The Norms in the Body

- Power structures and their Transgression through Arts-based research

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# Table of Content

List of Figures .................................................................................................................. 4
Acknowledgements ............................................................................................................. 5
Prologue ................................................................................................................................. 6
1. Introduction .......................................................................................................................... 7
   1.1. Research Aims and Questions .................................................................................... 8
   1.2. Disposition of Thesis ............................................................................................. 9
2. Previous Research .............................................................................................................. 10
   2.1. Arts-based Research ............................................................................................... 10
   2.2. Social Identity in a Swedish Context ....................................................................... 13
3. Method and Methodology ................................................................................................ 16
   3.1. Body Mapping in this Study .................................................................................. 16
   3.2. Participants ............................................................................................................. 17
   3.3. Data Creation Workshops ..................................................................................... 18
   3.4. Analytical Approach ............................................................................................. 21
   3.5. Ethical Considerations ........................................................................................... 22
   3.6. Reflexivity and Positionality ................................................................................... 23
4. Theoretical Framework .................................................................................................... 24
   4.1. Nationalism and National Identity .......................................................................... 24
   4.2. Intersectionality ..................................................................................................... 28
   4.3. Discourse and Performativity ................................................................................ 29
   4.4. The Affective Turn .................................................................................................. 30
   4.5. Queer Phenomenology ......................................................................................... 31
   4.6. Contrasting the Affective Turn .............................................................................. 33
5. Participants’ Body Maps .................................................................................................. 35
6. Analysis ............................................................................................................................. 44
   6.1. Negotiating Space, Place and Belonging ................................................................ 44
   6.2. Feelings of Dis/orientation ..................................................................................... 56
   6.3. Transgression and Resistance (through Body Mapping) ......................................... 61
7. Conclusion .......................................................................................................................... 65
   7.1. Benefits of Body Mapping ...................................................................................... 66
   7.2. Methodological Conclusions .................................................................................. 68
   7.3. Summary of Analysis ............................................................................................. 70
   7.4. Final Reflections ...................................................................................................... 72
Bibliography .......................................................................................................................... 73
## List of Figures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Figure 1</td>
<td>..................................................................................................................</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 2</td>
<td>..................................................................................................................</td>
<td>35</td>
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<td>Figure 3</td>
<td>..................................................................................................................</td>
<td>36</td>
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<td>Figure 4</td>
<td>..................................................................................................................</td>
<td>37</td>
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<td>Figure 5</td>
<td>..................................................................................................................</td>
<td>38</td>
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<tr>
<td>Figure 6</td>
<td>..................................................................................................................</td>
<td>39</td>
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<td>Figure 7</td>
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<td>40</td>
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<td>41</td>
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<td>Figure 9</td>
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<td>42</td>
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<td>Figure 10</td>
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<td>43</td>
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<td>43</td>
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<td>51</td>
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<td>58</td>
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<td>Figure 16</td>
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<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 22</td>
<td>..................................................................................................................</td>
<td>64</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
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Prologue

What is seen as meaningful, as informative, as worthy of attention in society? How is intellectual work which disrupts the norms on which the world is grounded perceived? These questions were coming up for me in the beginning of the research process and speaking to questions that I had asked myself at previous stages in my life: How come I feel that my words don’t matter? How come (I feel that) I am put down and less acknowledged than others? How come I put myself down? How come I am shamed or punished for addressing in/exclusion that I have witnessed happening to me or someone else? I became determined to use arts-based practice and feminist thought to tackle these questions and counteract the doubts that these questions had evoked in me. Publishing them is a way to tackle them and resist the white heteronormative capitalist patriarchy that undermines certain subjectivities and sees certain knowledges as more factual, serious, legitimate and meaningful than others. To borrow from bell hooks (1994), the concept of “theory as liberatory practice”, this thesis can be seen as being motivated by the will to free myself from the restrictive bars that I felt were built around me – and to give participants the space to free themselves from these bars. These silver, cold iron bars that are forming cages around us. Cages of normative ways of thinking, acting, feeling, being which limit our blossoming as free, loving and fearless persons – students, friends, daughters, brothers, sisters, colleagues – as wholehearted, loved and loving human beings. Through reading academic theory I learnt to see connections between the cage that I and the cages others felt surrounded by. I came to see similarities and differences in these cages which are representing mechanisms of power that shape our realities of being and becoming. Starting with the will to explore these cages, it lead me to the urge of unravelling the notions that these cages are defined by. The notions that form the normative social order that these cages are consequence of and condition for.
1. Introduction

In this thesis the body will be addressed and engaged through the participatory\(^1\) arts-based approach body mapping. Bodies are central in the construction of boundaries and borders which have im/material walls or “dimensions” that we come up against, bump into and align ourselves with – depending on who we are (Ahmed 2017). Bodies are the physical site where relations of nation, race, class, gender and other power dimensions are coming together (Skeggs 1997). They are the site where boundaries and borders play out and influence how identity and belonging are thought, felt, performed and negotiated. This thesis will thus identify and dis/entangle embodied power relations through an arts-based approach in order to understand how they are built from while building boundaries and borders.

Arts-based research practices developed as a way to widen conventions and norms of qualitative research through going beyond traditional, language-based research approaches and crossing disciplinary and societal boundaries. Body mapping in particular acknowledges feelings and bodily experiences as equally informative as acts of speech (de Jager, Tewson, Ludlow, Boydell 2016) and includes participants as (which the word “participants” already implies) more active agents in the research process. Being engaged in a fuller capacity – not merely as informants, but as personal bodies that feel and are bodily and actively inclined in the data creation process might alter the modes in which participants perceive their bodies (cf. de Jager et al. 2016: 11ff.; cf. Leavy 2009: 5ff.; Lennon 2004). This might offer new possibilities of researching and understanding how power relations structure life and living.

Body mapping is also defined by a “worldly” approach (Ahmed 2017) because it allows theory to be related from the world, to the world, through the world – through participatory engagement. “Theory itself is often assumed to be […] more theoretical the more abstracted it is from everyday life. [...] Concepts tend to be identified as what scholars […] come up with [even though] concepts are in the worlds we are in. [...] Concepts are at work in how we work, whatever it is that we do.” (Ahmed 2017: 13) The use of body mapping can thus be seen as a social and liberatory practice which strives to contribute to shifting the ways in which academia frames and the public thinks about societal issues (Leavy 2009: 3, hooks 1994: 67).

This thesis will thus explore power axes and their interplay with bodies and social contexts, as well as the ways in which arts-based knowledge production and emanation processes are allowing to overcome the dichotomies of science/art, fact/fiction, true/false, rational/emotional or objective/subjective (Leavy 2009: 263f.). The creation of art and critical reflection on embodied

\(^1\) There are various arts-based approaches, not all of which are participatory. Participatory projects include informants as the creators of creative material, while non-participatory ones include the researcher as creator of material or rely on creative material already available.
mechanisms of power as part of this thesis will in this sense ideally contribute to processes of political and social transformation inside and outside of academia (Lennon 2004).

### 1.1. Research Aims and Questions

The aim of this thesis is to explore the entanglement of various power axes with the body through body mapping and to look into how the implementation of the method enriches research processes. Body mapping is an arts-based method which places the body in the center of social inquiry. This allows the body to be explored as a central site where social identity is negotiated while being engaged in this exploration. This orientation might allow insights into how embodied power relations affect people's lives and how body mapping can contribute to this exploration through raising consciousness and bringing forward personal embodied knowledges. Body mapping will thus ideally allow participants to see themselves through a different angle and thereby engage with questions of how normative ideas in relation to identity are shaping their experiences and feelings of non/belonging in Swedish society. This might initiate newly informed understandings in participants’ lives regarding critical consciousness on their positionality and foster participants’ connection to their bodies as sources of knowledge. The guiding research questions of this thesis are:

- How is identity and belonging expressed by participants verbally and visually?
- How are norms lived, felt and experienced by participants?
- How does intersectionality play out in these regards?
- What are the benefits of exploring societal power structures through body mapping?

### 1.2. Disposition of Thesis

In the chapter following the introduction, I will lay out previous research that has been done in the subject areas of arts-based research and social identity which informed my work. The next chapter will give details on how I conducted the study of this thesis, including the data creation process, analytical approach and ethical considerations. This chapter will also lay out the significance of my methodological approach. In the subsequent chapter, I will present key theoretical concepts which allowed for the framing and conceptualization of the analysis and thesis. I will then proceed with presenting the visual contributions of participants (making up one part of the material for the analysis), before I will move on to answering the first three research questions (outlined above) in the analysis chapter. Thereafter, I will end the thesis with answers to the last research question (outlined above) and conclusions on the limitations and strengths of my study, followed by a summary of analysis and final remarks.
2. Previous Research

The following chapter elaborates on previous research relating to my thesis themes and study. I will briefly introduce how my interest in arts-based research came about. Then go on with the previous use of the method body mapping, before presenting insights of studies that employed embodied arts-based approaches in Migration studies. I will then give examples of four different studies relating to Sweden which focus on various aspects of identity, migration and belonging.

2.1. Arts-based Research

2.1.1. Body mapping

Body mapping is a creative practice and research method through which participants represent parts of their experiences and identities within their social contexts through drawing. (cf. Skop 2016: 29)

My first contact with arts-based research in the form of body mapping was as an undergraduate student in Transcultural Communication at the University of Vienna. There, I came across the research group “Spracherleben” which investigated embodied experiences of language and how it shapes identity. The research group was exploring language awareness in regard to how people use, feel and experience languages in their lives. Later, the arts-based practice whole body mapping\(^2\) – developed in South Africa – evoked my attention during my MA studies at the University of the Witwatersrand when studying and interning at the African Centre for Migration and Society (ACMS) as well as through having gotten in contact with work from the Sustainable Livelihoods Foundation (SLF) based in Capetown.

Body mapping has been used by people to better understand themselves, the world and their bodies since centuries (Salomon 2002). In research, it was developed as a creative tool to explore health-related questions in regard to physical, sexual, social and mental well-being. It is a tool that can serve various purposes and crosses disciplinary boundaries – ranging from being used for therapeutic reasons, advocacy or community building (Jager et al. 2016). As a research practice, it allows to be implemented in the data creation process or as a knowledge representation and emanation tool.

The use of whole body mapping in research was first documented in 1987 by MacCormack and Draper (1987). Their project was a cross-cultural study which compared correlations of different levels of women’s body awareness and fertility rates in Jamaica and the UK. Further records show

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\(^2\) There are different body mapping approaches. In some projects participants produce *life-sized* drawings of their bodies or social worlds. This approach is called “whole body mapping”. In other projects, participants produce images of their bodies in smaller size – depending on the purpose of the study.
that whole body mapping\(^3\) was subsequently developed in South Africa. There, it was used as a tool for raising awareness, counteracting stigma and sharing experiences of treatment-related issues in regard to living with HIV/Aids. (cf. de Jager et al. 2016: 3)

One example of this is the Lifelong and Memory Box project conducted by creative facilitator\(^4\) Jane Solomon and psychologist Jonathan Morgan, together with the Bambanani women’s group (2003). This project was dedicated to creating a space where people living with HIV/Aids could explore difficult issues regarding their situation and think about their previous life and future. Another aim being to produce material that participants who will die can leave behind for their children (Salomon 2002). The project gave insights into how body mapping allowed participants to re/imagine themselves through a visualization process. It showed that participants were encouraged to find or create new parts and layers in their identities and that body mapping as a visual means of communication can be helpful when wanting to express difficult aspects of one’s identity (Salomon 2002: 2).

Another body mapping study which relied on Salomon’s (2002) facilitation guide is a project (Gastaldo, Magalhaes, Carrasco, Davy 2012) on the social well-being of undocumented migrants in Canada. In this body mapping study, participants were telling and reflecting on their reasons for migration to and experiences as undocumented workers in Canada. The study explored the ways in which intersections of migration, gender, and other contextual factors are influencing the health and well-being of undocumented workers. Their project showed that body mapping was particularly useful to explore the impact of social exclusion and working conditions on undocumented workers for several reasons. First, the ethical aspect of being able to show embodied experiences while at the same time ensuring that participants stay anonymous (due to in this case, the risk of deportation). Secondly, it encouraged participants to re/imagine who they are or have become through their migration process (Gastaldo et al. 2012).

As was made clear, the above-mentioned projects aimed at making “otherwise oppressed or obscured perspectives” (de Jager et al. 2016: 4) visible through “centralizing bodies that are usually hidden or relegated to the margins of society” (Rice, Chandler, Harrison, Liddiard, Ferrari 2015). While purposes and aims for the use of body mapping differ from project to project, one intention lies at the core of all projects – which is the dedication to social change and initiating reflection (cf. de Jager et al. 2016: 11). This is what makes body mapping a method suitable for exploring societal power structures and its consequences in relation to health as well as in relation to social identity

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\(^3\) In the subsequent parts of the thesis, whenever I use the term “body mapping”, I will use it to refer to “whole body mapping”. I will also use the terms body map or drawing to refer to participants’ visual material.

\(^4\) The word “facilitator” is used to refer to the person or researcher guiding the body mapping workshop, while “participants” are the one’s taking part in the workshop.
2.1.2. Embodied approaches in Migration Studies

Vacchelli’s (2018) book *Embodied Research in Migration Studies* relates to my thesis because it lays out various creative and participatory approaches for “collecting ‘embodied data’ (that is the representation or expression of something in a tangible or visible form)” (Vacchelli 2018: 50).

One specific project that Vacchelli (2018) describes in the book included collage-making workshops where migrant, refugee and asylum seeking women reflected on their lives in the UK. More particularly, the project focused on the women’s experiences of accessing mental health services as migrants. Vacchelli was thereby collaborating with different community organizations and women interested to reflect on their experiences of discrimination in British society.

In this project, one participant shared experiences of “being labelled and discriminated against as a migrant in the British society” and how these experiences are “entangled with her social position as a Turkish migrant” (Vacchelli 2018: 59). This participant also drew a connection between her health and discrimination she has experienced, saying that before she came to the UK, she was in “good health” (Vacchelli 2018: 60). Another participant shared experiences of having been “a refugee with an uncertain status” and how this has affected her feeling of freedom and well-being (Vacchelli 2018: 61). She was waiting a long time for health treatment in the UK but was glad to have had the possibility to go to community organizations which looked after her. Another participant emphasized that what others might see in her is different from what she sees in herself. Others might see her as an equal member of society in the UK, while she knows what she has been through in her life as someone who had to flee her home country (Vacchelli 2018 63).

An aspect of Vacchelli’s (2018) work which I find crucial to mention relates to the social classification of groups. Her project investigated specific structural positions of vulnerability which people who have migrated, fled and are seeking asylum face in society. The formation of groups along these specific criteria was necessary for the research aims to be met. It was interesting to read about her reflections relating thereto and to think further about re/production of social categorizations in research.

Her book shows the diverse ways in which arts-based approaches can be used through implementing different creative practices in various phases of the research, including data collection, analysis, interpretation or representation (Leavy 2009: 2). Collage-making was among the creative methods she used to research migrant, refugee and asylum seeking women’s experiences of discrimination and access to health care in British society.
2.2. Social Identity in a Swedish Context

2.2.1. Intersectionality and categorization
Maria Vallström (2010) in her study “Making Difference” analyzed the historical situation of Finnish migrant workers having come to Sweden between 1950 and 1975 and their self-ascriptions of their identity today. She particularly wanted to explore the tension between self-identification and pre-ascription of identity categories by investigating how the individuals in her study define themselves.

The method she was working with involved reading of narratives of experiences and “listening to how individuals ‘make’ themselves in relation to [...] social categories. [The questions being:] how is subjectification made with respect to the subject-positions available? [What is] it possible to be within the limitations of the dominant discourse?” (Vallström 2010: 94).

