dark. Additionally, a
narrow and non-female friendly architecture of Husby’s public space is described as a
factor which inhibits the informants’ sense of safety and belonging further. If looking at
these patterns through the lenses of the socio-spatial-dialectic in order to explore what
power hierarchies and social interactions that influence the production and reproduction
of gender dichotomies in Husby, it is apparent that patriarchy and male dominance clearly
influence the social interaction and contributes to the shaping and reshaping of gender
dichotomies. In addition, according to Molina and Johansson (2002), an effective tool to
maintain power is to create certain groups as “the others”. The informants frequently
denote senses that they feel like the others in contrast to the dominant group of men. The
results show that such feelings influence their sense of belongingness and safety, and
effect their movement in Husby’s public space. Such mechanisms surface that patriarchy
is perceived as a dominating force which influence the social interaction and strongly
contributes to gender dichotomies in Husby’s public space. However, space has a flexible
nature and its features are not set in stone, and both social and physical dimensions
interplay in its creation (Molina, 2007: 10, and Listerborn, 2002: 223). Therefore, the
upcoming feminist city planning is interpreted by the informants as a physical and social
measure towards combating patriarchal dominance in the actual formation of the physical
layout of the public space.

12.2 Gender contracts I relation to production and reproduction of public
space
This pre-set category and attached themes are related to how gender contracts are
perceived and how these relate to the production and reproduction of gender dichotomies
in Husby according to the interviewees.

12.2.1 Traditional gender contracts yet diverse and intersectional
tendencies.
The interviewees in this study discuss that men are more typically raised and encouraged
to consume space and be outgoing, whereas women are taught to be more withdrawn,
soft, caring, and careful.
Women should take place but not too much, they should be good looking, quiet, be there for the men and their, what is it called, needs (H1).

Moreover such gender roles are manifested in the centre in Husby according to the interviewees. For example, according to the interviewees the two different genders seem to have different moving patterns in the centre where previously discussed male groups stand still and establish a form of territory in the public. Conversely, women pass by in it for reasons such as undertaking errands, shopping or going to the subway. This makes the men’s prevalence more firm, whereas the women’s fluctuate and are not established in the same sense.

Like you do not hang in the centre or in the coffee shops in the same way because you are like busy with chores in the home and other tasks which traditionally women are in charge of, and it is the women that mostly are in charge of grocery shopping and then when you move in the centre you run errands more than standing still and hang in groups (H4)

It is very annoying when I am passing by with grocery bags and have to sick sack my way between these guys because they do not move, or for example when others come with baby strollers and they just stand there… (H2).

Moreover, the interviewees describe personal experiences which have influenced their perceptions of gender contracts’ influence on gender dichotomies. Both H3 and H4 have talked with men in Husby about why they hang outside, and these specific conversations have pinpointed towards traditional gender contracts as encouragement for gender dichotomies in Husby’s public space.

One time I asked a guy, why do you have to stand here? He said, what am I supposed to do? Do I have a job to go to? I said no but your mother is home, your sister is home, you can also be home! No, he said, guys should be out and the girls should be home (H3).

Nevertheless, the interviewees also disclose an awareness regarding that gender contracts and their implication for accessing public space or not are not perceived the same by everyone and that women are not homogenous. Therefore, the interviewees’ perceptions are not the truth for everyone. Some examples that were reflected upon was that women have various norms, interests, experiences and values.

I do not feel comfortable to pass by the mosque in the summertime wearing only a tank top and shorts, but another woman which wears the traditional clothing might not perceive the same discomfort, then all of the sudden there are two different pictures, for her the climate
might feel comfortable whereas for me it is the opposite. No one is right, no one is wrong. It is just different perceptions (H3).

The interviewees also reflect upon intersectional tendencies regarding gender contracts and women’s access to public space, and that aspects such as class, age, ethnicity, education level and privileges could influence perceptions of gender contracts and access to public space in Husby.

Like, I have an education, I have a job, so, so probably it is easier for me to claim space as a woman than it is for many others that does not enjoy the same privileges as I do (H4).

