The impact of multicultural festivals

on women’s empowerment in

Uppsala.

A case of immigrant women.

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Abstract

Empowerment is a process or a mechanism of individuals, organizations and communities acquiring control over their lives (Rappaport (1987), and there is a sustained effort by nations and the international communities across the globe in search of pragmatic agendas and policy framework in achieving women’s empowerment. The purpose of this study was to understand the experiences of immigrant women who participate in multicultural festivals, and how such experiences impact their empowerment. Guided by the ladder of empowerment theory by Elizabeth Rocha in 1997, a phenomenological qualitative study was conducted with fifteen immigrant women residents in Uppsala, and with heterogeneous description, the women were mainly from west African, South American and the European sub-regions.

Drawing on the interviews, exposure to different cultures, making friends and interacting with people from different cultural origins, opportunity to have fun, happiness and social networking were the sailing experiences revealed by the study. While the women are able to achieve the first three levels – atomistic, embedded and mediated empowerments – of individual empowerments as espoused by Rocha (1997), the study further shows Socio-political and Political empowerment were not felt by the women, though their groupings into groups and organizations could influence decisions, legislations and programmes underlying the celebration of multicultural festivals in the Uppsala municipality.

Keywords: immigrant women; multicultural festivals; women’s empowerment.
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Dedication

To Almighty God, myself, and every determined individual who strives to go against all odds to achieve their fullest potentials.
List of Abbreviations

ILO : International Labour Organization
OECD : Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development
UN : United Nations
UNDP : United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO : United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
List of tables

Table 1 : Demography of the interviewees

Table 2 : Themes and categorizations of the women’s responses.
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Chapter one

Background to the study

1.1 Introduction

Empowerment has long been a multi-discipline concept featured prominently in liberation and community psychology, multiculturalism, women’s counseling, social work, international affairs and among others (Rappaport, 1987; Sue & Sue, 2007). In all scholarly perspectives, empowerment is acknowledged as being cardinal to the work of improving human lives across the globe (Zimmerman, 2000). This affirms the view that empowerment is geared towards social good and it enables individuals, organizations and groups to be aware of the relevance of power, how they can acquire such power for a reasonable control of their lives and support the empowerment of others (McWhirter, 1991, p. 24). It is thus worthwhile to consider how empowerment is stretched to cover immigrant women across the globe, and most especially in Sweden, which is the focus of this study.

Sweden is globally noted among the leading countries that has hosted many immigrants from diverse nationalities and ethnicities. According to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), about 99000 non-EU citizens migrated to Sweden with many of them from Syria and Iraq (OECD, 2020). Immigrants make up a significant portion of the Swedish population. A total of 19.7% of the population is born out of Sweden and 23% have a foreign background (Statistics Sweden 2021). The integration of immigrants in their host countries is necessary, and the celebration of multicultural festivals is one of the opportunities immigrants can rely upon to integrate themselves. Multicultural festivals are celebrations for ongoing dialogue and negotiation within communities, as individuals as well as groups attempt to define meaningful concepts of identity and belonging along the notion of exclusion. Thus, multicultural festivals present opportunities for multi-ethnic groups, including both ethnic minorities and members of the dominant population to have extraordinary experiences (Duffy, 2005; McClinchey, 2008).

Lee, Arcodia and Lee (2012) outline three key implications of multicultural festivals: (1) cultural celebration, (2) cultural identity and expression and (3) social interaction. The cultural celebration entails performance of cultural music, dance, symbols and entertainment activities (Rokam, 2005; Helbert, 2006; Arcodia & Whiteford, 2007). Multicultural festivals also provide celebrants the opportunity to showcase their cultural identity and express their beliefs and values. Minority groups get the opportunity to express their culture to the public
and foster cultural acceptance within the mainstream community (Jupp, 1996; Lentz, 2001; Bailey & Oetzel, 2004; Fong, 2004; Osterlund-Potzsch, 2004; Picard & Robinson, 2006). The last significance of multicultural festivals has to do with social interaction. That is, festivals serve as a connective vehicle among members of the society who belong to diverse cultures and with distinct ethnic orientation. Multicultural festivals foster interaction among visitors, exhibitors and performers, and also extricate prejudices and stereotypes (Kuutma, 1998; Picard & Robinson, 2006; Lee et al. 2012).