Vallström showed how already existing discursive identity categories influence the self-identification of people and hence their position in society. Her study was evaluating the use of categories in intersectional studies and the method of “dialogic listening” in an open analysis of subjectification processes (Vallström 2010: 94). She sees the key for more inclusive research narratives in the researcher’s responsibility to listen: “listening out for the categories used, their content, and the ways they are made significant” (Vallström 2010: 95).

Reading about Vallström’s approach on the use of categories in intersectional studies has opened up valuable trains of thoughts for me on how to deal with categorizations in my own research project.

2.2.2. Social hierarchy and language
Research by Rickard Jonsson (2018) with young male immigrants in Sweden focuses on the non-normative use of Swedish as part of their negotiation of identity. His study looks into the ways in which language is used by immigrant youth to challenge social hierarchies, disrupt stereotypes and categorizations of ethnicity, gender, and race by at the same time reproducing the normative ideas around these categories (Jonsson 2018: 333).

Participants in the research project were contesting, displaying and making fun of ideas of national belonging and cultural otherness through allowing an insight into some of their linguistic expressions and reasons behind them (Jonsson 2018). One of the linguistic styles that the teenage boys use, they themselves described as “mashing up the words” (Jonsson 2018: 320). They were also explaining that imitating different accents and ways of speaking – which coincide with stereotypical ideas of migrant identity – does not mean that they do not speak “ordinary Swedish” (Jonsson 2018: 320). The boys thereby pointed to the reality that language use is normatized and that different ways of speaking are more or less accepted. Playfully re/producing these norms allows the boys to resist...
this social hierarchy. Jonsson’s study argues that tabooed words and urban youth style can be useful for interactional enjoyment in a classroom and for teaching activities on identity and language.

The study made visible that “non-standard styles spoken by youths in multilingual settings acquire their meaning through a monolingual ideology” (Doran 2004: 93). It thus showed the role language plays as an instrument through which national identity gets re/constructed as homogenous. This role as a consequence allows non-normative identities or practices to be devalued and social exclusion to be legitimized in a unitary national(ist) logic. All of these mentioned aspects speak to the theoretical concepts I will be working with in this thesis.

2.2.3. Troubling solidarity

The study “Troubling Solidarity: Anti-racist Feminist Protest in a Digitalized Time” (Berg, Carbin 2018) focuses on the negotiations of anti-racist and feminist solidarity and Swedishness as an example for racist sexism or sexist racism in Swedish society. It addresses the consequences of the #HijabOutcry – initiated by Muslim activists in 2013 – which was meant as an online protest against racist hate crime and the ban of veils directed towards Muslim women in Sweden.

What has happened throughout the #HijabOutcry was that pictures on social media were framing the veils as examples of “odd, exotic, and beautiful elements that enrich Swedish culture” (Berg, Carbin 2018: 120). The veil itself soon became the center of the debate. This focus, as the study shows, is typical of a “colonial Christian context” in which the veil is framed as either a symbol of political individual choice or of oppression. The norm of secularism in Sweden is in this regard used as a tool to delegitimize, traditionalize and politicize religion and disregard any personal or banal function the veil as a day-to-day item of clothing can have (Berg, Carbin 2018).

The study investigated the reasons for the underlying white hegemony in the #HijabOutcry to historical interlinkages of (anti-)racism and white hegemony in Sweden. It was thus laying out that Sweden is believed to be and discursively constructed as “an outstanding, tolerant, gender-equal, and anti-racist society” (Berg, Carbin 2018: 123), while two (of many) obvious examples of racist ideology and practice paint a different image. The first one being that Sweden has operated a world-leading eugenics institute between 1922-1958 aimed at studying and preserving the white race (Björkman and Wildman 2010). The second one being that the Swedish state and dominant culture have discriminated against the indigenous Sami population for centuries up until today (Naum and Nordin 2013).

The study emphasizes that the aforementioned circumstances are however brushed aside

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5 While acknowledging that there are numerous names for different types of clothing covering the face, hair, body, etc., the word veil is used here because it was used by the initiators of the protests and the authors of the research article (Berg, Carbin 2018).
through the discourse of “Swedish exceptionalism” which frames Sweden as separate from patriarchy or racism (Berg, Carbin 2018). The multicultural ideology underlying the idea of “Swedish exceptionalism” disregards that racism is a structural and historically established system of beliefs and not just the sum of individual social acts. These circumstances, as the study shows, lead to anti-racist feminist movements in Sweden being predominantly white or dominated by white hegemony. These circumstances might explain why Muslim women have to “struggle to be recognized as political subjects” in projects of anti-racist feminist solidarity such as the #HijabOutcry and why they came up against white feelings of repulsion connected to secular pride in the protests (Berg, Carbin 2018: 120).

Social media in the case of #HijabOutcry allowed for white people joining the protest online to individually position themselves as anti-racist through a superficial act of taking a picture of their veiled selves. Thereby re/producing “troubling solidarity”. The study thus showed that while the protest was aiming for anti-racist feminist solidarity amongst people differently located in Swedish society, it opened up questions around the re/establishment of the idea of a normative homogeneous Sweden. My thesis relates to this study because it equally looks into the ways in which identity and belonging are negotiated in Sweden.

2.2.4. Feelings and migration

Looking for previous research on feelings, identity and belonging lead me to Sara Ahlstedt’s (2016: 369) dissertation “The Feeling of Migration” in which she investigates “how emotions and feelings structure queer partner migration processes to Sweden.” She more specifically looks into the ways in which nationality, gender, sexuality, age and race are tied to negotiations of belonging after voluntary migration for relationship purposes to Sweden. Her study shows that voluntary migration for love purposes can be a disorienting process in which identity is questioned and re/shaped. She gives a “multifaceted picture” of migration in which notions of privileged migration and less privileged migration overlap (Ahlstedt 2016: 24).

The study gives the example of one participant who has Iranian roots and moved to Sweden from Denmark. This participant experiences racialization in Sweden which complicate her feeling of who she is. While her migration process did not involve frictions in terms of legal and bureaucratic matters, she still faces difficulties in Sweden. “Because she is read as ‘not-white’, she is also assumed to be ‘not-Swedish’ as well as, by extension, ‘not-Danish’, as the assumption is both that Danes and Swedes are white. […] She is read as a ‘migrant’ because of the inability of people she meets in Sweden to interpret a non-white body as Danish.” (Ahlstedt 2016: 19f.)

Further examples of Ahlstedt’s (2016: 20) informants’ narratives show the “feelings of alienation that race and nationality” can cause. Ahlstedt (2016: 369) in her dissertation centers these
in relation to feelings of love, loss and belonging which she defines as “individual, subjective experiences”, in contrast to emotions which are “structural, social and cultural”. Her dissertation showed that emotions and feelings are politically and socially laden and that they play a crucial role in each partner’s way of narrating and positioning themselves in their lives relating to the migration and partnership processes (Ahlstedt 2016).

My study relates to Ahlstedt’s in the way that it takes on an affective approach to investigate questions of identity and belonging. Instead of specifically looking at queer intimacy and partner migration, I will however focus on notions of race, nationality, citizenship, gender, age and functionality as bodily and sensory experiences which shape everyday negotiations of identity and belonging of people living in Sweden.

3. Method and Methodology

In order to meaningfully contribute to the field of body mapping research, this chapter will first lay out how body mapping was used in this thesis. It will then give details on who the participants were and how the data creation process was prepared and structured. It will then put light on the analytical approach and the ethical considerations which accompanied the research process. It will also give an overview on the significance of arts-based research, before closing off with considerations on why reflexivity and positionality are central to my research endeavor.

3.1. Body Mapping in this Study

Body mapping as an arts-based research practice was used in the process of data creation for this thesis. I organized in total 3 body mapping workshops à 4 hours (1 of which was a trial workshop⁶) in which participants were creatively exploring the relationship of their bodies, their social identities and societal power structures in groups of 3-5 people. The participants were creating data through drawing, writing and talking as part of 1 body mapping workshop per group (details to be laid out in 3.3.). It was crucial to employ a mixed methods approach so that the body maps produced can be interpreted (Oliveira, Vearey 2017: 10).

Body mapping was used to stimulate discussion and explore thoughts and feelings around questions of belonging and identity-making. The drawings of participants were “points of reference” for their life stories elicited by the art-creation process (Vacchelli 2018: 59). Body mapping in this way served as a tool for reflection on how participants are differently located in society due to power relations and what this has to do with their bodies (de Jager et al. 2016; Leavy 2009: 14, 219).

⁶ The trial workshop served as a test workshop which means that the material created in that workshop was not used for the analysis in this thesis.
The art supplies needed for the workshops were provided by me. They included large sheets of paper, oil pastels, coloring pencils, markers, pens, glue, scissors, scratch paper and magazines. I gathered a few free magazines because I thought participants might have fun using cut-outs for their body maps. Like Vacchelli (2018: 57) for her study (laid out in 2.1.2.), I made sure that the magazines I chose were showing people from “different ages and ethnic groups [...] and not just have representations of white people in them”. I also chose paper for the body maps which was grey-brown, not white. This was to break with the norm of whiteness symbolically. Moreover, all the workshops took place outside of university. This served the purpose of symbolically widening the doors of academia and conducting research as a social practice in which participants and researchers are social actors who collaborate in creating information.

Body mapping was used in this study as a way to “expose and alter unequal relations of power, privilege, and oppression” (Leavy 2009:219). Using body mapping strived to make social embodied realities visible and critical perspectives emerge (as was mentioned in 1.1.). The following quote (hooks 2005: 110) speaks to this: “To be truly visionary we have to root our imagination in our concrete reality while simultaneously imagining possibilities beyond that reality.” These lines describe the potential and aspiration of the use of body mapping in this study – which is to allow for critical ways of knowing/feeling/being through arts-based practice.

3.2. Participants

In the search for participants, I did not narrow the criteria for participation to specific categories such as gender, sex, age, nationality or citizenship. The central criteria for participation were to be curious and motivated to creatively explore questions of identity in relation to the body through drawing. The workshop was thus targeted towards everyone who wants to reflect and engage in an interactive conversation on in/exclusion mechanisms in society.

I planned the data creation process with the idea of letting participants themselves define what makes them who they are. This decision inter alia was informed through Vallström’s (2010) intersectional study where she explored subjectification processes (see 2.2.1.). With this approach I was aiming to prevent pre-identification of participants within fixed categories along already determined ideas of identity. I have thus given participants themselves room to mention what role migration, nation, race, gender or other social variables have played in their lives and how it has shaped them.

The participants who took part in the study were, in total, 8 people who were structurally not as vulnerable as other populations in research projects can be. While vulnerability is something that every human can feel when risking to expose themselves, structural vulnerability applies to people who do not have enough resources available to understand and navigate their experiences of
in/exclusion due to class, education and language notions (Ahlstedt 2016). Participants in my study generally did have such resources available to help them understand their positionality and identity-making processes in Sweden. Among the participants were some who have migrated themselves or have none, one or two (grand)parents who have migrated from various different countries to Sweden. Most participants have been born in Sweden, some have grown up in Sweden and one has been living in Sweden for several years.

I was looking to find participants in the Östergötland, Västergötland and Södermanland regions, with focusing on the bigger cities in those regions. I was trying to reach the public, as well as specific organizations or activist groups engaging with art and politics or both. I spread information about my research project via email, via word of mouth as well as via posters that I hung up in public spaces. Participants interested in the study were informed about the research purpose, approach and ethics before-hand. I sent out an information letter giving the most important information about the project to everyone (I thought might be) interested.

3.3. Data Creation Workshops

Each body mapping workshop consisted of 7 exercises in which participants were asked to draw a life-sized representation of their bodies and social worlds on a body-sized sheet of paper. They were also asked to answer 3-5 open-ended questions on a questionnaire complementing each task and speak about their drawings and related topics in the group after each task. The questionnaire aimed at initiating reflection and guiding the group discussion with participants. It was meant to give participants the opportunity to explain what they drew and why, and which experiences they connect with it. The questionnaire included general questions such as ‘How does thinking about your body make you feel?’, ‘What did you draw?’, ‘Were there situations in your life where you felt you did not belong?’, ‘What happened in these situations?’. I clustered the questions into 3 sections: 1) questions on experiences realtions to the “topic” of each task, 2) questions concerning the drawing, 3) questions concerning feelings relating to the 2 afore-mentioned sections.

Each workshop was divided into two parts, the first revolving around “How do participants see themselves and Swedish society?” and the second revolving around “How do participants think others see them? How do norms influence participants’ experiences and feelings in Swedish society?”. For a conceptual overview of the workshop exercises, see Table 1 (p. 19).

Between the 2 workshop parts was time for a 20-25 minute break. The time spent for each exercise differed depending on the scope of the task as well as group dynamics, so did the time spent for group discussions. Each task and group discussion approximately took 10-20 minutes. During the exercises, participants were busy with drawing, reflecting for themselves and filling out the open questionnaire. After each exercise, there was time for group reflection. The instructions for the
exercises were prepared in detail before the workshop, while the group discussion was semi-structured and guided by spontaneous open questions and questions from the questionnaire that I prepared. I took field notes throughout the workshop process to be able to trace back the data creation process for further reflection on my performance as a facilitator, the workshop setting and dynamics within the process. The whole workshop was audio-recorded and held in English.

Letting participants walk across the room, orientate themselves in the room, breathe and shake their bodies were measures taken to loosen the atmosphere and allow for a body-centered approach. I however purposefully did not walk around the room while participants were engaging in the drawing tasks to not make it seem like I evaluate their every move or line of drawing. This was an important ethical decision. It however also contributed to the workshop being quite static and based on the questionnaires and oral reflections which required formal linguistic expression.

I was designing the structure and exercises of the body mapping workshops with orientation from different sources. Salomon’s (2002) facilitation guide and Gastaldo’s et al. (2012) methodological considerations of their project with undocumented workers (see 2.1.1.) was helpful to start drafting the exercises and gave inspiration for the overall structure of each workshop. They provided detailed and practical insight into their body mapping preparation, process and exercises.

Coetzee’s et al. (2019) overview of body mapping projects in research was also helpful. It showed how researchers have used body mapping in various projects in the past. This gave relevant orientation in the planning and setting up of each workshop in regard to time, purpose and implementation. The body mapping approach for example usually foresees that participants create three central elements which are the life-sized body map, a testimonio – which is a short story narrated by the participants activated by the body map – and a key for interpretation. For my study, I re-conceptualized the format of the key and the testimonio (Coetzee et al. 2019). I instead provided participants with the possibility to express who they are through letting them come up with a personal slogan and to describe elements of their drawings in questionnaires and group discussions. This decision was made due to the timely scope of each workshop.

Other sources which informed the set up of each workshop were online pedagogical materials (https://werise-toolkit.org) for anti-racist education. They gave detailed insight into the pedagogical approaches aimed at sensibilizing for how various power relations structure society and inspired the design of the workshop exercises in this study (specifically exercise 5).

Lastly, the trial workshop I conducted in the very beginning of the project was important to get feedback on the exercises, and to evaluate my performance as workshop facilitator and the use of body mapping in research. I must add that in the trial workshop, I did not use questionnaires but asked participants to only draw and reflect orally but not to write. I then decided to add questionnaires for the following workshops to make sure to have rich enough material. Comparing my two approaches
in retrospective does however not signal a difference in the material being less or more informative. The trustworthiness of the data (Coetzee et al. 2019) has however increased through using questionnaires which were building a bridge between me, the participants and their drawings. Through the questionnaires, participants had the opportunity to explain what they drew and which experiences and feelings are connected to or interconnected with their drawings.