In other words, the interviewees disclose that it is not possible nor preferable for them to identify one common gender contract for all women in Husby, and that it is imperative to not cluster all women into the same categories solely based on the fact that they share gender identities.

12.2.2 Lack of jobs, apartments and activities.

According to the informants there seem to be some expectations that men should be more outside than women. However, the interviewees also reflect upon this critically and link this to for example the high unemployment rate. The interviewees observe that since there is a lack of employments and activities some of the men leaving the house might not have anywhere else to go than to the centre.

Yeah, but they should like have jobs to go to, or to have a life to be in instead (H4).

All four informants mean that the young men occupying the centre need either one or all of the following; jobs, activities, socializing points and apartments so they have other things to do than standing outside.

… So I also think that it is about lifting the whole area both economically and socially ehm, and make sure that young adults, foremost men, get jobs so they can acquire their own homes and hang there instead (H2).

Moreover, the informants discuss that the apartments in the area are small and not always compatible to the amount of individuals living in them. The informants discuss that this could make it difficult for all family members to be inside and some, seemingly men, might have to go outside.

12.2.3 Analysis:
According to both Hirdman’s (1988) gender system and the participants’ perceptions and experiences men are expected and encouraged to be more mobile and public. However, when men adopt this socially constructed gender contract and end up standing in groups in Husby centre they simultaneously compromise the informants’ sense of security and belongingness in the public space. In this specific context there is a perception that men lack jobs and other meaningful activities which might contribute to the perception that many men just hang outside. Therefore, more jobs and activities are suggested by the interviewees as means to both enhance many unemployed men’s livelihoods, but also to shift the male dominance in the public. If relocating the male bodies from the public space the perceived male dominance could decrease. Such relocation of male bodies would according to the socio-spatial-dialectic interfere with the prevalent social interactions in Husby’s public space and shift the patriarchal dominance. If the social interaction in Husby were more gender equal influenced, the public space would seemingly be shaped and reshaped accordingly (Soja, 2012: 70). Both Hirdman (1988) and Massey (1994) highlight that gender contracts are not set in stone and are not similar for all women at all times which also influence the space. Instead these contracts vary dependent on for example experiences, norms and local cultures. Therefore, the analysis also surfaced reflections about diversities and intersectional tendencies regarding gender contracts and access to public spaces. As Molina (2007) requests, a more intersectional analysis of the socio-spatial-dialectic could extend the understanding for production and re-production of spaces in the future. For example, intersectional tendencies such as age, education levels, privileges and ethnicity emerged in the results which accord with the theoretical notions that women are diverse and gender contracts vary due to for example time, local cultures and experiences (Massey, 1994: 179). Therefore, based on both the participants’ perceptions and theories, one common gender contract cannot be generalized to the whole female population in Husby and neither be determined as more or less influential in the production and reproduction of gender dichotomies.

13. Discussion of results and analysis:

In this section, the results will be summarized and linked back to the research aim and questions, and moreover the interpretation of the results will be discussed critically. Furthermore, the results will be compared and interpreted in relation to previous research.
13.1 Summary of results connected to research aim and questions

The obtained results have addressed the research aim and the research questions of this study in broad, entangling and adequate manners. The results have encompassed and addressed how locally anchored women with interest in feminist questions perceive and reflect upon the production and reproduction of gender dichotomies in public space in Husby. These have further included how power hierarchies, social interaction, and gender contracts relate to the production and reproduction of these dichotomies according to the interviewees. Moreover, the summarized chart of the obtained results can be accessed under heading 11.