In view of the aforementioned importance of multicultural festivals, this study is interested to know how the celebration of festivals contributes to the empowerment of immigrant women in Sweden. Empowerment of women has been a topical agenda, both at the national, regional and international levels, and the study focuses on the connection between women’s empowerment and the multicultural festivals. More specifically, the study is interested in examining how the immigrant women’s participation in multicultural festival celebration in Sweden contributes to their empowerment. How the key importance and celebration of multicultural festivals impact on women’s empowerment is central to this study.

1.2 Problem statement

Sweden has had a relatively generous migration policy for a relatively long time, and a public welfare system intended to cover the entire population, including immigrants with the right to reside in Sweden (Schütze 2020). Notwithstanding the inclusive public welfare system in Sweden, social exclusion of immigrants is visible; Schütze (2020, p. 425) clarifies: “despite this formal inclusion of migrants, several studies show that migrants are facing different forms of exclusion; for instance, through ethnic segregation, discrimination on the labour market and the rental housing market”. Studies (see Ahmed et al. 2008; Bursell, 2012; Aldén et al. 2015) revealed the presence of ethnic discrimination and segregation on the labour and rental housing market. Attitudes towards migrants and ethnic diversity directly influence how migrants are treated within the welfare systems; negative attitudes are associated with unequal treatment (Dias et al. 2012; Pitkänen and Kouki 2002; Schütze 2020).

In addition, it is reported that the discrepancy between employment levels among immigrants and native-born women is also pronounced owing to a playout of multiplicity of constraints. According to OECD, the disparity between employment levels is largely due to the fact that many of Sweden's immigrants came for humanitarian reasons, and from origin countries where the education system and labour market are quite different from those prevalent in
Sweden. Additionally, language barriers, discrimination, and the importance of networks in finding employment were identified as contributing factors to the disparity of employment levels among immigrants and native-born in Sweden (OECD, 2014).

The adverse conditions highlighted above are compounded by the current shift in Swedish migration policy. In 2015, the Prime Minister of the Sweden Democrats, Stefan Löfvén in his words “my Europe does not build a wall” (Aftonbladet, 2015 cited in Lind et al. 2023) reiterated support for immigrants in Sweden. However, after a few months, there was a shift in his position towards a more restrictive migration policy as he remarked that the Swedish reception system “needed a breathing space” (Wiese, 2015 cited in Lind et al. 2023), which resulted in the changes to 2016 Swedish Aliens Act. The current coalition government (formed by the three far-right parties with an ally from the far-right anti-immigrant party, Sweden Democrats) have implemented the Swedish migration policy based on the Tidö Agreement with far reaching restrictions for migrants. For example, under the new migration policy, the permanent resident permit is downgraded to three-year temporary permit subject to renewal, and immigrants with lack of good repute could face deportation (The Local, 2022, Lind et al. 2023). Studies in Sweden and internationally have disclosed that temporal permits, to a large extent, do not only make immigrants more vulnerable in the labour market, but pose a serious mental health problem to them (Nickerson et al. 2011; Beskow 2018; Schultz 2020; Ziersch et al. 2021).

1.3 Purpose of the study

Women’s empowerment has become and still is a preoccupation of governments, organizations and advocates groups across national and international levels. The search for more pragmatic women’s empowerment strategies by national and international government agencies, and has become an endless enterprise, especially in relation to immigrant women. This study seeks to be responsive to analyze the enterprise of women’s empowerment by investigating how the experiences and involvement of immigrant women in the celebration of multicultural festivals impact on their empowerment as women.

1.4 Research questions

The following research questions were posed to guide the study:

1. What empowering experiences are encountered by immigrant women as a result of their participation in the celebration of multicultural festivals?
2. How does the participation of immigrant women in the celebration of multicultural festivals, and experiences contribute to their empowerment?