Table 1: Conceptual Overview of Workshop Exercises

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Workshop Part 1: How do participants see themselves and Swedish society?</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Task 1: Bodily appearance</strong></td>
<td>Creating a representation of themselves, tracing their body outline and drawing features that represent who they are.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Task 2: Localization of body</strong></td>
<td>Drawing 3 symbols that represent where they feel they belong or what makes them feel they belong.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Task 3: Norms of the national</strong></td>
<td>Exploring what they think makes them a Swede, or what Swedishness means to them. Drawing aspects of Swedishness by using symbols or visualizing associations with being Swedish in other ways.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Task 4: Personal message</strong></td>
<td>Creating a personal slogan that describes who they are or says something about them.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Workshop Part 2: How do participants think others see them? How do norms influence participants’ experiences and feelings in Swedish society?</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Task 5: Norms of the social</strong></td>
<td>Visualizing a situation in their lives where they felt judged based on how they look or appear. Drawing this situation or symbols that they associate with this situation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Task 6: Positionality of body</strong></td>
<td>Exploring which social categories they feel put in by society. Drawing a “power flower” that represents what others see them as and in which social categories they are put, or how they see themselves or want to be seen. They decide which categories they want to refer to. (f.ex. gender, sexualities, citizenships, nationalities, race, …).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Task 7: Message to the world</strong></td>
<td>Creating a message to the outside world that they want themselves or people in society to think about or be reminded on.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.4. Analytical Approach

The material analyzed in this thesis comprises 3 complementary sets of data provided by participants: the drawings, the verbal accounts of the group discussion and written accounts of the questionnaires.

Since the creation of the drawings served as an entry point for reflection and discussion in my study, the visual data was not primarily analyzed. Participants created visual outputs which were interlinked with their audio-recordings and notes. Vacchelli (2018) (see 2.1.2.) worked with a similar set of data in her analysis. This “triangulation” (Coetzee 2019) of the material allowed to how Vacchelli (2018: 59) says: “make sense of [parts of the data] in different stages of the analysis”. Conclusions on how this specifically influenced the analysis of the material can be found in the last chapter (7.1.).

To be able to start with the analysis, I first of all had to connect the visual, verbal and written material. Following thematic analysis principles, I therefore transcribed and coded the group discussion recordings, coded participants’ notes and printed the body map photographs. In a next step I looked at the images and connected details of the drawings with the transcript as well as the written notes by participants. I also took time to look at the body maps themselves to be able to see in what ways participants were negotiating norms of the body through their drawings only. In this process, the notes that I took as a facilitator during each workshop were helpful. The drawings however live from the additional information given by participants. I therefore always prioritized to see the material in its entirety – as 3 complementary strands of data.

The process of thematic analysis was defined by going back and forth throughout the whole stage of the analysis. In this cyclical process, I looked for themes and symbolism in what participants expressed which appeared relevant to the research questions. These themes were marked and entered into an analytical table to get an overview of similarities and differences in what participants expressed and how they expressed it (Coetzee et al. 2019).

The themes ranged from umbrella terms such as gender dis/conformity, national belonging, feeling home, feeling dis/oriented, resisting norms to small markers such as hair, shame, being racialized/sexualized, being judged which spoke to these umbrella terms and were strongly connected to societal norms. Analytical questions included: Which themes, feelings and experiences came up in the workshop?, What are similarities, differences or particularities in these three matters between participants?, Why are they similar, different or particular?, How is the material that participants created influenced by national and/or gender norms or influenced by the will to go against them?

The visual, verbal and written material created by participants was analyzed in a thematic analysis process in regard to the above-mentioned themes which appeared to be most significant in participants’ material.
3.5. Ethical Considerations

Ethical aspects were considered for a successful implementation of the method from the start of the project. I was following the ethical research guidelines “Good Research Practice” (2005) by the Swedish Research Council as well as ethical considerations specifically concerning body mapping based on de Jager et al. (2016).

First, initial informed consent of participants and the on-going negotiation of consent with them had to be guaranteed. Gaining consent from participants included informing them about the scope, setting and aims of the project from the start. It also included making sure that they know, they can withdraw from the project for any reason without stating that reason at any point in the process.

Confidentiality, privacy and anonymity were also ensured throughout the research process. In order to make sure that the data provided by participants can not be connected back to them, personal identifying information such as names and places were anonymized. For this purpose, I replaced participants’ names with pseudonyms taking their preferences of names into account.

Questions of ownership and permission of the use of the body maps were also determined with participants in the beginning of the workshop. I informed participants that I will keep the created material for the analysis process and it was agreed that I am permitted to photograph the body maps. I offered to give the original body maps back to them at a later point when the project is finished. All participants declined this offer. I however provided them with photographs of their artworks instead.

All created material was being stored in secure and anonymous ways according to the ethical research guidelines throughout the whole research process. After the official submission of the thesis, the audio-recordings, original body maps and questionnaires of participants will be destroyed.

Another ethical consideration I was concerned with was to make sure that participants had a workshop experience, in which the questions I asked were adjusted according to the level of trust between group members and me as a facilitator (de Jager et al. 2016: 16f.). At this point it should be mentioned that the participants in one group already knew each other before the workshop.

Another ethical aspect accompanied the phase of analysis. It concerned the interpretation of the contributions of participants. In the entire analysis process, I made sure to keep a certain research distance developing my own perspective on the material, while at the same time trying to stay close to the participants’ understanding of their embodied experience and drawing. Remembering to listen to participants (as was mentioned by Vallström 2010, see 2.2.1.) was important in this process, especially when it came to negotiating if or if not to relate to a specific part of information which was not openly or directly given by participants. Examples of this will be elaborated in 7.1. The ethical aspects of distance and listening were central because “the meaning of a body map may be fully understood only by the accompanying story and experience of its creators” (Coetzee et al. 2019: 1238).
To ensure participants’ integrity and privacy, all aspects and steps of the research process were handled according to the outlined ethical research principles.

3.6. Reflexivity and Positionality

The concepts of reflexivity and positionality are central in this thesis for understanding the choice of arts-based methodology as well as the relationship of society and research as a whole.

The researcher is central in the research process. With the researcher is where the research starts, where questions appear, where the research is conceptualized and the field of inquiry framed and answers to these questions looked for and created. In a feminist research context, this is captured in the concept of reflexivity.

“Reflexivity can be described as a process of thinking about one’s own thinking, as reconsideration and doubt, as the interaction between and construction of the researcher and the researched.” (Livholts 2011: 4) Reflexivity thus allows the researcher to be(come) conscious of their positionality in the research project and society. It allows for questions of ‘who is the researcher?’ and ‘why is this researcher interested in this?’. In this sense, reflexivity “encourage[es] an understanding of the relationship between individual practice and social structure” (Stanley 1993: 44). The researcher’s positionality affects and reflects all stages of the research process. This is why it is important for the researcher to be conscious of and make transparent the process that they go through and position they come from when researching.

My position as a researcher is not only influencing what I see and understand but also what I write and how I write it according to what I understand and believe. This means that as a researcher and writer of this thesis, I acknowledge that there is an inevitable gap between the experiences that participants expressed and the expressions I chose to describe what they have expressed (see Ethical considerations 3.5.). Meaning-making and –sharing involves “transforming a speechless, [or embodied] reality into a discursive form that makes sense” (Leavy 2014: 200). The inevitable gap between expression of experience and description of experience is what makes all social science writing a narrative production (Leavy 2014: 200).

In relation to body mapping, it is crucial to acknowledge that to fully describe embodiment in words or in a drawing is next to impossible because participants’ contributions are a translation of their experiences from thought, feeling and memory into another medium, form, context, time, language and situation. They cannot be seen as determined accounts of how something is because how we see something is processual and relational. This means that body maps give an insight into specific spheres of people’s complex subjectivities created in a specific context and situation. In order to be able to not override participants’ experiences, it was crucial to listen to what was said in relation to the drawings but in the process of trying to understand also being aware that I am listening from a
specific standpoint from where meaning is constructed and the information given by participants is as well already framed by them according to who they think I am or what I might want from them. The task of research practice is to recognize these dynamics and deal with them in ethical ways through reflecting on knowledge creation and meaning-making processes and hierarchies within them. Conclusions on this will be laid out in 7.2.1.

Social researchers can thus “only” try to get close to describing what is, or seems to be, according to what informants share about their lives from their standpoint. Academic writing such as any other form of communication should therefore be acknowledged as a way of producing “stories [that are] fluid, co-constructed, meaning-centered reproductions and performances of experience achieved in the context of relationships and subject to negotiable frames of intelligibility and the desire for continuity and coherence over time” (Leavy 2014: 203). This is why I see academic writing and research as endeavors of re-narration and reflexivity.

4. Theoretical Framework

The following chapter will lay out the concepts and theories that the analysis of this thesis is informed by. It will introduce the workings of nationalism for the understanding of society and construction of identity today and show how national/ist ideas are weaving through power relations. It will then give insights into the concept of intersectionality and structural privileges/disadvantages, before discursive and affective approaches to identity will be explained. Moving on with defining the concepts of performativity (Butler) and queer phenomenology (Ahmed), it will then be proceeded with contrasting these two discursive and affective frameworks.

4.1. Nationalism and National Identity

Nationalism as an ideology does not solely structure the ways in which the modern world system functions politically or economically but also socially. It structures the ways in which questions of belonging are thought of and answered.

Calhoun (2007: 111) argues that nationalism as a discursive endeavor is “an attempt to constitute identities in sharp, categorical terms, to render boundaries clear and identities integral even while the processes of capitalist expansion, slave trade, colonization, war, and the globalization of culture all have ensured the production of ever more multiplicities and overlaps of identities.” This quote exemplifies the complex negotiations that the understanding and making of identities along national lines across borders entail. National identity is dependent on boundaries but at the same time crossing them. It is formed through boundaries and across boundaries and tied to images that are believed to represent members of one nation.
While the historical phenomenon of nationalism underlies the conceptualization of national identities which often leads to the exclusion of defined or perceived non-nationals, it is first of all a phenomenon that allows everyone to imagine a shared self and a distinct other. Benedict Anderson (1983) with the concept of “imagined community” has laid out that members of a nation imagine themselves as belonging to that nation and to each other on the basis of certain imagined commonalities. Members of a community thus share a common idea about each other and where they belong which persists without those members ever meeting (Anderson 1983). The commonalities they imagine are re/institutionalized by states in nation building processes. Anderson with the concept of imagined communities thus emphasizes that nations are socially-constructed and fluid systems that structure living and thinking.

Nationalist thinking depends on the myths of unitarity and homogeneity which provide the basis for the making and marking of boundaries and the construction of closed integral group identities. The imagination of a shared self relies on the myth that nations are static, homogenous and integral units in which identities are thought of having to be both “maximally integrated” and “inhabit[ing] self-consistent unitary cultures/lifeworlds” (Calhoun 114). The notion of unitarity is a key aspect of nationalist thinking which frames belonging in an either/or logic and sees people in society as “members of one and only one nation, [...] of one and only one race, one gender, and one sexual orientation, [...] naturally liv[ing] in one world at a time, [...] inhabit[ing] one way of life, speak[ing] one language, and [having to be] singular, integral beings” (Calhoun 2007: 113).

A nation(-state) consists of various ethnic groups and of people with different races, having various nationalities and sometimes several citizenships. Not all of the groups and people living in a nation(-state) are (socially, legally or politically) recognized or accepted in this nation-state depending on how much they fit into the imagined unitary as well as homogenous categories of who the national is (imagined to be). Not all citizens in a nation are considered or considering themselves to be nationals. Residents feel nationally or “culturally” close to the nation in which they are living to varying degrees despite and/or depending on their social, legal, economic and political situation. Nationals of a nation are thus often citizens of that nation (thereby also affirming the nationalist logic), they can however also be citizens of another nation or no citizens at all (as is the case with people who are stateless).

The national self is thus imagined to form part of the homogenous ethnic group in a nation in which members share the same specific and unitary attributes. Nationalism is however “not simply a claim of ethnic similarity, but a claim that certain similarities should count as the (my emphasis) definition of political community” (Calhoun 2007: 69). This usually becomes visible in politics that postulate for privileging the one and only national ethnic group which is presumed to be homogenous and unitary, while giving less rights or temporary residence to all the others who cannot be defined
in those homogenous and unitary terms within the nation(al/ist logic).

Jonsson’s (2018) study (see 2.2.2.) on the non-normative use of Swedish clearly gave an example of how the myth of homogeneity and unitarity play out in relation to language where monolingual ideology contributes to in/exclusion mechanisms in classrooms. While these myths are often believed to only apply to nationalist thought that takes form in patriotism or right wing politics, they are actually shaping core ideas of social organization in the whole of society. The soon to be following subchapter “national family” (4.1.1.) will also elaborate on this through drawing an intersectional connection between the nation and the family.

Nations rely on the creation of borders such as national identity formation processes rely on the marking of boundaries. Borders and boundaries in this sense reproduce each other. For Hall (1996: 4,5), the construction of boundaries happens through the marking of difference within discourses. For him, identities are product of hierarchy and exclusion, rather than the sign of an identical, naturally-constituted unity. He sees identity formation as something that involves a “relation to the Other”, a “constitutive outside” which is how Butler (2011) calls it. “[I]f certain constructions appear constitutive, that is, have this character of being that ‘without which’ we could not think at all, we might suggest that bodies only appear, only endure, only live within the productive constraints of certain highly gendered regulatory schemas.” (Butler 2011: X) While this quote is highlighting how (gender) identity is constructed through performance along specific normative lines, Thomas Hylland Eriksen (2010: 132) is focusing on the relation of gender categories or other power axes between various groups and societies which shape identity formation. He thereby emphasizes that hierarchies and group formation processes are relative, relational and “socially created”.

This is also emphasized by Jonsson (2018: 322) who says that “people construct identities in and through social interaction” and that, to refer to Althusser (2001), “subjects are called into existence through being interpellated in ideology”. The aspect of ideology also speaks to the role of nations and their state institutions in re/creating a normative social order.

While the aspect of interrelation and interaction is constitutive to identities, it is also the perception, or rather emphasis on difference which creates group identities (Puskás, Alund 2015: 21ff.). Relating hereto, Brubaker (2004: 31) makes the crucial argument that the construction of groups and the notion of belonging to them unfolds in the everyday. He says that categories like race, ethnicity, nationality and citizenship which shape feelings of belonging “exist only in and through our perceptions, interpretations, representations, classifications, categorizations, and identifications” (Brubaker 2004: 79). Lennon (2014), in this sense, speaks of subjectivities as being lived. With this they both seem to be emphasizing that identities are constantly in the making and being re/produced – within the however tight constraints of national/ist logic. National belonging can be understood as being performed and re/produced through the creation of hierarchies and attaching meaning to these
hierarchies in ethnic, racial or national terms when these categories appear or are made relevant for those involved in the interaction.

Patricia Hill Collins (1998) argues that the formation of national social identity and personal social identity within the family are interconnected. She understands national social hierarchies as being re/produced through families. Framing the nation(-state) as a family and the family as a place for national re/production allows to see how norms of social organization such as nation, gender, race, sexuality and age are re/constructing each other in both the believed private and public sphere.

Families in her theory are the first place where social positions are assigned and re/produced in hierarchical ways according to national/ist norms. These national/ist norms are the myth of homogeneity and unitarity (elaborated before in 4.1.) and follow the logic that members of a nation such as members of a family are tied through blood. Due to the belief in blood ties, nations are seen as natural and biologically founded. This makes the connection with the traditional family idea/l evident. In line with these idea/ls, every group is thought of having to live in their own unique place. Thereby re/producing naturally seeming social segregation which separates social space into isolated compartments of one home, one neighborhood, one nation in which racial and/or class homogeneity prevail (Collins 1998: 67).

According to the national/ist and traditional family logic, a family consists of members who share one race, are assumed to be heterosexual and hierarchized according to gender and age. To describe hierarchies within families, this means that a man in the traditional family is believed to be the head of the household, his wife who is assumed to be younger in age and his children are believed to be subordinate to him. Hierarchies between different racial groups can be understood as playing out like hierarchies of gender, age and sexuality within one family or one race.