13.2 Critical reflection of results and analysis.

The interpretations of the results in this study were directed by two pre-set categories which were created in order to encompass notions from the two theories chosen for this study. Moreover, a thematically-inspired analysis was also utilized in order to find themes within each pre-set category which allowed for some flexibility and openness within the pre-chosen frames. Furthermore, the analysis generated results that addressed the research questions and research aim, hence, the aim of this study was addressed. However, it is important to highlight that the choice of analyse method affects interpretations of results (Brinkman & Kvale, 2015: 223, 224). Therefore it is significant to obtain a critical stance towards obtained findings. For example, if the analysis had focused on language instead of content and if the study had another theoretical framework, other results might have emerged due to other interpretations (Brinkman & Kvale, 2015: 224). Moreover, the participants have a genuine interest in feminist questions which also mirrored the answers. For example, the participants are engaged in feminist ideology, feminist activities and organizations. This is not the reality or preferences for all women in Husby and therefore it is imperative to stress that the results in this study mirror the interviewees’ experiences which are also influenced by certain ideologies, interests and experiences. Even though the informants declare that Husby centre is patriarchal, not all women might agree that such power hierarchies exist or interpret such orders as something negative or problematic. As the informants declare, they are personally engaged and interested in for example intersectional feminism and LGBT questions, and some of them work or are actively involved in organizations and networks which want to increase female representation in public space and to combat gender injustices. In short, the analysis and
interpretations of the results in this study have been conducted satisfactorily and addressed the research aim and research questions appropriately. However, the results were interpreted through specific analytical tools and lenses and could therefore have differed if other theories or analysis approaches had been utilized. Also, since the sampling shared feminist ideologies and interest such aspect have affected the results as well.

13.3 The results in relation to previous research and theories.

In this part of the discussion, the results will be compared and interpreted in relation to the previous research.

13.3.1 Power hierarchies and social interactions in relation to the production and reproduction of gender dichotomies in Husby’s public space.

Listerborn (2002) and Heber (2007) both display that research discourses describe that girls and women feel more vulnerable in public space than boys and men. Also, that girls see themselves as more vulnerable, and as potential victims such of rape or assaults to a higher extent than boys (Johansson et.al, 2012: 76, 77). The results of this thesis shows that the participants are uncomfortable and do not feel included in Husby’s public space because there is a patriarchal order where men consume the public whereas the participants feel either uncomfortable, excluded, insecure or annoyed. Also, the findings display that the participants do not feel safe in the centre of Husby after dark since it is narrow, and not enough lightening. Furthermore, the centre is dominated by men at this hours. These utterances goes in accordance to what both Listerborn (2002) and Heber (2007) found from their discourse analysis of the research field; public space becomes coded more dangerous after dark. Moreover, such sense of lessened safety in public cites after dark in combination with the interviewees’ learned fear of male violence do not seem to encourage them to thrive further in Husby’s public space. Basically, the interviewees express that they maintain a risk calculation after dark in Husby’s public space since something might happen. However, according to the participants this “something” is also something very abstract and hard to define, and no one of them have actually been subjected to any personal harassments. Nevertheless, their perceptions and feelings are still real, and should not be overlooked or discouraged. These perceptions about feeling vulnerable and less powerful than a potential male predator goes in
accordance with Johansson et.al (2012) findings regarding that both girls and boys see women as more weak and vulnerable in general. This pinpoints towards a structural patriarchal notion which are embodied in both genders and consequently demonstrate male power and women as inferior.

Heber (2007) got more similarities than differences in women’s and men’s responses regarding fear of crime in public space, and it would be highly interesting to conduct another study with the same research aim but with a mixed gender sampling in Husby. However, since no boys or men were included in this sampling it is hard to know whether the informants’ perceptions are distinct for their gender, or if similar results would have emerged if boys and men were interviewed as well.