1.5 The organization of the rest of the study

Chapter two focuses on the related literature on empowerment. Literature work on definition and dimension of empowerment is central to the discussion. The third chapter gives a detailed overview of the theoretical framework underpinning the study. Specifically, Rocha's ladder of empowerment theory is featured prominently in this chapter. Chapter four provides an exhaustive outline of the research methodology. It describes the research design, the informants of the study, the chosen informants as well as data collection and analysis procedures. Chapter five deals with the presentation of data collected, analysis, and discussion of the results. Chapter six is the concluding chapter and it highlights the conclusion of the study.
Chapter two

Review of the related literature

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the related literature and studies on empowerment and women’s empowerment. It also presents the world’s population trend of immigrants, more specifically in Sweden. Based on the literature, the chapter also outlines the connection between women’s empowerment and immigrant women. The chapter then highlights the contribution of the study to the existing body of knowledge on women’s empowerment.

2.2 Overview of the literature of women’s empowerment

Empowerment over the years has become a focal point of nations, international organizations, local communities and interest groups, particularly women’s empowerment advocates groups. The concept has become an alternative approach to community development (Scheyvens, 2002; Cater, 2006). The United Nations (UN) has included women’s empowerment as one of the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets as captured under SDG 5. Empowerment of women is a strategy for the development of a country because it involves the full involvement of women towards equality in the society, including participation in the decision-making process and access to power which is the basis for achieving development, equality and security (Hazel & Sally, 2000). Through empowerment, women have the power to change the socio-economic and development of a country (Jayaraman, 2008), and in view of the ever-increasing numbers of immigrants worldwide, which in 2020 was estimated at 281 million, with female migrants accounting for 48% (about 135 million), and labour migrants estimated at less than 50% (169 million) (Migration Report, 2022). The findings of the report (Migration Report, 2022) requires that the frontier of women’s empowerment is stretched to equally focus on the proportion of immigrant women, and rightly so make a strong justification for the purpose of the study.

2.3 Definition of empowerment

Empowerment has been espoused in various fields such as social, economic, political, community development, psychology, health, education and organization (Ampumuza et al. 2008; Angahar, 2012). Nonetheless, the definition of empowerment is still unclear and is often misused in the development world, sparking intense scholarly debate (Taylor, 2000). However, in general, Rappaport (1987) defines empowerment as a process mechanism of
individuals, organizations and communities acquiring control over their lives. In support, Gauthier (1993) opines that empowerment in the context of controlling that act in a distinct way to control their lives. Zimmerman (1995) views empowerment as a social process in various dimensions that helps people gain control over their own lives, while Page and Czuba (1999) remarks that empowerment is a process of empowering individuals, whether for their own lives, within society, and freedom of action on issues that occur in their environment.

In the psychological perspective, studies suggest that empowerment is a process that enables people to act on and improve issues that are important for their individual lives, communities and their societies (Bandura, 1986; Page and Czuba, 1999; Maton, 2008; Cattaneo & Chapman, 2010 in Hanson et al. 2017). In support, Kabeer (2005), in her conceptualization of empowerment retorts that empowerment refers to the process by which those who have been denied the ability to make choices acquire such ability. She asserts that having the ability to make choices in life does not necessarily bring about empowerment, but to be able to challenge power relations.

In summary, Malhotra et al (2002) define empowerment encapsulating various aspects as raised by the earlier scholars. They argue that empowerment is one of the processes to gain power and control over decisions and resources. They further argue that empowerment refers to independence, choice, dignity, control and capacity of individuals to control their own lives and interaction within society. It is abundantly clear that empowerment hovers on two principal concepts; thus, power and process. The power or the ability to control one’s own life resonates first with the individual through their self-confidence and a sense of self-worth, which arguably marks the process of their empowerment. As a process, empowerment of individuals, including immigrants, goes through stages, and one progressively becomes empowered over time.

2.4 Dimensions of empowerment

According to previous studies (Gershick et al., 1990; Rappaport, 1985; Swift & Levin, 1987; Lincoln et al, 2002) empowerment has multiple dimensions. Scheyvens (1999), identified four main dimensions of empowerment, thus psychological empowerment, economic empowerment, social empowerment and political empowerment. The social dimension of empowerment concerns with the state in which social unity and integrity are recognized and reinforced. It encompasses the existence of unity or cohesion among society groups including women, youth and the elderly. That is, the protection and strengthening of cultural traditions
and conservation of natural resources can enhance the social empowerment of the community. The economic dimension of empowerment talks of the empowerment of communities through the economic benefits derived from their economic advantage, either directly or indirectly in the long term (Scheyvens, 1999; Timothy, 2007). It is achieved when the community relies on a fair distribution formula to share the revenue gain among the distribution network, and the economic gains are widely distributed in the society, particularly to the less privileged including women and the poor and not the elite and outsiders (Timothy, 2007).