These social positions are learnt to be seen as “natural social arrangements” because they are nurtured within a seemingly natural framework, the family. This is why the social positions assigned in a family come to serve as fundamental principles of social organization in society, namely a nation-state as a whole (Collins 1998: 64f.). Collins in this regard refers to Ann McClintock (1995: 45) who says that "the family image came to figure hierarchy within unity as an organic element of historical progress, and thus became indispensable for legitimating exclusion and hierarchy within non-familial social forms such as nationalism, liberal individualism and imperialism." This means that the normative social order of the traditional family developed to legitimize hierarchies outside as well as inside the considered private sphere of the family through a process of naturalization of norms.

Butler (2011: 88) in this regard argues that through the re/iteration of norms, they become embodied and thus seem real or natural over time. Norms then serve as standards according to which existence and performance are measured. Ironically, acceptance and inclusion come through the performance of these norms which can always only seem “real” and never be “natural”. Racial and
class norms, to name only two power relations, are in this sense impersonated by members of society and serve as ideals which regulate their performance, but which none of their performance can fully approximate (Butler 2011). The gap between the standard of the norm and the performance of the norm, between “realness” and performance is described by Audre Lorde (1987: 116) with the concept of the “mythical norm”. Norms become perceivable as normative through a gap between the normative standard and the performance. This gap allows to deconstruct norms as myths – which nevertheless largely secure the seemingly “natural” social order.

As was laid out, nation-states function through hierarchical social re/production within and beyond families. The idea(l) of who becomes accepted in society, and social hierarchies within and between nations is thus closely tied to the idea/l of the traditional family which is regulated through specific norms.

4.2. Intersectionality

The concept of intersectionality sees social identities as being defined by interwoven power axes such as nation, race, gender, age, sexuality and functionality. Combinations of these power axes are shaping society and people’s experiences and feelings of privilege/disadvantage and belonging. When wanting to understand how the social world functions, multiple grounds of identity need to be considered because people are positioned at the intersections of various societal power relations (Crenshaw 1991). Looking at the interconnectedness of different systems of power is thus inevitable and allows to see how these systems are simultaneously and “mutually constructing each other” (Collins 1998).

Intersectionality can thus contribute to showing in which ways interlocking racial, class and gender (to name some) hierarchies are re/producing each other and are being re/produced when seen as separate. It also allows to acknowledge that people in society are oppressing and oppressed at the same time while re/producing social norms regardless of which intersections they are located at (Fellows & Razack 1998).

The model of intersectionality was introduced to better understand the interlocking relations of power that shape experiences of violence that women of Color have in society (Crenshaw 1991). Before the model was used, power was theoretically framed as operating within isolated spheres of identity. This means that a specific interdependence of discriminatory factors that for example a woman of Color experienced could not be grasped in its entirety but was theorized as isolated issues of her being a woman and her being of Color, for instance. Important work in the field of feminist and postcolonial scholarship then emphasized “the necessity of recognizing that gender is always racialised” (Lewis, Mills 2003: 4) and interlinked with class, sexuality, functionality and other power relations.
Fellows and Razack (1998) have identified three processes that usually stand in the way of coming to understand simultaneous privilege and disadvantage and realizing that there are “intragroup differences” (Crenshaw 1991) within imagined unitary or homogenous groups.

First, one’s own path towards liberation is usually ignited by realizing the ways in which oneself has experienced being oppressed in one’s life. This is an important realization and necessary for the questioning of power. This recognition however becomes problematic if it is seen as isolated and not connected to the larger logic of how systems of oppression function. With this isolated logic, a person has understood their own experience of being oppressed without looking into the ways through which they are structurally or personally oppressing others. Through this logic the comfort of this person or group this person ‘belongs’ to gets secured and hierarchies re/established.

Secondly, this process of limited recognition of oppression serves to make sure that through focusing on one’s own liberation from oppression, one’s own position of being marginalized does not get erased. While this is understandable, it unfortunately leads to all oppressed groups emphasizing the ways in which they have been oppressed instead of acknowledging the ways in which power is weaving through their relations – which would allow the confrontation of power and building of solidarity amongst groups.

Both of the afore-mentioned processes are connected to the third dynamic which is that stories of subordination which are different from or not part of one’s own reality are often ignored, seen as not important or delegitimized by the dominant groups in society (Fellows & Razack 1998).

Intersectionality thus offers a way to understand simultaneously privileged and disadvantaged positioning and to acknowledge that one’s own positioning, acts or experiences are structurally embedded and differing, yet similar in the ways they function systemically and affect people emotionally. For a successful deconstruction of power relations, one needs to understand the intersectional workings of power in society, as was laid out above.

4.3. Discourse and Performativity

Discourse and language are shaping these intersectional power relations and identity formation processes in society. Butler’s concept of performativity says that gender and other social identity categories are being re/produced through the performance of norms within discursive spheres.

According to Butler, bodies that are accepted in society are bodies that live within or recognize the “productive constraints of regulatory schemas” (Butler 2011: X). These bodies are accepted because they run along specific normative lines. Other bodies are put below, behind or on the other side of these lines which for these bodies are boundaries/constraints made from constructed norms.

Butler sees legal frameworks, the role of state power and state authorities as crucial discursive agents active in the re/inscription of norms. This re/inscription of norms thus functions through the
“reiterative practice by which discourse produces the effects that it names” (Butler 2011: XII). As an example of this, Butler (2011: XVII) lays out: “[T]he founding interpellation of gender which happens grammatically from ‘it’ to ‘she’ or ‘he’ is reiterated by various authorities. The naming is at once the setting of a boundary, and also the repeated inculcation of a norm.”.

While Butler (2011: 37) says that “every effort to refer to materiality takes place through a signifying process”, she recognizes that linguistic categories are never all-encompassing and missing to fully or permanently describe or be described. Language according to her does not capture everything, it however frames materiality. Through this linguistic frame certain things become present and others absent (Butler 2011: 37). This is why Butler (2011: XIX) speaks of social construction as “a temporal process” having a “constitutive” notion. Through recognizing that something is the norm – which according to Butler mainly functions through discourse or the performance of discursive constructions – an outside-of-the-norm is re/produced.

For Butler, there is no performance without the relation to language because the social world is constructed and perceived through language. Social categories are re/enacted and re/produced through an individual’s performance of certain social behavior, thoughts and feelings based on expected and pre-determined societal discursive ideas.

4.4. The Affective Turn

There are different ways of framing and understanding society and identity formation processes. My study can be situated in the affective turn. This means that it looks at the social world as being mediated by feelings and bodily senses instead of solely shaped through discourse and language (Vacchelli 2018: 23).

More particularly, Affect studies see bodies and social activities as combining, assembling, articulating and shifting into new formations of being and being understood in the moment (Wetherell 2013: 350f). In other words, there are social processes that are working upon, through, within and between bodies which influence interactions, encounters, identities and societies at large. Affect theory looks at the ways in which the body is re/assembling and re/assembled in these processes as well as how these processes are equally re/assembling and re/assembled through bodily activities (actions, thoughts and feelings) in a specific moment.

Affect has been conceptualized and taken on in different ways by various scholars since the mid-1990s. In the beginning of the affective turn social researchers were however dedicated to focusing solely on questions of embodiment by ignoring discursive aspects. Influential scholars like Massumi and Thrift were working on isolating the affective from other embodied spheres, namely language, in order to offer counter scholarship to the discursive tradition that strictly neglected bodily spheres when exploring social realities (Wetherell 2013). The discursive tradition contributed to the
body being marginalized in social sciences, marking the body as a superfluous, independent, unaffected sphere while framing embodied experiences as narratives. As a response to this, Massumi and Thrift found it crucial to question the discursive tradition through developing an affective approach that is equally ignorantly or radically neglecting discursive aspects in affect (Wetherell 2013).

Now, Affect studies are however developing in a direction where the affective and the discursive are being thought together. Wetherell (2013: 353) in the following describes the importance of considering affective and discursive understandings: “[T]he turn to affect opens up crucial questions about meaning-making practices, the articulation of the somatic with these, and issues about how the speaking subject makes sense of and communicates affect.”

My thesis can be placed in line with scholarship that tries to acknowledge and analyze the ways in which the affective and the discursive are entangled. My thesis is thus dedicated to investigating dimensions that occur and play out “beyond, below and past” (Wetherell 2013: 350) as well as in relation to discourse.

4.5. Queer Phenomenology

In line with affect theory, queer phenomenology (Ahmed 2006) allows bodies and societal structures to be seen as entangled and co-creating social reality and identity. Bodies move in social spaces, yet these “spaces are not exterior to bodies”, they “instead [...] are like a second skin that unfolds in the folds of the body” (Ahmed 2006: 9). Bodies move along the boundaries of these spaces, along norms. These boundaries build “dimensions” in which bodies are (being) positioned, regulated, straightened out – to reinscribe the normative social order.

This means that the body and societal spaces are sharing boundaries which are “alive”, which are set in place but also bendable, moveable and negotiable. These boundaries come into existence through emotions. Emotions work as glue in social spaces between bodies and are binding subjects together, thereby re/creating dimensions and boundaries (Ahmed 2004: 119). Ahmed (2004: 117) hereby emphasizes that "emotions are not simply "within" or "without" [bodies] but that they create the very effect of the surfaces or boundaries of bodies and worlds.” She sees emotions as implicated in the re/creation of boundaries and social spaces to which bodies are assigned. The differentiation of emotions and feelings is not a stark one. Feelings can be seen as subjective patterns which become norms and form structural emotions over time, together forming a path along which bodies can feel and experience affective, bodily reactions (Wetherell 2013 :14). Emotions and affect are in this sense “cultural scripts of feelings”7 which are constantly re/producing each other.8

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7 I am indebted to Anna Bredström for this formulation.
8 Regarding the subsequent analysis, it should be mentioned that I will later refer to the role of emotions in re/creating
For Ahmed (2006) the entanglement of identity and society is perceivable through “moments of dis/orientation” in which the body can see, feel and “switch” the dimensions that separate the normative from the non-normative. In these moments the body gets objectified through the white gaze, the heterosexual gaze, the male gaze with the aim of being put in place, in an “upright” position. In the process of dis/orientation, the body is being queer/ed and becoming an object which is being perceived as “out of place” (Ahmed 2006: 159). Being perceived as “out of place” can disorientate the one being perceived but also the one perceiving. The perceived becomes the point of disorientation for the perceiver when the perceived is not expected to be there or not expected to exist in this way (Ahmed 2006: 160). These moments of feeling disorientation can play out in various ways. They can feel “unsettling” and destabilizing or give a feeling of “hope” and show paths of “new directions”. They can also be accompanied by quite “ordinary” feelings that come and go as bodies move through the day (Ahmed 2006: 157, 158).

To disrupt the social order of things, to break with the norms of the white patriarchal heteronormative world thus means to queer things (Ahmed 2006: 160f.). In this sense, “[q]ueer becomes a matter of how things appear, how they gather, how they perform, to create the edges of spaces and worlds” (Ahmed 2006: 167). Queering occurs in moments of re-orientation. This re-orientation happens when objects are encountered as “strange things” and through this moment re-arranged from being a “specific way” to being another way – queer. This moment of re-orientation gives space for changing the story and path of this object – the queer/ed being. ‘Queer phenomenology’ in this sense describes objects being brought to life, being brought to movement through being questioned in a moment of re-orientation that involves disorientation and the object’s “loss of place” (Ahmed 2006).

When studying Ahmed’s approach, I myself was accompanied by feelings of re/orientation. I had the feeling that her affective approach to social and bodily materializations of power relations is not only expressed through what she writes but through how she writes. The words on the pages were “dancing”, they made me smile or frown, they appeared in one way and then turned to mean something else. When reading her words, they did not seem fixed. Her words affected me as a reader in the sense that I could experience them and feel their ambiguous meanings. Reading turned into an experience that made me feel and see things. Ahmed’s words were opening up perspectives in me and then twisting these perspectives in an instance later. This is what she writes, dis/orientation does and queer phenomenology is meant to do.

affective boundaries through using both the words “emotion” and “feeling”, while acknowledging the difference in their theoretical definitions.
4.6. Contrasting the Affective Turn

It seems that Ahmed and Butler have differing approaches to how identities and societies are shaped.

When for Ahmed the bodily as such and the body as an object cutting across spaces is central for how norms materialize in and through the affected or affecting body, for Butler the bodily in relation to discourse is central. For Ahmed there are unspeakable or often unspoken feelings of dis/orientation that she considers to be shaping social interaction and spaces, while Butler sees boundaries as linguistically signified. Butler’s (2011: XVII, laid out in 4.3.) example of the ‘girl’ that is born and immediately (linguistically, legally and as a consequence socially) identified/defined as a girl due to her female genitalia, shows this. The girl is based on her biological sex mandated to ‘become’ a girl due to the word ‘she’. When for Butler orientation happens through the repetitive performance of social norms that are pre-determined by discourses and state apparatuses, for Ahmed it happens between bodies within spaces, through gestures, movements, gazes and feelings.

I would say that norms work in “a performative fashion to materialize [and regulate] the body” (Butler 2011: XII) as well as in an “affective” (Ahmed) way to materialize difference and hierarchy, to differentiate bodies.

Materialization, as Butler (2011) argues, is a process which demarcates boundaries through the “reiteration of norms”. This shows that materialization is “never quite complete” but always ongoing and in motion. It is in this process of reiteration that bodies have space to also destabilize the regulatory framework and go against the materialization of norms through questioning the hegemonic forces that re/create these boundaries. This allows them to – in Ahmed’s (2006) words – “reorientate” themselves.

When reading what I think is Ahmed’s (2006) interpretation of the constitutive notion of exclusion that Butler describes, she frames the body in her writing as being actively inclined and involved in the process of re-orientation, even though moments of exclusion or judgment are forcing the object to re-negotiate its orientation and switch positions and perspectives. I think this is important to highlight, for bodies who are excluded or queer/ed are still bodies who take an active part in the re-orientation of who they are and want to be.

Queer phenomenology frames the body as being engaged in feelings and experiences of “disorientation”. Ahmed (2006) speaks of the world as consisting of different dimensions separated/connected by skins or boundaries that form spaces we are living in, living with and living through. Butler (2011: VIII) puts this as follows: “[B]odies tend to indicate a world beyond themselves, [...] this movement beyond their own boundaries, a movement of boundary itself, appear[s] to be quite central to what bodies ‘are’.”

I would argue that Ahmed agrees to Butler’s (2011: IX) perspective that “relations of power [...] not only produce but also regulate bodily beings” through what Butler (2011) calls “normative
constraints” and Ahmed (2006) calls “alignment”. They however as was laid out see these relations of power as playing out differently.

Through drawing on Ahmed’s (2006) and Butler’s (2011) theoretical work, I was trying to understand, “how experiences of disorientation shape the orientation of bodies and spaces[,] how orientations are organized [and] shape what becomes socially or bodily given [in other words: material]” (Ahmed 2006: 157, 158).

With bringing together Butler’s work on discourse and performativity and Ahmed’s work on affect and queer phenomenology, I was also trying to bridge academic scholarship on affect and discourse. I myself have initially been academically trained in discourse studies, realizing that “[m]any areas of discursive research are not well suited to either notice or investigate embodiment” (Wetherell 2013: 353). I realized that a sheer focus on text, language and discourse neglects to see the central dimension in human sociality of how discourse affects the body on a psychosociopolitical level. This realization has lead me towards a affect theory, soon seeing throughout the research process that the affective and the discursive are entangled with each other.

The subsequent chapter will give insights into the material created as part of the research process which might already hint towards the interrelation of language and affect in participants’ drawings.
5. Participants’ Body Maps

“We know things with our lives and we live that knowledge, beyond what any theory has yet theorized.”

