This dissertation focuses on some young girls and their family relations. My aim has been to investigate how some of those girls with foreign background who in media, government documents and project descriptions have come to be categorized as “vulnerable girls in patriarchal families” – what has come to be termed honour-related violence and oppression, HRV – describe their situation themselves. The selection consists of eleven girls between 16 and 20 years old who have expressed that they live with restrictions and control of their social life and their sexuality. This means that it is the girls’ subjective experiences which have defined their vulnerability and delimited the selection.

The theoretical basis consists of theories of patriarchy together with Bourdieu’s theories of habitus and symbolic violence, which provide an understanding of the context that the interviewees found themselves in. Central for this understanding is how norms and values are transferred from the older to the younger generation. For a deepening of the habitus concept, theories are used from emotion sociology about the coupling between feelings, cognition and action, which become useful in the analysis of the girl’s self-reflections, their relations to their parents, and regarding their space for action.

This paper investigates how group membership may be involved in achieving educational success, and may be sought used by immigrant girls negotiating conflicting demands of school and home. Drawn from a larger body of material, the paper compares narratives from three young ethnic minority women, who actively navigated school contexts around the age of 15.

As the narratives accord central importance to a dividing line between minority and