Psychological empowerment on the other hand, denotes community members who have confidence in the traditions, cultural values inherent in nature, and are optimistic about their future (Scheyvens, 1999). It includes the beliefs about one’s competence, efforts to exert control and an understanding of the socio-political environment one finds himself or herself in. For individuals to be psychologically empowered, Berger and Neuhaus (1977) suggest increased opportunities for people to be involved in community organizations (example, churches, neighbourhood groups, service organizations) in order to help to decrease a sense of powerlessness, alienation and withdrawal from community living. The last dimension of empowerment is political empowerment, and it reflects the situation where political power can provide opportunities for local people or the public to articulate their views in the decision-making process of its development and implementation (Scheyvens, 1999; Timothy, 2007). Political empowerment manifests vividly when community stakeholder groups, including ethnic groups, women and the poor, are given the same opportunity to determine their own future (Rawland, 1997; Timothy, 2007; Cusack & Dixon, 2006). The dimensions are very critical in the sense that they will help the study to unearth how the specific empowerment attainment by the women as a result of their participation in multicultural festival

2.5 Empowerment and women

Women’s empowerment is when women are involved in the process of decision making to change their level of self-confidence, especially about their status and how they make decisions in their homes (Sharma, 2007). Ahmed et al (2001) on the other hand, explain women’s empowerment as the redistribution of social power and control of resources in favour of women. In furtherance, O’Neil, Domingo & Valter (2014) opine that women empowerment is a process of personal and social change, taking place over interlinked and
mutually reinforcing psychological, political, social and economic domains, and through which women individually and collectively gain power, make meaningful choices and control over their lives. The feminists view empowerment as a solidarity by women to fight the commonality of oppression, discrimination, and violence against women across communities and different cultures (Mohanty, 2003). Women's access to power either to make meaningful choices or to control their lives is not a linear, uncontested process, but instead a journey characterized by negotiation and compromise, and uncertain outcomes (Cornwall and Edward, 2016).

Hashemi, Schuler and Rilley (1993) identify six general domains of women’s empowerment – thus, (1) sense of self and vision of a future; (2) mobility and visibility; (3) ability to earn a living; (4) decision-making power within the household; (5) ability to interact effectively in the public sphere; and (6) participation in non-family groups. They went on to outline the indicators for measuring women’s empowerment within Bangladesh context as a developing country (Hashemi et al. 1996) The eight indicators are: (1) mobility; (2) economic security; (3) ability to purchase or make small purchase; (4) ability to make larger purchase; (5) involvement in major decisions; (6) relative freedom from domination by the family; (7) political and legal awareness; and (8) participation in public protests and political campaigning. The indicators are in line with the view that empowerment is a process of positive change that improves women’s fallback position and bargaining power within a patriarchal structure, and identify different causal pathways of change; material, cognitive, perceptual and relational (Chen & Mahmud, 1995).

From the above, women’s empowerment is a dual pathway process, through which women and power trustees (state and its agencies) create deliberate and mutually agreed transformative structures for women to build capacity leading to greater self-control, greater participation and decision-making power, and towards the achievement of transformative actions and outcome. Women's empowerment is also an ongoing process that is both individual and collective. Occasionally it involves women’s’ groups that initiate a process and build structures to develop their awareness and the capacity to organize themselves towards a particular cause of action and bring about change in individual’s lives, as a group or within their communities. Power or the ability of women to control their lives and make far-reaching decisions cut across the definitions, and though the eight indicators of empowerment are context specific, they are equally relevant in helping the study to understand how multicultural festivals really contribute to the empowerment of immigrant women.
2.6 Discrimination of immigrant women.