Knowing things with one’s life means embodying knowledge, carrying knowledge through one’s body. Bodies are the spheres through which we perceive reality. Bodies are informing our understanding of the world and of each other (Vacchelli 2018: 22). The premise on which the body mapping workshops were grounded is that “an embodied experience of power provides the basis of knowledge” (Ahmed 2017: 10).

In group workshops of 3 - 5 people per group, participants were instructed to draw their bodies and social worlds onto a big sheet of paper. Throughout 4 hours, participants were engaging with questions of how they see themselves, what they represent to others and how this has shaped their feelings of non/belonging in Sweden by being guided through various drawing and writing tasks. The aim of these workshops being that participants create so-called body maps (accompanied by written and oral reflections) representing multiple aspects of their embodied experiences in regard to their positionality in society. Details on the workshop outline and tasks can be found in chapter 3.3.

Photos of the body maps that participants created will be presented in the following. To introduce each participant, I also added quotes of ‘messages for society’ which participants came up with throughout the workshop. Showing the body maps as a whole before going into concrete details in the subsequent analysis chapter serves the purpose of displaying the drawings as such without giving further reflections around them. This is an ethical decision that aims to present participants’ drawings as they ‘are’ and should allow each viewer to see what they want to see in the images following on the next eight pages.

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10 One photograph of a participant’s body map shown on page 38 (Figure 4) excludes certain details of the participant’s drawing to ensure the anonymity of the participant.
Figure 1

"Live and let live."
Delfina:

Figure 2

“Fuck society. Change comes from within.”
Emelie:

*Figure 3*

"Stop, Feel, Think. Because that’s a way to start sort of."

""
“Understand why, understand how.”
Ines:
Figure 5

“Break isolation, it is only fake. We think we need that but it is not good for us.”
Amanda: Figure 6
"What others think is not that important."
""
Lisa:
Figure 7

“Look upon each other with kindness and love - because if you do, it is harder to judge.”
“Let me grow.”
6. Analysis

The material created by participants will in this chapter be re-narrated analytically through my lens as a researcher by connecting it to my observations, my reflections and the frameworks of queer feminist, intersectional and critical race theory.

The analysis is arranged in three main parts. In the first part, I elaborate how participants were negotiating their space, place and belonging in their lives in relation to various intersecting power notions. It will be looked into the ways in which participants have visually and verbally expressed these. The second part addresses how and why participants have experienced moments of dis/orientation in their lives. Relating these to certain feelings and emotions which have affected and were affecting these moments. The third part focuses on the ways participants were transgressing social norms in their lives or data creation process and how body mapping allowed them to do this.

The analysis will refer to the body maps that were presented in the previous chapter “Participants’ body maps”. Some parts of the analysis are accompanied by pictures of details of the body maps, while at other parts of the analysis it might be necessary to go back to the images shown in the previous chapter to be able to follow in detail.

6.1. Negotiating Space, Place and Belonging

6.1.1 Home is where the house is?

The connection of race, nation, gender in relation to feeling home (cf. Collins 1998, 4.1.1.) got visible through the drawing and reflection process with participants. One participant, Martin, chose to use the same visual representation for describing ‘Swedishness’ as well as ‘belonging’ giving expression to his national Swedish identity and feeling of belonging to Sweden. He drew (Figure 9) a red house, a road, some trees and people, placing it on the body map where his heart is. This visualization represents home for him because Sweden is his home, represented by the house. The symbols which Martin used to represent his sense of belonging to Sweden are what he calls “stereotypical” representations of Swedish national identity. Pointing out that they are stereotypical might hint to Martin’s awareness of the congruence between his social identity and Swedish national identity. He shared:

I grew up here, I have lived in [this town] here my entire life, where my father lived his entire life, where my grandfather lived his entire life.
I did a DNA test with national geographic channel and they said that my ancestral line has

Figure 9 Detail of Martin’s body map
been not only in Sweden but in the Östergötland region for the last 10,000 years since the ice age. [...] So I am very much part of the norm. [...] This might not be forever. I might not always fit in that city. I think it’s changing. It can change. Depending on how society changes as well, so I might not fit in as much.

Martin fully identified as Swedish, relating his sense of belonging to biological and ancestral understandings. He explains that he very much fits into the idea/l of who a “Swede” is imagined to be. It seems that he is aware of the connection between his positionality in Sweden and the national(ist) myths of who a “Swede” is imagined to be.

Lisa mentioned that she found it “really difficult” to think about Swedishness and belonging because she does not see a “typical Swedishness”. She added: “I drew a house and a Swedish flag because I consider myself Swedish because I live in Sweden and think I am Swedish.” She also brought up the concept of birth right through which she wanted to question biological understandings of nationhood and belonging. Regarding the symbol of the house she explained that it was the house, where she lives. This adds a layer of banality to the question of national belonging through which she might have aimed at distancing herself from the national image of Sweden. Yet she also used the national image of the flag to represent her subjective feeling of being home in Sweden (see Figure 10 above).

Another participant, Amanda drew a house, snow and a broken heart (see Figure 11 to the right) to express her relation to what ‘is’ Swedish or is supposed to be Swedish. The broken heart could be seen as a symbol for wanting to resist essentialist categorizations of “Swedishness” and wanting to break the norm of being silent or holding back emotions. She explained:

It is hard to say, what is typical because I feel like I am just making stuff up or I am saying what I am supposed to say. I drew snow because this was the first thing I thought of because it also represented like coldness or distance because it is kind of easy to isolate [yourself in Sweden], I have experienced that. [...] I feel like I don’t know what is connected to Swedish society or how I grew up because I haven’t been much in other countries than Sweden so I have nothing to compare with. But I think it is kind of Swedish from what I have heard that [...] the emotions are small or should be contained. [...] That’s why the heart is broken as well. [A lot of Swedish people] don’t say anything. I feel like that happens to you too when you are like in that kind of [environment], you also get quiet.

Amanda’s example shows the discrepancy between the myth of national identity and the reality of social identity. She was acknowledging this discrepancy through trying to take a broader perspective
when thinking about what is Swedish. She was trying to look onto the country through an outside perspective more distant from her actual life or experiences. This shows that ideas about nations and what it means to be national are constructed and that these constructions and ideas are imposed onto people.

The mechanism of imposing national/ist ideas is something another participant speaks about. Emelie addresses the right-wing populist agenda of instrumentalizing images of Swedishness and says that the Sweden Democrats, Sweden’s right-wing populist party, are “lying” about Swedishness. What she might want to say with this is that the Sweden Democrats are using the idea of a homogenous and traditional Sweden for their political agenda of exclusion. (cf. Calhoun 207: 111, 4.1.)

Relating hereto, Fiona expressed Swedishness through drawing the national symbol of the maypole, saying that it for her represents “protected” Swedishness. Fiona’s drawing (Figure 12) shows the maypole entangled with a silver fence, a fence which seems to be guarding the national symbol and trying to secure the Swedish national identity as if the fence was protecting the Swedish nation. The word “anger” written on her arm might hint towards how negotiations of national belonging make her feel.

The symbol of the maypole (Figure 12) as well as the symbol of the red Swedish house (Figure 9, p.42) are part of what Emelie calls the “illusion about Swedishness” which she expressed through drawing two eyes (Figure 13). Emelie said:

I think they [Sweden Democrats] are sort of right now representing this illusion about Swedishness and what it is, red houses and flags and midsummer. [...] So I drew an eye, a closed eye because people are not seeing things or denying things. Even the ones who think of themselves like they understand and see things, they often don’t. [...] People think they don’t have prejudice but they do because it is so indoctrinated. I have been affected by this throughout my life also. It’s not like I am standing outside of it but I have been open kind of person that has to deal with what it means and learn from those thoughts and reflections. [...] When you grow up, you are like ‘this is the world around me’ but when you grow up it get’s wider but for some people it doesn’t.

Emelie speaks to a crucial aspect of nation-building processes which is the aspect of state apparatuses (Althusser 2001, see 4.1.) and the role that state institutions play in teaching certain ideas and understandings of the world according to normative national agendas.

What got clear from the presented material in this subchapter is that
participants were being aware of these normative and national ideas and symbols, and at the same time re/producing them to describe their sense of belonging to Sweden. Participants were reflecting on the normative or stereotypical ideas of Sweden, their ideas of Sweden, their ideas of themselves and how these stand in relation to power. Negotiating this contested sphere within the workshop has created feelings of unease for some of them. Several participants were trying to deconstruct the typical national ideas around Sweden by using the symbols of the home to do it. They used the house as a banal signifier for self-evident belonging, trying to relativize the congruence of their social and national identity through the symbol of the house. This dynamic exemplifies the dilemma between what people identify with as being their social or national identity and what gets instrumentalized for political agendas. It showed that the identification with images of Swedishness might be a contested act in which it is not clear what one is ‘allowed’ or able to perceive as Swedish without the perpetuation of power and exclusion mechanisms. It showed that race, nation and gender are together informing national as well as social identities defined through constructed normative unitary understandings of who belongs or not or what it means to belong.

6.1.2. Race to ‘the other’

Race as a marker for belonging was negotiated by participants through thoughts on racial categorization and notions of colorblindness. Participants gave insights into the role race plays for their self-images and society.

One participant shared: “[W]hite to me is a skin color, it’s not an ethnicity, it’s a label on me because it’s my skin color. It brings me privilege because of my skin color. I have privilege, I acknowledge that but it is not an ethnicity, it is not race.” The participant went on explaining that they chose not to acknowledge race because it is connected to “historical baggage” and said:

Groups often become exclusionary and I don’t want that. I like putting myself in boxes, I am fine with putting myself in boxes but when I start putting other people in boxes or when I maybe tell people about the boxes that I put them in, then they become exclusionary. So, and I don’t like that, so it makes me uncomfortable very much so... Swedishness or anything like that...if there is a racial or ethnic part to being Swedish, I dislike that. But I never took that conversation also because I was too afraid of it. And it was when I took that conversation that I realized it was more about a feeling and Swedish is just a nationality, it is not an ethnic...ethnicity, it’s not race, it’s not, it is just holding a passport and feeling at home basically...it’s a beaurocratic term, in my view...

This participant shared that race is a category that makes them uncomfortable, a category which they prefer to not pay attention to as a factor for in/exclusion. I am not sure if the participant has difficulty with the word ‘race’ itself, or with acknowledging that people are different and hence differently positioned in society which creates different experiences of in/exclusion or discrimination. It can be
said at this point that the Swedish language, as Safar mentions also complicates the discourse on race:

I mean Swedish language is very limited. We have a word in Swedish which means “dark-skinned”. I know that a lot of black people don’t want to use that word. [...] So, it’s like...we have a culture which is, a lot of people are afraid of conflicts and the language is limited, so it is not a good combination to start discussing race.

The tendency to talk around race, address it in relation to ‘the other’ or not address it is, as Safar says, a result of and condition for having a limited linguistic repertoire that does not allow racial in/exclusion to be addressed.

Another participant voiced thoughts around categorization which also had a colorblinding notion. Lisa shared:

I don’t want people to categorize me in any way. I want to be able to do it myself and I think that should be free for anyone. So I categorize myself as Swedish even though I am half English. But I don’t think I am Swedish because I was born here. I just, it’s what I want to call myself right now, so I should be allowed. [...] [I]f I want to live in Sweden now and I want to call myself English or something else or Marsian, people shouldn’t tell me ‘no’. [...] It’s just where I live.

Lisa equally says that she does not want to put anyone into categories, that she is fine with putting herself into categories but not others. Both, Lisa and the first participant cited above are emphasizing their personal choice of identification in regard to race.

While the two previous examples show that participants prefer to not pay much attention to ‘race’ as a social stratifier, the following examples will show that participants mostly addressed ‘race’ in relation to ‘the other’ who is imagined not to belong, and not so much in relation to themselves.

Safar explained that she is “not comfortable with talking about [race]”. “I know it is important for some people because they haven’t been privileged because of their race. But I don’t really know in my case how to relate to that.” She is, in this instance, framing race as something that relates to someone else, not to her and thereby maybe trying to avoid to talk about her experiences of racialization in Sweden.

Throughout the workshop, Safar has shared that she was granted asylum in Sweden as a child and has felt “svart & svår” (black/dark and difficult) in the country. Safar uses the word “sexracism” to describe her feeling of being racialized and judged according to gender norms as – how I think she sees herself but she has not explicitly said - a white female Persian body in Sweden. Safar felt categorized as different legally, socially and physically in Sweden due to being associated with a specific “ethnic group”, “religion”, “family situation” and “sexual orientation”. She however says that she is “flexible socially.” She points to her “middle-class” position, education level and
knowledge of languages which allow her to navigate discrimination she is experiencing in Sweden.

The importance of certain resources such as language and education to navigate (structural) vulnerability was also mentioned by Ahlstedt (2016, see 3.2.). Jonsson’s research (2018, see 2.2.2.) equally gave an example of how teenagers are using language to play with national images of the normative Swede or immigrant and thereby playfully resisting discrimination. Their example as well as Safar’s example show that vulnerability is negotiable, while structural vulnerability asks for certain resources to overcome it.

The way Martin has approached thinking about Swedishness was also connected to ‘the other’. He shared:

Sweden is my home and if it is yours then you are Swedish to me. That is what it is for me. [...] If you step off the plane in Arlanda and you feel like you returned to home, then you are Swedish to me. That is what it is. Sweden is a home and it is your home, then you are Swedish.

These mechanisms of addressing race or questions of belonging in relation to ‘the other’ or disregarding them entirely can be result of participants’ positionalities which allow them to pay less attention to certain social stratifiers or navigate the consequences of them.

It should nevertheless be mentioned that disregarding race as a central power-related difference between people which are impacting on people’s experiences in society can have wide-reaching societal effects. Language (as was mentioned before) as well as public and academic discourse play a role in this regard. Lundström and Hübinette (cf. 2011: 44) give the example of official Swedish statistics which do not differentiate between people via self-defined ethnicity, but only between Swedes (or “Swedish background”) and immigrants (“foreign background”) leading to the loss of knowledge on structural positionality in regard to race. As a result, the talk about structural differences and related discrimination in regard to race might become blocked and blurry, according to the motto: if there is nothing to see, there is nothing to talk about.

Generally, it can be mentioned at this point that I observed the atmosphere in the room having become less relaxed when the discussion circled around racism or race. How body mapping also allowed to address feelings in relation to race and racism as well as gendered racism and sexism will be elaborated in chapter 6.2.1.

6.1.3. Distancing from racism

When participants were speaking about racism in Sweden, they at the same time distanced themselves from it through referring to ‘the others who are racist’. Distancing themselves from racism might have served as a strategy of trying to talk outside of the national discourse of homogenous identity
on the one, and multiculturalism on the other hand.

An example of this is when Lisa spoke about how racism is visible for her in Sweden:

All I have to do is, go on the tram and hear people talking. And walk along the streets and you see someone begging for money. And people go, ‘It’s a rysska [a Russian woman]...you know, they are like a group and they drive fancy cars’. You hear this kind of crap all the time. Just growing up, 20 years ago in [a small town in Sweden], there was always a huge divide and the whiter you were, the better you were basically. I mean, I grew up with an immigrant dad but he was from England so I was called multicultural, you know, I benefitted from it. But my friend whose parents came from Turkey didn’t benefit from it at all because she wasn’t from a cool country. And it hasn’t gotten much better.