It is also important to include intersections when discussing the results because neither women nor men are just their genders. Instead as mentioned by Molina (2007), the socio-spatial-dialectic contain intersections such as ethnicity, sexuality, and class which might have an impact on individuals’ perceptions of certain space. Intersectional tendencies did surface in the analysis of the results, and the informants discussed about women’s diverse prerequisites and that for example privileges, age, ethnicity, religion and educational levels might have implications for whether gender dichotomies are recognized and/or perceived as problematic. Albeit these tendencies are interesting it is not possible to go deeper into such analysis in this study since it was grounded on the participants’ perceptions and these cannot predict general significant patterns for the female population in Husby. Nevertheless, these tendencies are not irrelevant and as Molina (2007) means, more emphasis need to be put on intersectionality in relation to the gendered socio-spatial-dialectic in future research. Heber (2007) made an effort to gain a varied sampling with a variety of ages, areas, ethnicities when surveying fear of crimes is the public. Even so, these voices are not representative for all individuals which identify as for example racified, young/old, or suburban since they all carry various experiences, feelings and social status. A man in the suburbs might perceive phenomena totally differently than a women, and a heterosexual women might experience a phenomena totally different than a homosexual woman. For example, Listerborn (2002) concluded in the results from her case study that women that enjoy certain amounts of privileges such as driving a car and living in a so called “good neighbourhood”, will probably have no idea how it feels for a women that has to take the subway home after dark and then walk home alone through a
narrow poor lightened centre. This notion can be linked to Johansson et.al (2012)’s study since their sampling solely contained informants from areas which would be labelled as resource strong and with high socio-economic status, and hence their findings were highly contextually bound. In general, it would be wise to keep a reflexive stance when exploring individuals’ perceptions about certain phenomena, such as gender dichotomies, since many factors such as experiences, social status and privileges intersect in the formation of people’s perceptions, and that one reality do not accord for everyone.

Listerborn (2002) found patterns in her discourse analysis that public cities can be both an empowering and a disempowering arena for women, and this findings match the results in this study. Even though the informants argue on the one hand that they feel uncomfortable, insecure and as “the others”, the public has also become an empowering arena for them for example through the engagement in the feminist city planning or by being active in other activities in Husby which strive towards empowering women. According to both Friberg and Larsson (1997) and Listerborn (2002), there seem to be a discrepancy between the existing gender inequality in the city planning force and the actual enforcements of such since many planners and other actors have issues to actually acknowledge such injustices. However, the results of this study surface that a feminist city planning is in the process and that it was commenced in order to combat patriarchal decision making traditions where few decides for many. The feminist city planning in Husby is described as openly enforced by the local planners with the aim of including local women’s perspectives through dialogues and workshops. Therefore, in this study nothing negative was said about the fact that Husby will implement a feminist physical planning, or that such project would portray women as victims or vulnerable, which was one aspect that Listerborn (2002) identified in the safety discourses. Nevertheless, since the participants are all interested in feminist questions and share an opinion that the male dominance in Husby centre is disturbing, it is not perceived as very surprising that they support this kind of city planning. Moreover, since Listerborn (2002) and Friberg and Larsson (1997) are not very updated much can have happened in the contemporary city planning projects, and gender inequality in the physical planning might not be as controversial or sensitive to talk about today. Therefore, a more updated review of feminist perspectives in the city planning would be of great value to this research field in order to better grasp current attitudes, policies and programs in the physical planning.
13.3.2 Gender contracts in relation to the production and reproduction of gender dichotomies in Husby’s public space.

Both traditional and more diverse gender contracts were identified in the analysis and presented in the results. The participants feel like the public nature of men is demonstrated and continuously reshaped in Husby, whereas they perceive that they and other women have different moving patterns such as going to the subway or going shopping. This goes in accordance with Forsgren’s (2005) study where students identified women as running more errands and men as more socializing in it and forming territories. As Heber (2007) concluded in her discourse analysis, women are socially taught to maintain risk calculations in order to avoid crimes such as rape. These findings comply with the results in this study regarding gender contracts. The participants discuss this social learning critically and highlight that it has encouraged them from an early age to maintain precaution and awareness in public space especially after dark. Nevertheless, the results emerged from informants with interest in feminist questions which have an interest for socially constructed gender roles and which also discuss these critically in relation to the production and reproduction of gender dichotomies in Husby. However, the informants’ answers also denote that they and other women are heterogeneous with different experiences. Therefore, the results concerning gender contracts also displayed some intersectional tendencies where features such as age, education level, ethnicity and privileges, were mentioned and could potentially have an impact on whether they and other women claim public space or not. As mentioned previously, this would have to be studied further, and such investigations would be highly interesting to conduct in Husby.