In Sweden, social exclusion of immigrants is visible. Schütze (2020, p. 425) clarifies that “despite this formal inclusion of migrants, several studies show that migrants are facing different forms of exclusion”. Studies (Ahmed & Hammarstedt, 2008; Bursell, 2012; Aldén et al. 2015) revealed the presence of ethnic discrimination and segregation on the labour and rental housing market, and such attitudes towards migrants and ethnic diversity directly influence how migrants are treated within the welfare systems (Dias et al. 2012; Pitkänen and Kouki 2002; Schütze, 2020). In support, Akhavan (2007) noted that non-recognition of qualification from abroad coupled with racism and ethnic discrimination account for the high rate of unemployment among female immigrants in Sweden. The immigrant women are largely and indirectly faced with exclusion from the social network. Indirect discrimination in the recruitment network cut off immigrant women from the labour market. The Swedish language, in most cases, is a prerequisite of employment requirement by employers, and such conditions obviously disadvantage immigrant women, particularly those from non-EU origins (OCED, 2014) The disparity in the labour market segmentation has exposed immigrant women to work-related physical psychological and social risks (Urban & Slavnic 2008). Immigrant women experience high levels of physical demand at work (Dunlavy & Rostila, 2013) largely due to the fact that they are employed in manual or unskilled jobs.

The enforcement of the Swedish Alien Act invariably exposes immigrant women to domestic violence and abuse in their relationship with either Swedish men or EU citizens resident in Sweden (Tentoni, 2019). The immigrant women are often faced with legal or/and legal and cultural barriers. Culturally, the people deny assistance to immigrant women caught up in domestic violence because they perceive them as opportunists with the preoccupation of using relationships just to enter or secure resident permit in Sweden, hence have to pay the price (Tentoni, 2019). The legal barrier has to do with the laborious requirements under the Swedish Migration Legislation, which immigrant women due to their vulnerability, are mostly unable to fulfill such conditions in the wake of domestic abuse by their partners (Tentoni, 2019).

The discrimination and disparity in the labour market segmentation, the enforcement of the Swedish Aliens Act, and the exposure of immigrant women to domestic violence combine effectively to disempower and make immigrant women more vulnerable in an already

In Sweden, immigrant women are largely and indirectly faced with exclusion from the social network. Indirect discrimination in the recruitment network cut off immigrant women from the labour market. (OCED, 2014).

2.7 Research gap

The growing numbers of immigrants (including women) is rapidly transforming nations and cultures into multicultural societies across the globe, and more specifically the corresponding surging numbers of immigrant women globally calls for a pragmatic and deliberate focus on their empowerment in their host countries (International Migration Report, 2022). The study underscores the fact that a lot of studies have been conducted on women’s empowerment, immigrants’ integration and multicultural festivals. However, interplay or connection between women’s empowerment and multicultural festivals, and how they combine to contribute to integration of immigrant women in their host countries has not received research attention, and that is the contribution this study seeks to offer the research fields.

This study is aimed at contributing to the already existing body of knowledge on women’s empowerment by focusing specifically on the empowerment of immigrant women through the celebration, and their participation in multicultural festivals. The world is fast transforming into a multicultural arena, and identities of nations and cultures becoming more infused by immigrants. The study aims at contributing to the body of knowledge towards the multicultural transformation across the globe, and to come out with new set of conditions to promote the empowerment of immigrant women,
Chapter three

Theoretical framework

3.1 Introduction

The study is guided by the Empowerment ladder model propounded by Elizabeth Rocha (1997). The ladder of empowerment is one of the models that conceptualized individual and collective forms of empowerment. The model is largely influenced by Sherry Arnstein’s ladder of citizen participation (1969) and Roger Hart’s ladder of children’s participation (1992), and it talks about the dynamic forces of power and participation at both the individual and collective level within the community.

3.2 The Ladder of empowerment Theory

The ladder of empowerment proposes a graduated progression, with lower stairs reflecting less empowerment and the higher stairs more empowerment. Thus, individual empowerment forms the basis of empowerment through community empowerment as the apex point of empowerment. Roche argues that empowerment is basically the dynamic interaction between individual and the collective agency, where the latter comprises other actors that exert influence in the community (state). Individual empowerment represents the least amount of potential power, where actions underlying changes at the institutional, political, and structural level throughout a system or within a community represent the greatest amount of power. Roche proposes five levels of empowerment: Atomistic individual empowerment; embedded individual empowerment; mediated individual empowerment, socio-political empowerment and political empowerment. These five forms of empowerment are shaped incrementally, and that empowering individuals by providing supportive services ultimately result in empowering the entire community by effecting political, legislative, structural changes.