Lisa addresses different issues here, she first of all frames racism as something she is witnessing which at the same time contributes to distancing herself from racism. Lisa’s example shows that being judged or “being labeled” (Vacchelli 2018: 59) according to which country one is associated with is interconnected with race, class, gender and other power notions. Lisa gives an account on how racialization, class and geo-political hierarchies due to colonization efforts connected to whiteness and imperialism shape the way in which people who are associated with countries such as England or Turkey are seen and treated. Lisa pinpoints to the discrepancy of national/ist myths and societal realities. She uses the words “cool country” to describe that Britain is positioned in a specific way geo-politically. What her words speak to is that underneath the descriptor “cool” and the idea of multicultural lie notions of unitary race, unitary class, unitary language, unitary nation (Calhoun 2007, see 4.1.).

Emelie also shares stories of racism she has witnessed being performed by acquaintances describing her acquaintances as “being more suspicious towards a person of color than towards a white person....” She said:

I am from Northern Sweden and I grew up in a village where everyone was White, there were one or two people who were black and adopted, one of them was my friend. [...] It’s a racist society I think because people are judgmental and how they use words, some words that is like racist but we have always called it like that, like the n-word. People are stubborn [with] nuances in the language and I also know that people I grew up with, I have not seen them in like 15 years but I know that they are [racist]. I have seen two of them walking out of the election last year, seeing that they had SD [Sweden’s right-wing party] t-shirts and things like that. So I know, like one of my old classmates, when he was describing that he saw an unknown car in the village where I grew up, he was noticing and described the person as, ‘It is a Mohammad that is here.’.

Emelie is pointing out racism she has witnessed being performed where she grew up. She speaks about the role of language and politics in perpetuating racist ideology. While she positioned herself as an ally in black people’s struggles through being friends with one black child in her village, she at the same time distanced herself from the others in the village who are not friends with black people.
or who are racist towards other groups in society.

Going on a macro-perspective and approaching the mechanism of distancing from racism through a national lens allows a connection to the nation-building narrative of Sweden as an anti-racist and multicultural nation. The assumption that Sweden is an anti-racist nation politically and socially is widely believed world-wide and summed up under the expression “Swedish exceptionalism” (see 2.2.3.). It should just be mentioned on the side that multiculturalism is a concept which defines cultures as closed entities, meeting but not merging, only existing next to each other. It should however be emphasized that Sweden’s image of an anti-racist nation allows its inhabitants to re/construct themselves as anti-racist, thereby re-establishing a white anti-racist national (self)image (Berg, Carbin 2018: 123) which might accord to some but mostly serves as a shield behind which racist acts and are hidden and (the conversation on) race made invisible. Distancing oneself from racism could through this lens be seen as a societal demand directed towards persons who are recognized as having a certain structural position in Swedish society. This societal demand would in the case of Sweden mean to in any case (at least seemingly) “distance” oneself from racism through various strategies with the aim of being seen as “anti-racist”. An example of how this became apparent in the case of a feminist anti-racist protest which turned out to be not as anti-racist as intended was given in chapter 2.2.3.

The examples of the two participants given in this chapter show that both participants were critiquing the dynamics through which Sweden as a nation and culture is re/establishing white hegemony through distancing themselves from it. Their examples showed how difficult it is to speak outside of the discourse of the nation and to transgress the workings of power which are re/established as long as paradigms such as modernism and nationalism are not tackled systemically.

6.1.4. Hairy and gendered positioning

Norms of gender make people re/position themselves in social contexts. While gender is not the only power structure which shapes experiences of identity and belonging, this section will center on it because it was lying at the core of the experiences the participants cited in this section shared. The act of re/positioning can be hairy as the following example of Fiona will show. Fiona voiced how having body hair as a woman was creating frustration for her because she experienced not being accepted for who she is or choses to present herself.

[People] automatically think that people actually want to say something about themselves, just by being a body, and I don’t think this is fair actually. Because I can’t chose [how I look]...I mean, I can chose to remove it [my body hair for example] but that [then] says more about me than anything else...actually. Then, it says, I am conforming, I am giving up, I am giving in. Because, yeah, [I could feel] like I care or I don’t care or that I am comfortable in my body. How can anybody be comfortable in their own bodies in society? You can’t.
Because everything that people say is that you are wrong or that you should change anything to fit more into the norms. [...] [N]orms function [as] guidelines and people will show you that you are not right, by looks, by comments, by avoidance or shame is what you will feel and that will make you go into the direction that is the easiest...

Her example gives insight into the ways in which she feels that norms are asking her to re/position herself in relation to her gender performance. She sees her hair as a central marker for this negotiation. Fiona speaks not only about a normative social order which de/legitimizes certain ways of identity expression over others, she also links it to affective motors such as the feeling of shame. Section 6.2. will speak more to the affective textures of social boundaries.

In relation to hair, masculinity and gender norms, Martin shared that he chooses to conform to certain gendered body norms in order to be liberated from performing masculinity in other ways.

[My beard] is one of the things that I have constantly since I was 18, since a very long time. And in a way, it represents manliness. It’s a thing that from society’s way, it is considered very manly to have a beard. I think for me at least, the irony is that it frees me from manliness in a way. Since I wear it [manliness] on my face, I don’t feel the need to express it in my behavior or in how I am. I can be feminine if I want, because no one will doubt my masculinity since I have a beard – so to speak.

Martin’s example shows that the bodily or social features that others read into his body make him feel liberated from norms of masculinized behavior through his beard as a marker of masculinity. A beard is however read differently depending on who wears it. The intersections of nation, race, class and gender play an important role in that regard. Martin also shared how he sees his body as a more neutral sphere that happens to be in social spaces. Martin chose to draw “a normal body posture” and explained:

I chose the shape as [it is], I like the simplicity of it. I felt that if I just lay straight, it is like a tabula rasa, you know, it’s a clean slate and then I can put my feelings onto that. [...] My face [for me] is my most defining feature of my body. [...] That part is me – the rest is my body.

With this he hints towards seeing his body as not that central in negotiating his position in society. Martin through the example of his hair however acknowledged that how he presents his body to the world does matter in how he is perceived and what this allows him to do.

Fiona describes the act of negotiating one’s position in society as an act of “balancing”. Her body map (see whole body map, Figure 1, p.34) shows her standing on one foot, the second foot resting on the other leg, her hands directed upwards. She explains the choice of her body posture on the body map as follows: “I chose the posture because it [stands for] ‘balancing’. And that it [life] is mostly a balance act, especially between society and yourself.” Fiona has explained this connection
between what others see in her and how it affects how she sees herself quite specifically. She said:

[T]he features that [I chose to draw to represent my body or who I am] were those that other people noticed and have expressed to me. So I haven’t chosen for myself, I have actually chosen what people have expressed to me – that’s the first thing that came to mind. And I didn’t criticize that, or when I started answering why...that’s because people point these out to me. ‘You changed your hair, you changed your glasses, you changed your color of this, you have long hair on your legs, you have long hair under your arms!’ I mean, these things do not define me and these are not who I am as a person but that’s the things I chose [to draw here] without reflecting why.

Fiona describes her body and social identity as entangled in an act of balancing who she wants to be and who society wants her to be or sees her as. While Fiona says that what others see in her does not define her, she at the same time acknowledges how who she is, is connected to how someone else sees her.

Delfina drew the same body posture as Fiona and added some writing in various colors around it. It is interesting to see that both participants drew the same body posture even though they have not been in the same workshop group. Delfina explains the process and choice of coming up with this particular body posture as follows:

“What I was thinking of is that, I don’t, at least today, I don’t care about my body. So, I was trying to express that it is changing all the time. So, yeah, [I chose] this position but it doesn’t matter and in a way it’s different. [I also wrote down] ‘change’, ‘movement’. [...] I was feeling free from....like one month ago, I would have drawn I am fat or something like this but it depends on the mood – but today, I didn’t feel like that, so I was feeling like this: ‘What the hell, it’s cool, it’s colorful.’”

Another aspect that I observed in the drawings was that the female participants wrote feelings/emotions on their body maps, placing words describing their feelings of being judged or discriminated against directly on their skin, around their skin, in their body, on their body (see whole body maps, p.34ff.). This can be an indicator for the reality that female participants perceive their bodies as a site for the negotiation of societal norms.

It is important to mention at this point that gender is always racialized and classed and does not function on its own. The experiences of balancing one’s gender performance includes more or less frictions due to various intersecting power dimensions. Mechanisms of inclusion/exclusion do not unfold along clear-cut normative lines but are relative expressions of interlocking systems of oppression which create various experiences of inclusion/exclusion in regard to for example gender performance for people differently located in society (cf. Crenshaw 1991, see 4.2.). The next example will show the intersectional workings of power relations more clearly.
Emelie hints towards the reality of her being strongly measured in line with societal norms of gender, age and functionality by voicing her frustration around it. She shares: “[I]t is just me, don’t categorize me and just see me as who I am.” She has explained how her interest in video games and playing the bass guitar is read as not female and how she is not seen as herself regardless of social norms or social context but seen as a “daughter”, as a “girl”, as her “brother’s little sister” or as not being “capable of leading”. She expresses this in her body map through drawing a crying eye, an arrow pointing downwards and a stereotypical representation of a little figure that wears a skirt in pink color (Figure 14). The crying eye that she drew can be connected to the social norm of not showing emotions in society. She was sharing that she felt people were not seeing her as “capable of leading” the group in a school project because some of her colleagues saw her cry once. Norms of gender, age and functionality together produce her experience.

Emotions are also central in the next example. Lisa shared that she sees her body as representing her role of being a mother. Lisa says: “I have my hands cradling my belly because I carry so much stored in there. I also carried my child in there.” She connects the experience of (her role of) being a mother, of “looking after” to her belly. This shows that she experiences her body as entangled with mothering emotions and her role as a mother which is connected to societal norms.

Through the three previous examples, I do not want to re/construct the feminized/racialized as being closer to the body, to bodily experiences and feelings, but rather want to show how social constructions can be internalized and become experiences as well as normative ideas mutually re/enforcing each other.

It can be summed up that the female participants cited in this section saw their bodies in relation to gender performance as strongly intertwined with society. The male participant saw his body as a more neutral sphere. All have voiced experiences of negotiating gender norms. For some this was connected to having body hair as a woman, to being seen as “incapable” or “little”, to being a mother or to being allowed to behave more “feminine” as a man.

In the example that Emelie gave, norms of gender, age and functionality were present. Other participants’ narratives cited in this section did not allow to see interconnections of power dimensions impacting their negotiation of gender performance in negative ways. The intersectional workings of power will however become clearer in other parts of the analysis (f.i. 6.1.5. and 6.2.1.).
6.1.5. When the body is told not to fit

Bodies are measured according to normative societal idea/ls in relation to their functionality. The following section will show how non/normative bodies are affecting and affected by non/normative ideas around functionality, appearance and well-being. Participants were expressing to what extent their body fits into normative idea/ls of bodily ability and bodily appearance in regard to various intersecting power dimensions and which consequences this had/has for them.

Lisa says that her body gets judged due to several reasons relating to norms of class and well-being. She shared:

It [my body] is both fat and it doesn’t work very well. Partly because of my mental health issues and not being able to work and in the circles I have been moving around, that has been very looked down upon. You know, you have to be a good member of society, you have to be able to pay a lot of taxes, buy the newest car. So I never really felt like I fit in.

Lisa’s experience of a certain body shape and mental health issues sheds light onto a certain class norm according to which existence and well-being are measured in society.

Ines shares that she does not fulfill certain expectations or does not have certain skills that society requires of her.

I have to fight for being myself [...] I didn’t connect to so many people because I don’t feel connected to everyone, the society, the majority society because I haven’t grown up in that way. Sometimes it’s like it’s a power but it is difficult for me to handle sometimes because sometimes in the society you need things, skills but I don’t have so many of these. [...] For me it is like this society, when you always have this hierarchy thinking of status and the first thing people ask you is ‘what do you work with’, ‘how old are you’, ‘where do you come from’. [Some people] always start with these questions[]. They put you into these categories and then they are [deciding], how they are going to feel about you, how they are going to treat you and how they are going to have this relation with you, if you are worthy or not, this is how the majority society is.

Ines speaks of the importance of certain skills and bodily abilities in order to achieve socially and be included in a system which is based on hierarchies. She does not address which particular parts of her body and identity are perceived to not fit, she however says that being herself demands fighting for herself and being supported by friends.

Martin was voicing that he feels judged when he does not “have the ability to fulfill the expectations that people have” of him or that he “think[s] people have” of him. For him this was connected to deciding to stop studying at university although he has grown up in “a middle-class family”. He connected the feeling of not meeting societal expectations to his class position which would require him to follow a certain path of education. Through his drawing he expressed having dyslexia, ADD and impatience. He himself did not specifically voice this, there could however be a
connection made between his functionality and his experiences of not fulfilling class and education norms.

Safar shared in her notes that the shape of her nose, her body shape, body hair and hairline are amongst the bodily features that she “had a hard time accepting in a Swedish context”. These experiences for her resulted in having “bodydismorphia” which she is dealing with since her childhood. In relation to her bodily appearance she also makes a connection to her age, gender and sexual identity. She elaborated that she is perceived to be younger than she actually is and that this has impacted other’s perception of her gender and sexual identity. She says that her identity is “not clearly identifiable” and “complicated” for others. Safar’s well-being is entangled with her body and societal norms of race, nation, gender, sexuality and age.

Safar’s description of not being clearly identifiable in regard to race and nation by people in Sweden reminds me of experiences of racialization that a participant in Ahlstedt’s dissertation (see 2.2.4.) addressed. This participant was voicing similar experiences of not being able to be placed by people in Sweden due to her non-unitary national identity.

The drawings and notes of participants were giving information which hinted towards them having had experiences of not functioning, being perceived of not functioning or not being accommodated in societal frameworks due to normative ideas of bodily appearance or bodily ability in relation to class, race, nation, sexuality, age and gender. Even though not all participants mentioned which direct consequences this had for them, their contributions show how intersecting power relations, well-being and social in/exclusion are mutually re/constructing each other and how the body is involved in this negotiation.

6.2. Feelings of Dis/orientation

6.2.1. Gendered/racialized shame

Moments of dis/orientation are felt. The following section gives insights into the experiences of sexualization/racialization of two participants which was evoking gendered/racialized feelings of shame for them.

Safar shared that she was feeling ashamed because her bodily appearance was being judged according to racialized ideas of gender. She described the emotion of shame as follows:

[I]t’s the worst feeling I think. Because it is not guilt. I think you can do something about guilt, it’s something your acts are. What you do makes you feel guilt. But shame is connected to how you are, and how you are, can be defined by others and you can internalize that a lot. It’s the really victim-blaming [logic], you become a victim in your own thoughts, and it is terrible. I think that’s why shame is such a heavy emotion in this case for me.
Safar wrote the word ‘shame’ 17 times on her body map to express how heavy the feeling of shame is for her. She placed it around parts of her body where she has hair (see whole body map, Figure 8, p.42). She says: “A lot of times, I don’t feel like a human because I feel like I’m outside, like an alien or like an animal, looking from outside. So, my eyes are like animal eyes and my hair is pretty wide. And I have body hair. I tried to draw all of it. It’s very loaded for me.”

As got clear from the example above, hair (as was equally laid out in section 6.1.4.) functions as a marker for masculinity, difference and foreignness. Safar’s experience of shame can be seen as connected to being measured according to normative ideals of gender, class, nation and race. This has affected her experience as a racialized female body in society. In this regard she shared that she is used to not being accepted as she is in Sweden:

I decided really early that I wasn’t really feeling good about being in Sweden, I felt a lot like I was a burden to society. I still sometimes do but I am also ok with that because I know it’s just social construction anyway – being a burden. Because every human is a burden – to life. So, yeah, I don’t belong but it’s cool. [Smiling and laughing.]

Safar’s feeling of being a burden relates to experiences of discrimination she has dealt with at the intersection of race, class, nation and gender. Feeling shame can be seen as a result of how she is recognized as different in society. Her gendered feeling of shame is shaped by racism she experiences which literally affect her.