The participants do not feel hostility towards the young men that occupy the centre in Husby, instead the results reveal that they are disturbed by the situation and that there seem to be a pressure on men to adopt a public nature in Husby. Moreover, the results unanimously implicate that the groups of young men that occupy the public space in Husby and makes it manly coded have never attempted to harass any of the informants personally. This further pinpoints and confirms the patriarchal pattern in the results since the informants feel like they need to take precaution since they might be subjected to harassments. Instead of talking ill about the young men, the informants argue that this group need jobs, apartments and activities so they have other occupations. The results suggest that if these young men acquired adequate activities three issues would be solved at once; the groupings of young loud men would disappear from Husby’s centre, they
would acquire better livelihoods and women would not be disturbed. Furthermore, this situation highlights a vicious circle which can possibly be traced to the high unemployment rate in Husby (Stockholms stad, 2017). The participants also brought up that young unemployed individuals have hardships to access their own dwellings and might have nothing better to do than being outside. If combining these aspect with socially constructed notions that men should be out of the home it might be an implication for why these young men reside outdoors. According to both Hirdman’s (1988) gender system and the participants men are expected to reside outside the home to a higher extent than women, however when they end up standing in groups in Husby centre they constrain the informants’ sense of mobility, inclusion and safety which also influence the production and reproduction of the space in itself. However, these findings exceed the theoretical framework of this study, and other theories which embody economic and social exclusion would have to be utilized to investigate this matter further. Concurrently, interviews with the guys themselves would have to be conducted since these are the only ones that can actually explain and motivate why they hang outside and occupy the centre in Husby which simultaneously contribute to the production and reproduction of gender dichotomies which makes the informants feel like “the others”.

13.4 Discussion of method

In this part of the discussion, the methodology will be critically reflected upon.

13.4.1 Population and research design.

In order to improve the study further, the population could have contained of a more varied sampling including for example more diverse backgrounds, sexual orientations, ages, religions, classes, and mental and bodily abilities. Moreover, a focus group interview design would probably have generated broader perspectives and reflections for this study since such design would have given opportunity for participants to discuss, relate, and develop their perceptions in relation to each other (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009: 175, 176). Through such design, participants’ eventual biases and pre-conceived ideas could have been illuminated and challenged by other informants within the focus group discussion. For example, a heterosexual woman might have ideas about how a homosexual woman perceive and act in public space, however, this will maintain as speculations unless a homosexual woman is actually present in the conversation and willing to share her realities and experiences.
13.4.2 Theories and pre-set categories.

The theories chosen for this research were adequate and embodied the research topic of this study sufficiently. Nevertheless, the pre-set categories which directed the content analysis must be reflected over critically since other scope which did not match these could not be addressed (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005: 1282). However, due to the limited amount of time and since this thesis builds upon established concepts and notions, the pre-set categories were effective analytical tools in order to maintain coherence and address the research aim.

Another critical reflection is that the pre-set categories which guided the analysis could have been developed. In order to add additional dept and clarification into the pre-set categories each one could have comprised interwoven aspects from both theories instead of being divided into two separate groupings. Nevertheless, due to the level of this thesis and the limited amount of time such multi-levelled analysis might have been too complex to conduct satisfactorily.

Also, there was a constant balance and reflection whether certain questions could be asked or not with respect for the interviewees’ integrities and these were always prioritized which probably compromised the scope somewhat. However, the participants in this study have been incredibly helpful and open with both general thought and reflections, but also with personal experiences, and their contributions have been beyond expectations.

13.4.3 Validity and reliability.

As described in the method part Bryman’s (2002) qualitative validity checks have been utilized. Firstly, credibility aspects have been addressed in this study since general research instructions have been followed in order to adhere to research guidelines. Moreover, the respondent validity check was an efficient credibility tool since it allowed interviewees to take part of the final results in order to check whether interpretations were compatible with their thoughts, experiences and perceptions, and whether these had been captured and reported adequately.

Secondly, the absolute aim of this research have been to deliver thick descriptions throughout concerning the research phenomena, contexts and research processes. Nevertheless, the sampling, context and time are greatly distinct in this study and such
must be emphasized since these aspects impact transferability. The specific context of this study has been reported for example by introducing background information about Husby and the debates in media regarding women and space, and through thick descriptions about the sampling. However, these discourses and situations might change in the future which would affect transferability, and another sampling could have different perceptions than this one.