An experience from Amanda’s life shows how being read as someone she is not made her feel ashamed. Her experience shows how the emotion of shame was affecting and affected by her dis/orientating moment in which she has been mistaken as a sex worker by a men when she was going for a walk at night.

[I]t made me feel...ashamed. [...] I feel, I think I am sad because I didn’t want to like admit that I felt ashamed. Because for me it’s like, I don’t know, sometimes I am very hard on myself about how I am supposed to feel. I am supposed to feel maybe angry, well maybe I felt that too, I think. [I feel like] I shouldn’t feel ashamed because I could...like why would I be ashamed. I mean, it could have been anyone in that situation, I don’t know, I know why I feel ashamed, it is like a feeling your body is loaded with. And of course it is not that event but there is something that reminds you of [having been] judged in the same way in other situations. [...] It is like the old story about that it is your fault kind of thing and that’s I think where the shame comes in. Because I know that I am ashamed because it is something wrong that I have learnt and I should not feel ashamed.

From what Amanda has shared, it gets clear that she is questioning her feeling of shame. She acknowledges it as an emotion she has learnt to feel as someone being socialized as a woman in society, identifying it as a structural affective expression (cf. Ahlstedt 2016, 2.2.4.). She has not
pointed out what particularly made her feel ashamed. It gets clear however that her feeling is a consequence of her gendered positioning in society. One reason could be that she felt ashamed for being sexualized by a men. Another could be that she also felt ashamed for being read as a sex worker.

Sex work is in society widely associated with being morally wrong or being solely delivered out of force. Maybe Amanda’s feeling of shame was heightened because of the silence or stigma connected to sex work and highlighted by the fact that she was unknowingly taking a walk at a sex work area in town.

As was laid out before, gender norms are always also simultaneously racialized and classed. Seeing the emotion of shame through an intersectional lens allows to understand how Amanda’s emotion might have been a result of her structural positioning not only in terms of gender but also in terms of race and class. Amanda’s experience of feeling shame in this particular situation could be seen as connected to her positionality which might have made her not expect to be read as a sex worker and question the hierarchical assumptions regarding who a sex worker might be. Nevertheless, Amanda’s example shows that, according to norms or not-according to norms on a structural level, does not make dis/orientating moments less affective. Social norms become feelable in dis/orientating moments. This is where power structures are getting an affective meaning which is felt in numerous ways by various people.

Safar’s and Amanda’s experiences show how hierarchies within and between genders, races and nations within patriarchy are entangled with gendered/racialized feelings of shame evoked through sexualization/racialization.

### 6.2.2. Guilty passing

Passing was in this study identified as a concept which speaks to the relativity of power relations and norms depending on national, social and situational contexts. At the intersection of race, nation and gender, Delfina has had an experience as someone being a temporary resident in Sweden who has not experienced discrimination. She shared:

> It is not like I am getting people judging me all the time. I still have kind of a standard look: white and tall or whatever. Of course, if I go on the street, I don’t have as much ‘pffff’ that other people can have, I don’t know. Still I can even think I feel guilty that I am not strange enough in my look. I am [from Southern Europe] but still it is ok, and it is a good passport, it is ok. If you understand what I mean...

Delfina mentions feeling guilty for not being recognized as strange enough. Her guilt acts as an affective experience which makes her realize her positionality. She recognizes her position as someone who is read as a white, and I add, a cis-gendered, able-bodied woman in Sweden when she
is sharing this thought. Her example shows how the affective is part of societal, bodily experiences of dis/orientation. It shows that feelings structure the ways in which we experience societal realities – which are informing and informed by norms.

6.2.3. Unsafe passing

Fiona’s experience of passing as Swedish in certain spaces is connected to feeling unsafe. She speaks about feeling more Swedish (because she is recognized as more Swedish) in neighborhoods which are considered/constructed to be “non-Swedish” and says: “I don’t like this feeling. I know it is wrong, I am critiquing this feeling.” Fiona does not clearly mention what she means with “non-Swedish”. Her statement however speaks to segregation mechanisms which produce homogenous areas in which racial and/or national and/or class homogeneity prevail (Collins 1998, see 4.1.1.). Fiona also points to segregation and her feeling of unsafety through visually describing Swedishness in her drawing through the symbol of a fence (see Figure 12, p.44) which led to her reflections about her dis/orientating experience of feeling unsafe while being recognized as Swedish.

Fiona’s feeling of unsafety can be understood as the affective texture of the boundary which separates “Swedishness” from “non-Swedishness” for her. It is a feeling that Fiona has due to being in a specific space which is constructed as a contrast to normative Swedish society. Fiona is navigating her belonging between the “constitutive outside” (Butler 2011, see 4.1., 4.3.), the contrast of the norm and the norm. It is this contrast, this gap that allows her to experience to feel closer to the “mythical norm” (Audre Lorde 1987, see 4.6.). This experience for her is entangled with a feeling of fear for being not safe in specific spaces.

Fiona is someone who identifies as Swedish but is sometimes being placed or places herself outside of being Swedish. “I don’t have to wear Swedishness completely, I can actually take a step back from it – even though I feel totally Swedish but also I am not allowed to do that a hundred percent.” The metaphor “wearing” Swedishness that she uses to express her relation to Sweden is connected to the body. Swedishness becomes a coat that she choses to wear around her. Something external that becomes part of her. Something that she is coated in. A coat that surrounds her skin. Something that she can take off or put on. Her experience can tell us that to pass as Swedish or not is highly contextual, situational and relational (Eriksen 2010, see 4.1.). Fiona in this regard addresses her “fluidity between cultures”. She shares that she can sometimes chose as what she wants to pass and that if she does not pass, she does not experience harsh disadvantages from it.

I can be very much Swedish when I want to by talking more correct and behaving more ‘Swedish’. I think I do this when I want to be taken more seriously or when I notice someone has written me off as non-Swedish. At the same time I can slip into some kind of internationalism, especially when I'm not happy with how Swedish people are
behaving/acting/speaking... I use it to distinguish myself from the majority, and I do it proudly because there is satisfaction in knowing that I have a choice, Swedes don’t.

She emphasizes that not being recognized as Swedish is still something that she is navigating. This reminds me of a reflection laid out previously (Ahmed 2006, see 4.6.) in regard to feeling dis/oriented: a body which is dis/oriented, is still a body that is re/orientating itself. Fiona however also finds herself in situations where she feels the matter of choice of what to identify as gets denied from her through the emphasis on difference.

I pass for a Swedish person until they know my name. And then they go: ‘Oh, so, where are you from?’ ‘Well, I live in [Sweden].’ ‘No, no, where are you really from?’ So, that’s a harsh action from them that ‘I am Swedish, you are not. Where are you really from? You are not from here.’ So they position me outside of Sweden. That I have been here since I was 3 years old does not really matter, I am not Swedish. Then I really don’t feel like I belong that there is this need to take me outside this context and this happens a lot. But as long as I don’t say my name or they don’t know what my name is, I pass for a Swedish, a native.

Being recognized as Swedish as long as she does not reveal her name might be related to her position of being read in line with certain race, class, gender notions. Fiona deals with negotiating her position as “Swedish”/”non-Swedish” depending on the situation she is in and how much she is recognized as according to the national myths of unitarity and homogeneity. This is a process, as this section showed, which is sometimes accompanied by a feeling of unsafety for her.

The example of Fiona (and Delfina, see 6.2.2.) show that negotiations of identity and belonging are situational and relational while embedded in structural power relations. Their “Swedishness” gets measured according to normative idea/ls about what Swedishness ‘is’ depending on the context. Their examples show that bodies are re/aligned through the workings of emotions thereby re/creating bodily boundaries and societal spaces demarcated by boundaries (cf. Ahmed 2004, 2006, see 4.5.).
6.3. Transgression and Resistance (through Body Mapping)

6.3.1. Opposing “sexracism”

Safar’s body posture is a “power posture” that can be read as a response of resistance to her feeling of being othered in (Swedish) society. She shares: “My body posture is [full with] triangles. Triangles of power. But inside, [...] it’s a lot of shame and a lot of features that other people also have pointed out in a Swedish social context that it’s not fitting within the society’s norm or view of the female body or a body.” (see Figure 15). She is positioning herself in a way on the paper that aims at shifting power relations that she feels have negatively affected her well-being in Sweden at times. These power relations were affecting her in relation to her bodily and physical/social appearance and connected to experiences of sexualization/racialization (as was laid out in 6.1.2., 6.1.5., 6.2.1.). Safar’s drawing also shows the role of support through the symbol of the yellow hand on her shoulder which stands for “warmth”. The words “resilience” and “positive” hint to her power to resist. With her drawing, she is “taking up space” that she feels “was not given” to her in Swedish society. Body mapping in this sense allowed her to transgress “sexracism” in a creative way and share this process with the group.

6.3.2. Resisting through humor

Delfina humoristically expresses social pressure that she has internalized in her life through drawing two lizards, one whispering into her ear, the other sneakingly emerging from behind her back (see Figure 16 to the right). Delfina’s drawing is an example of how her visual expression can speak for itself without further explanations. Her drawing shows the feeling of “self-doubt” and the fear of being a “failure” which she is trying to deconstruct through humor to be able to take these feelings more lightly. She also drew a comic strip (Figure 17 to the left) which shows two women discussing whether or not the clothes they wear fit them. Through this, Delfina strived to deconstruct gendered body norms in a playful way.
Transgression through humor can also be found in Safar’s drawing. She has called humor a “defense mechanism” and described it as a tool of resistance to deal with being othered or excluded in society. You have to have humor “to stay alive”. Her drawing (Figure 19) shows the writing “Hihihihihih” surrounding her head. Her face looking serious. These two visual elements together with the writing “LET ME [GROW]” just above it convey an emotional impression of how discrimination has affected Safar. Safar furthermore chose to represent feelings of judgment and discrimination that she has experienced in her life through drawing eyes starring at her outside of her body underneath her feet (Figure 18). The position of the eyes can be read as a way of resisting these experiences. She is stepping on the eyes, to show that she is angry and trying not to care. She says: “In a lot of situations people [have taken] the freedom to say stuff about me, mostly about how I look. It makes me both angry and [gives me the feeling that it is] unnecessary to put energy into it, [this is why] it also makes me laugh about it.”

Another example of transgression through humor is connected to what Fiona has shared about her identity standing in relation to others. While Fiona says that she has chosen to draw features to represent herself which others have noticed on her, these are also features that she identifies with (elaborated in 6.1.4.). She is questioning this dynamic of “becoming what they think I am” but also problematizing what other people see in her through drawing a devil’s tail. (see Figure 20). She chose the symbol of the devil’s tail to represent having been judged as an “angry feminist” by men while at the same time identifying as one. This can be seen as an act of transgression through humor. The words “angry”, “strong”, “proud” around the devil’s tail give insights into the affective dimensions of her transgression process, as the picture (Figure 20) to the left shows.

Fiona also playfully resists norms through using her body. She speaks about how “show[ing] body hair as it is [has] almost become an act of activism” in society and that it should not matter if she wears it or not, because bodies are “just bodies” (see section 6.1.4). For Fiona, using her body as a way to transgress norms by having long hair or shaved hair or body hair where society would not expect her to have hair, can be seen as an act of not taking
the body so seriously and playing around with different ways of styling it. SAFAR HERETO SAYS: “It [hair] is very connected to identity, you can shape it or color it or you can actually adjust it to what you want to express. And if you don’t care, others will care for you... [she says with a sarcastic smile on her face].”

6.3.3. Resisting through not/drawing

Another defense mechanism that Amanda used in the workshop to represent her resistance to social pressure she feels in her life was to not visualize these feelings or situations of internalized social pressure. She says: “[W]hen I thought about judgment, I thought about me judging myself [...] I think that’s a big issue but I didn’t want to draw that because then the issue is me and it is so hard on myself again.” Amanda instead placed the sentence “What others think is not that important” on her body map underneath her foot which should represent resistance to judgment that she has felt in her life. (see whole body map, Figure 6, p.40). While for Amanda not-drawing has served as a tool for re/negotiating her self-image, for another participant it was drawing.

Lisa expressed that she was not happy with a specific part of her body outline that was traced by me as the researcher and shared how she was negotiating this through transforming this part of her body into something else through drawing. She says: “I thought my head looked a bit too small, so I made it bigger and then I decided to make something that would sort of stand for confusion, because that’s what’s going on in my brain and then I realized it sort of looked like a halo and I kind of liked it.” Later in the workshop as a result of another task, she shares: “And then I realized it looks like I am going swimming with a swim ring, and [the halo that I drew before reminded me on] a bathing cap, so I sort of like the picture.”

This example shows how Lisa was resisting a normative alignment that came from the outside. I was the one tracing her body outline which served as a frame of her body on the paper. What is interesting about this example is that it also relates to research hierarchies immanent in a body mapping workshop (to be elaborated on in 7.3.). In Lisa’s case, drawing served as a tool for re/negotiating her self-image and transgressing research-participant hierarchies.

6.3.4. Questioning bodily boundaries

The body maps consist of different boundaries. There is the boundary of the paper which is the boundary of the self-portrait and there is the boundary of the body itself which is formed through the outer layer of the skin on the paper. When drawing, most participants re/created these boundaries between the outside world, the outer layer of their body and their bodily insight and then respected them. Almost none of what participants wrote or drew on the paper was crossing these boundaries. This can tell us that even though social relations are affecting and affected by the body, thus making
up who we are, the body gets thought of as a (sometimes or ‘at the core’) independent entity separated from its surroundings.

One participant, Ines, was widening the perceived bodily boundaries of her skin through her drawing. She says: “I wanted to draw, I tried to do the connection with the surrounding [and] the body.” The bodily boundaries are visualized as being open on her body map. The body is open. The boundaries of what is inside and outside are moving. Her visualization shows that the body and society are entangled (see whole body map, Figure 5, p.38). I see the widening of bodily boundaries that Ines was visualizing as a creative way of resisting being put into boxes. Her drawing goes against boundary-making. It goes “beyond”, as is written on her map. Ines is, to refer back to Ahmed (2006), seeing the body as an extension of societal spaces. She is not heavily relying on words to express what she wants to say which can be read as a way of embracing the offered visual means for expression in the workshop and thereby making the notion of ‘boundary-breaking’ visible. This would have not been equally possible verbally (see Figure 5, p.38).

Delfina also crossed the boundary of her body map by attaching additional paper to her drawing to be able to draw more (see Figure 21). I however encouraged her to do so because she was hesitant if she was allowed to do it (concluding thoughts on participant performativity are given in 7.2.1.). Delfina furthermore explains that she feels different about her body every day. Delfina thus experiences her body and identity as not fixed and transitory, in “movement” and “constant change” which her drawing also represents.

The body mapping workshop encouraged Delfina and Ines to question and transgress bodily boundaries through treating them as fluid and changeable.

6.3.5. Creating homes

Participants’ drawings and reflections also addressed how they are resisting feelings and experiences of alienation, discrimination or exclusion through creating ‘homes’ for themselves, spaces where they feel they belong. A lot of them have mentioned feminism and feminist spaces as these homes. They have also verbally and visually expressed other strategies for resistance like cultivating peace and self-love or acceptance, going into nature, being with loved ones or making art which help them to cope with difficult situations in their day-to-day lives.

Emelie shares: “I made a big square around my body and the symbol for feminism because I was thinking about [the feminist group I am in] and that I feel very comfortable [there], like I am respected and accepted for the person I am and I almost never felt that.” Fiona has a similar connection
Lisa says that she drew a feminism sign because the feminist group she is in is “a safe place” for her where she does not feel “so judged”. She elaborates: “I don’t feel like I have to defend myself in the same way [in feminist circles]. It is a very safe space and I feel like I belong”. Ines hereto adds:

**Ines:** Belonging. I did two hearts, one black and one red. It is like anarchism and feminism. It is all about, for me, when people are all around the world, it is like connecting, helping each other, see each other, not judge each other and don’t care about your work and don’t care about much things, just connecting like human...

**Esther:** ...from heart to heart.... [smiling]

**Ines:** Yeah, from heart to heart! [smiling and laughing] [N]ot like what do you work with, what do you...and judge you in hierarchy, in like society, you have to have this and that and then you are a good person.

Ines underlines the importance of places where people accept each other, look out for each other or help each other. This reminds me of what a participant in Vacchelli’s study (2018, see 2.1.2.) shared when she was referring to support she found at a community organization that finally acknowledged and listened to her.

Community organizing and creating political spaces where one can “feel home” are ways of resistance. The examples given in this section show that participants were addressing and transgressing societal norms of national belonging through widening the meaning of belonging from a national to a social one through giving the example of feminist organizing in their drawings and reflections.
7. Conclusion

I will conclude this thesis with summarizing the benefits of the use of body mapping (fourth research question) and giving insights into methodological conclusions regarding the limitations and strengths of my study. Moving on with summarizing answers to the (first three) research questions and laying out key analytical thoughts in the summary of analysis, before I will end the thesis with final reflections on the study and its importance.

7.1. Benefits of Body Mapping

Body mapping allowed participants to critically reflect upon the interrelations of the body, identity, and society, and at times transgress norms throughout the research process. The analysis showed the ways in which participants were describing, questioning as well as problematizing how they orientate themselves (their bodies) and how they (their bodies) have been oriented along normative lines in society. There are four particular benefits that body mapping brought to the data creation and analysis process which will be summarized in the following.

The first one being that body mapping allowed for the negotiation of what information to share and how to share it for participants. Participants were able to include sensitive issues in their drawing that make up a part of who they are without having to talk about it or address it further.

An example of this can be found in section 6.1.5. when Ines expressed not having “skills” that society values due to her personal history of not fitting into society. Ines did not mention clearly which aspect of her identity or body this was connected to, but she has expressed that depending on bodily ability or identity, people are seen as fitting in more or less which influences feelings of belonging to (Swedish) society. She has drawn symbols on her map that were hinting towards possible experiences of exclusion she has felt, she however has not further positioned herself to it in the workshop. This shows that the workshop gave her room to process these experiences and navigate how much of it she wants to share in the group.

Another example elaborated in the same section (6.1.5.) relates to when Martin has not further positioned himself to a specific part of his drawing in regard to his mental health but mentioned it briefly in the group discussion when presenting what he drew. Martin’s example of not fulfilling certain class norms in relation to education and ability also show that he was navigating what to address in the workshop and in what ways.

The second benefit, as was mentioned in 3.4., is that the triangularity of the material allowed to connect different strands of the material where participants themselves have not necessarily made connections between or within the same medium.

This became visible in Ines’ and Martin’s examples given above. It was possible to relate
certain details of Ines’ and Martins’ drawings to experiences of dis/functioning according to societal norms through connecting verbal, written and visual information within and between participants’ data.

The triangular material has also allowed certain topics to be addressed which would have otherwise maybe not been discussed in the workshop. An example of this is that the discussion on gender norms in relation to hair (see section 6.1.4.) was possible because I had noticed that several participants had drawn body hair on their maps which is why I could take up the conversation about it initiated by the drawings. Another example of this is that one participant started discussing multiculturalism in Sweden and referring to a respective question on the questionnaire which I was about to leave out in the moment. In this situation, the questionnaire proved its use as a guidance tool for group discussion and participant emancipation because it allowed a key question to be discussed brought up by the participant.

The third particular benefit of body mapping in this study was that its processual structure allowed participants time and space to reflect and re/position themselves towards their drawing within the workshop.

One example of this relates to when Fiona was transgressing social judgment (6.3.2.) through drawing a devil’s tail. Her example shows clearly how she could throughout the workshop come back to the aspect of seeing who she is as connected to how other sees her, and question and critique this interrelation through her drawing.

Another example would be when Lisa was not satisfied with a specific part of the body map outline that I traced and how she has negotiated this friction throughout the workshop process (6.3.3.). Body mapping gave Lisa room to make this negotiation transparent and confront or go onto a meta level of how something felt that happened in the data creation space itself and how it was dealt with.

The fourth benefit I identified was that body mapping allowed to capture affective notions of dis/orientation which made it suitable for exploring norms and power structures in relation to identity (as section 6.2. most clearly showed).

In relation to identity, the feelings and expressions of participants’ selves and subjectivities of participants might have been re/shaped or at least re/positioned in the process of the workshop. While I did not put emphasis on how the experience of body mapping as a whole felt for participants, some participants verbalized that the workshop was: “fun and reflective”, created “positive feelings” and “understanding”. This allows to draw a connection between the process of meaning-making and the process of identity formation – which are both ongoing processes that were unfolding in the workshop.

Even though the body maps in themselves are static and the bodies on the maps are not in motion, the body mapping was an act of self-making. Thereby emphasizing that identities are fluid,
co-created and in constant negotiation. Selves are “shaky” because they are never still, never fixed, but always in motion (Stanley 1992: 14). Method and matter were in this sense congruent in this study since the creation of art, formation of identity and making of meaning are per se processual and interrelated (Leavy 2009: 12). Body mapping embraced these notions and in this regard also promoted subjectivity and ambiguity which made it an excellent tool to explore questions of norms and identity.

The previous examples show that body mapping gave room for the negotiation of who participants are, how they want to be understood, how they understand themselves, the researcher and the drawing process. My study showed that body mapping gave participants space for negotiating to what extent they want to include certain information into the group discussions. Body mapping was thus proven to be useful when participants wanted to express (sensitive) experiences relating to their body, health, ability or identity but not necessarily verbalize them or reflect on them in the workshop group. Body mapping in this sense gave participants the possibility to enclose information in various ways according to what they saw suitable and re/position themselves throughout the process.

The four mentioned benefits thus speak to the suitability of body mapping for researching identity-related questions, instead of health-related ones (as was suggested in 2.1.1.). My study showed that body mapping’s focus on embodiment, participation and ability to capture affective notions made it a “worldly” project which successfully allowed to raise consciousness and show negotiations around how norms are re/materializing in and through bodies.

7.2. Methodological Conclusions

7.2.1. Whose body map is it anyways?

As was laid out in the section before, body mapping proved to be a friendly, “less intrusive” (Vacchelli 2018: 43) method through which participants were given time and space to think, reflect, and re/position themselves throughout the data creation process. I am however critical towards the extent to which body mapping – as it was employed in my study – actually was less hierarchical as I and literature on it claim. While I already hinted towards researcher-participant hierarchies at other parts in the thesis (in 6.3.3.), I will at this point conclude with reflections regarding three examples where hierarchy was inherent in the body mapping process of this study.

First, the body mapping workshop of my study was marked by participants thinking about what I as the workshop facilitator might expect them to produce. While this is a common negotiation in any communication setting, I felt that it was particularly present in body mapping. Even though I was emphasizing that the workshop is about participants’ learning experience and placing their engagement in the center, participants were concerned with what it is that they can/should ‘offer’ and what it is that I expect them to ‘deliver’. This became apparent through participants asking, ‘do you
want us to use this paint?’, ‘are we allowed to do this?’, ‘what do you want me to say?’ etc.

The second example of how research hierarchies were present in the body mapping workshop became visible in the first workshop exercise. As was laid out in 3.3., the first step in the drawing process was tracing an outline of the body – which was done by me, the researcher. The drawing of participants’ bodies thus started with someone else setting the first creative visual action. Their position of thinking that they are drawing for me and not for themselves might have been emphasized by this.

Thirdly, the claim of researcher-participant hierarchy can be supported considering that I, the researcher, also was the one going home with the maps, while participants went home empty-handed. Even though I dealt with this as ethically as possible (laid out in 3.5.), by for example sending photos of the body maps to participants, the question of “whose body map is it?” stayed with me.

To answer the question, it was the researcher who in the end had the over all power to determine how the workshop unfolds and what happens in regard to the material during and after the workshop. It thus seemed as if the maps and other created material ‘belonged’ more to the researcher than to the participants themselves. Participants’ concerns about which expectations to meet however shifted throughout the workshop. This got visible in the drawing process which – to my impression – became more relaxed throughout the process. While hierarchy is inevitable in any research endeavor, it is nevertheless especially crucial to look at how this dynamic plays out in a body mapping workshop that claims to be less hierarchical.

To conclude, it can be said that despite its negotiation of performance and ownership, body mapping is less hierarchical. It gives participants room and time to express themselves in personalized, self-reflexive and ambiguous ways while being embedded in a larger research context in which the researcher has the first and last word and participants negotiate their performance in the process. The only way to get closer to making research more co-operative is through making these hierarchical negotiations and reflections on performativity transparent which is what I tried to do here.

7.2.2. Beyond language

Literature on arts-based research and body mapping claims that its potential to move beyond textual understandings of participants’ interpretation of their experiences makes it useful to explore questions of embodiment. Something that the body mapping workshops for this study however showed was how difficult it was to move beyond language for both me as a researcher when preparing for and guiding the workshop as well as for participants within the workshop process (laid out in 3.3.). Body mapping in my workshop thus involved both the negotiation of bodily engagement and language. To speak in Butler’s (2011) and Ahmed’s (2006) terms, the workshop took place within and between the dimensions of discourse and affect. The following three examples will show this.
The first example being that I as the workshop facilitator was always having sheets of paper with the workshop outline printed on them lying in front of me during the workshop, just to be able to rely on my prepared words. Even though I ended up only looking at them once or twice, my prepared words were lying in front of me to support the process. This contributed to a more static workshop atmosphere based on questionnaires and oral reflections which re/produced the request for formal linguistic expression. This was due to different reasons, I elaborated in 3.3.

The second example is that it was challenging for participants to move from normative ways of expression to less normative and creative ways of expression, in this case: drawing. Participants were sometimes asking if they could talk or write something down instead of drawing. This might have been because most participants were not used to drawing in their day-to-day lives and because speaking is the tool they mostly use for expression in their everyday lives. The set-up of the workshop might have also contributed to this challenge for participants due to its structure of switching between verbally-based and non-verbally-based modes of expression. As was laid out in 3.3, I also experimented with using more or less written language in the data creation process, both resulting in equally informing material.

I am concluding that I could only partially account to the beyond-discursive aspects of the body within the body mapping workshops I conducted. This however once again showed that the discursive and affective are entangled.

7.3. Summary of Analysis

The analysis explored how participants have visually and verbally expressed the ways in which they have felt power axes were being at play in, through and between their bodies.

The first section of the analysis focused on how, particularly, norms of national non/belonging, gender dis/conformity and societal dis/functioning were negotiated by participants. What became apparent in the process of negotiation is that participants were re/producing and at the same time distancing themselves from the normative social order. This became clear through the visual symbols that participants used and the experiences they shared relating to norms of nation, race, gender, age and functionality.

The second part of the analysis focused on how feelings act as affective markers for societal boundaries and norms in situations of dis/orientation. This became visible through participants’ experiences of negotiating their space and belonging in public spheres which was for them accompanied with feeling shame, feeling guilt or feeling unsafe. These moments and feelings of dis/orientation were shaped by participants’ positionalities.

The third part of the analysis focused on how participants were transgressing social norms in their lives and throughout the body mapping workshop. It was laid out which norms participants have
experienced as affecting them, which strategies of resistance they have developed in their lives and which acts of resistance body mapping allowed them to use or express. Among these strategies of resistance through body mapping were conscious acts of drawing and not-drawing of specific aspects. Among examples of strategies of resistance from their every-day lives were humor and group organizing.

The analysis made clear that social norms are lived, felt and experienced differently relating to participants’ self/ascribed nationality, race, gender, sexuality, functionality and age identities. It also showed that norms are simultaneously and equally informing experiences of privilege and disadvantage (Fellows, Razack 1998) for people differently located in society.

Nation, Race, class, gender, sexuality, functionality and age relations are complex notions which cannot be understood as single determinants of a person’s reality. They are interlocking social determinants entangled in complex societal negotiations which entail feelings of vulnerability for every human. While it was made clear that bodies which accord to certain notions of nation, race, gender, age, sexuality and functionality identities are more easily accommodated in Sweden than others, it was shown that feelings of dis/orientation and non/belonging are part of everyone’s negotiation of identity-making, regardless of how structurally privileged a person is. The affective approach of my study tried to bring this to the forefront by putting light onto the ways bodily/societal boundaries are negotiated, felt and transgressed (Ahlstedt 2016).

The metaphor of the cage with its cold, silver iron bars (introduced in the prologue) speaks to the afore-elaborated analytical finding. It shows that being affected by norms or feeling trapped within and between bars of a cage, in and between normative alignments is part of everyone’s identity-making. The analysis showed that this is a process which is defined by distancing oneself from certain norms, while establishing oneself as “good”. Participants were trying to navigate the boundaries of non/belonging and dis/conforming through distancing themselves from the normative social order when they were affected by it in both positive and negative ways. The act of distancing served as a coping mechanism through which participants were re/positioning themselves as “good” – to deal with the ambiguities inherent in their identities and society. The feeling of being “good” was navigated by participants through moving away from a norm towards the critique of a norm, towards “the constitutive outside” (Butler 2011). It was this movement that allowed them to re/position themselves towards the norm. This movement made boundaries visible. The normative boundaries between what one is and what one is not. The cold, silver iron bars of normative systems were explored and bended by participants through their efforts of navigating to what extents they are identifying with certain norms while at the same time being regulated by them – all the while trying to re-establish their bodily alignments and identities as “good”.

To conclude, participants’ visual, written and verbal material gave insights into how they see
their bodies, identities and society as interconnected through re/positioning themselves in a specific way on the paper and towards their drawing. Showing that while privilege/disadvantage is structural, feelings and experiences of dis/orientation are relative, relational and contextual. As Ahlstedt (2016, see 2.2.4.) showed how privilege and less privilege overlap in queer migration processes, I aimed to show the same overlap in intersecting identity dis/orientation and re/positioning processes. The conclusion being that non/belonging is felt, transgressed and negotiated differently by people depending on their positionalities in society.

7.4. Final Reflections

This study showed that the significance of body mapping for knowledge creation is manifold. It relates to both, changing research structures within academia by including informants in more participatory and creative ways, and changing societal structures outside of academia by triggering processes of consciousness in participants (and possibly readers of the thesis).

Body mapping allowed participants to “queer” (Ahmed 2006) their identities, to re/arrange their orientation towards norms, and through that come to understandings of their embodied privileges and disadvantages, and how these structure their bodies, lives and society as a whole. The drawings of participants can be seen as adding another visual dimension to Ahmed’s (2006) Queer phenomenology. A dimension in which images and words are co/created and interconnected, in which wor(l)ds meet through becoming images. Participants’ engagement can be seen as a process of re/orientating and re/aligning themselves in the world through visualizing and verbalizing their inter/relations with the world (Ahmed 2006:158).

The use of arts-based research in this thesis was a way to increase the legitimation of embodied knowledges within academia and in society at large. Since I see the norm of tabooing aspects of bodily experiences as a way to control bodies and make the conversation about in/exclusion difficult, it is important to listen to what one embodies and feels. Bodies which rely on knowledge on themselves from others are bodies which are discouraged to listen to their embodied knowledge on and of themselves. They are discouraged to speak for themselves. They are bodies that are controllable since they do not rely on what they feel. In this instance structural in/exclusion which affects the body can be mystified, naturalized and normalized.

This thesis can be seen as an act of making power structures and experiences of in/exclusion visible through acknowledging embodied notions. It, in line with intersectional queer feminist and arts-based thought, concludes that bodies are subjective, socio-political carriers of embodied (not only individual but collective) history and identity – affecting and affected by norms.
Bibliography