Thirdly, in order to strive towards addressing dependability in this study, a critical friend has served as inspecting eyes throughout the research process. This method has been valuable, however, the critical friend has had limited amounts of time and have not been able to inspect the research process as frequently as might had been desired. Moreover, comments and suggestions from the supervisor and later on the examiner was also highly assisting and encouraged the researcher to go deeper, add additional clarifications and reasoning, and to be more transparent and unbiased.

Lastly, this research has been conducted with continuous reflection regarding aspects such as biases and pre-conceived ideas. As mentioned in the method part, the researcher lives in Husby and hence arguments about total objectivity would be unnecessary in this situation, however, the research process of this study has followed research guidelines. For example, the study was built upon and guided by academic references and established theories which also served as analytical lenses. Moreover, the discussions have been connected to previous research, theories and contained critical thinking. In that sense, the study has been conducted with active intentions of limiting biases and subjectivity from the researcher.

14. Conclusions

In this section, both conclusions of the results and concluding implications for how the results could be utilized in Social work will be presented.

14.1 Conclusion of results.

The aim of this study was to explore how locally anchored women with interest in feminist questions perceive and reflect upon the production and reproduction of gender dichotomies in public space. Moreover, the research questions that have been surveyed are; 1. What kind of power hierarchies and social interactions can be identified as productive and reproductive for gender dichotomies in public space in Husby according
to the interviewees? 2. What types of gender contracts are experienced in Husby, and how do these relate to the production and reproduction of gender dichotomies in public space according to the interviewees? Moreover, the results of this study show that the informants perceive patriarchal order, especially during evening and after dark in Husby centre which make the informants feel unsafe, excluded, annoyed and less eligible to be there. According to the participants, such perceived gender dichotomy where men dominate the centre and women become “the others” seem to be both produced and reproduced through habits, socializing patterns and lack of female role models that take place in Husby’s public space. Another aspect which produce and reproduce gender dichotomies in Husby’s public space according to the interviews is women’s learned fear of male violence which result in avoidant behaviours and mental risk calculations which result in less female presence in public space since women are taught to be afraid of men in the public, especially after dark. Finally, according to the informants the physical planning of Husby is perceived as dark, narrow and contributing to women’s fear of harassments especially after dark. Therefore, the commencement of a feminist city planning is currently enforced and the intention is to decrease patriarchal planning norms and create a centre which is inclusive, equal and empowering for all genders. The informants simultaneously hope that this project will diminish the production and reproduction of gender dichotomies in Husby’s public space.

The informants perceive multifaceted gender contracts in Husby including both traditional and diverse notions. One the one hand, the interviewees had common perceptions of traditional gender roles where men should be productive and public, and women more withdrawn and careful. However the results also revealed awareness about that women are not homogenous and cannot be bulked into one category with similar experiences, perceptions and desires. Therefore, traditional gender contracts were perceived by the informants as influential on the production and reproduction of gender dichotomies in Husby, however that such must be problematized and contain intersectional reflections and awareness about women’s diverse experiences, needs and privileges. Moreover, due to lack of jobs and apartments some of the young men seem to end up standing and consuming the centre instead of attending more adequate occupations and obtaining their own homes. However, this male dominant consumption of space and macho behaviours is perceived as contributing to production and reproduction of gender
dichotomies in Husby’s public space since the informants perceive this male dominance as constraining and excluding.

14.2 Conclusion of implications for Social work

The international code of ethics for social work stresses the importance for social workers to strive towards encouraging social justice, social participation, dignity for each individual, and to combat discrimination and challenge oppressive structures (IFSW, 2012). Moreover, the results in this study has illuminated some women’s perceptions regarding gender dichotomies and these declare an overall sense of feeling unsafe, uncomfortable, excluded and annoyed in certain public space in Husby since these are occupied and dominated by men. This is obviously a social problem and something that social workers could address more both through further and more extensive research and potentially through interventions. For example, Lugna Gatan works in Husby and strives towards including marginalized youth and decreasing deviant behaviours. However, Lugna Gatan acknowledges that they have some difficulties to reach the girls and simultaneously women from Husby speak out in media and share their senses of feeling constrained and limited in Husby due to men’s perceived control of public space. This discourse portrays a social and spatial justice gap, and such need to be addressed in order to promote individuals, regardless gender, class, ethnicity, age and other intersections, to be able to access, thrive and feel self-determinant and eligible in their environments. Furthermore, it is important for both the academy and social workers to encompass the significance of space and its relative and flexible nature since it is socially produced and reproduced through power hierarchies and social interaction. For example and based upon the results of this study, locally anchored social workers could initiate dialogues and mediate between the women that feel unsafe and the men that claim the public space in Husby. This might create more understanding from both sides which could decrease gender dichotomies. Moreover, diverse female social workers could be present to a higher extent in Husby centre in order to serve as role models but also to make women feel more secure and lessen male dominance. Another example would be if social workers initiated more activities and meeting points, both gender separate and gender combined, in order to give individuals more options than hanging out in the centre. Such planning of and implementation of interventions could be initiated in dialogue with women in Husby in order to meet various women’s needs adequately. Moreover, since gender dichotomies
and spatial injustices are universal issues these matters are imperative to be addressed and discussed within social work on an international level as well.

15. Further research

Additional research would be needed within this research topic in order to explore production and reproduction of gender dichotomies in Husby further. Firstly, additional in-dept focus on intersectionality in relation to production and reproduction of gender dichotomies in Husby would be needed in order to grasp these implications more. Moreover, this would firstly demand a diverse and representative sampling of women which could share their experiences. Secondly, it could be beneficial to do questionnaire surveys based on the results from this study and other relevant discourses. Through such survey, women in Husby could air perceptions and reflections concerning gender dichotomies in the public space anonymously which would give a more general and broad summary of the situation. Findings from such questionnaires could constitute as general pointer and direct how dialogues and interventions could be initiated. Finally, understanding for production and reproduction of gender dichotomies in Husby would be enriched if the young men which consume the public space were interviewed and allowed to air their perception and reflections regarding the phenomena.

16. References:


Accessed 2016-12-22.


Accessed 2016-12-21.


Appendix I

Interview guide.

This interview guide has been translated to English since it was originally utilized in Swedish tongue.

“Introduction: I will in this study utilize the concepts women and men and synonyms to these. In this context those terms include everyone that identifies as either of, both in binary or non-binary manners”.

- Brief presentation.
- Tell me about your relation to Husby.
- Mention some public space that you reside in in Husby.
- Do you perceive that some space is more men’s and other space is more women’s, if yes, which?
- At what time and during which season can you see these divisions?
- How do you perceive this gender division in Husby’s public space?
- Why do you think these dichotomies exist?
- What happens to you are your needs in space which is manly coded?
- How can you and others effect these dichotomies in public space in Husby?
- If you reflect openly, how are boys and girls raised to be in general, and also in relation to public space?
- What happens to space that is only consumed by men or women in your experience?
- In which ways is it important that everyone can access public space in Husby?
- How is Husby constructed/planned in order to address women’s needs?
- Does Husby’s public space feels safe, why/why not? Difference dependent on time?
- What do you think is needed in order to increase female representation in Husby’s public space?
- What kind of organizations and activities are you familiar with that works towards increasing female representation in Husby?
- How can it be problematic to bulk women into one homogenous group?
- Do you feel as if there is a pressure on how you as a women should behave in Husby’s public space? How? Why?
- What other aspects than your gender identity enhances or inhibits you to consume public space in Husby?
- Some women from Husby have aired their voices in media about men’s control, however the picture is not unison. How can a place be interpreted so differently do you think?
- What kind of dominance do you think shape and reshape female and male space in Husby?
- What kind of attitudes and norms do you think shape and reshape female and male space in Husby?
- What kind of behaviours do you think shape and reshape female and male space in Husby?
- Would you like to add something or make comments about something in general?