Atomistic individual empowerment is fundamental and precedes all forms of individual empowerment. It is achieved by individuals when they show the capacity to control their lives, attend to personal needs and address personal challenges with alacrity. Atomistic individual empowerment manifests in the form of self-confidence and self-worth in individuals. Once individuals attend to their personal needs at ease, they are better positioned to accentuate their capacity and power within identified groups in the societies, culminating in the achievement of embedded individual empowerment. At the embedded stage, the individual’s self-worth manifests in the form of assertiveness and influence within the
identified group, community, system or organization they find themselves. The mediated individual empowerment is concerned with how effectively an individual interacts and influences the social groups he or she belongs to. It defines the social relation of individuals, and the potency of their influence on social groups they are identified with, progressively enables them to bring their expertise, skills and ingenuity for individual and community decision making. This is what Roche described as the mediated individual empowerment which reflects individual ability to influence community decisions.

The fourth is socio-political empowerment, and at this stage, individuals mobilize themselves into groups – such as Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) interest or pressure groups, community-based organizations (CBOs), community-development corporations (CDCs) community-development that raise funding, develop programmes, train community organizers – and undertake other actions to increase political education, and capacity of community leaders and residents. The last step of Roche’s empowerment theory is the political empowerment which translates into actions that bring about institutional, system change, and legislative transformation that alters the legal connection between all community members and the environment. Political empowerment directly manifests in the form of individuals contesting elections or holding political or public positions in order to control policy direction. Fundamentally, political empowerment adjusts a system (either through changes in policy, or alteration of established convention) to empower individuals who hitherto were dis-empowered, marginalized or oppressed.

3.3 Justification for the theory

The theory resonates well with related literature reviewed. The four dimensions of empowerment (Scheyvens, 1999) sit well with the theory. The psychological dimension of empowerment is encompassed by the atomistic individual empowerment. Both talks or recognizes self-confidence and the ability of individuals to control, and address their personal needs as the starting point of individuals’ empowerment. The economic, and social dimension are more related to the embedded, mediated and socio-political empowerment of the theory. The six domains of empowerment (Hashemi et al. 1993) are equally in line with the theory. For example, the first three domains – thus, sense of self and vision of a future, mobility and vision, ability to earn a living – are more related to the atomistic individual empowerment, while the last three of the domains tilt towards the embedded, mediated and socio-political empowerment.
However, the literature is silent on how women move along the linear trajectory of their empowerment. For instance, Scheyvens (1999) failed to draw the linkage or connection among the four dimensions, likewise the domains of women’s empowerment outlined by Hashimi, Schuler and Rilley (1993). The inability to establish the connections will not only make it difficult to monitor the progression of the women on the empowerment scale, but we cannot tell which particular empowerment has been achieved by the women, the next to be achieved, and difficulty in the prescription of conditions and the kind preparedness for the next level of empowerment. This inadequacy in the literature motivated the study to choose the Roche ladder of empowerment theory. The theory does not only complement the literature, but moves a step further to provide a basis for monitoring the progression of individual empowerment.

3.4 Relevance of the theory

The theory brings clarity to monitoring of individual empowerment at any time. That is, we can identify the particular empowerment attained, and the preparedness needed to harness the empowerment. This will help the study to identify the state of empowerment attained by the immigrant women by evaluating and mapping their experiences and forms of participation in the multicultural festivals.

The theory will help the study to unravel how the participation of immigrant women in multicultural festivals in the city (Uppsala) helps them to take control of their lives (thus, their individual empowerment). The immigrant women’s experiences of the multicultural festivals will be mapped against the empowerment indicators identified by Hashemi, Schuler, Riley and Akhter (1996). The theory will also help the study to know how the attainment of mastery over their lives (which Roche refers to as atomistic individual empowerment) empowers them progressively – thus, become well placed in the city (Uppsala) – to participate in community organizations, groups, and influence political structures, systems, institutions and policies to bring about changes in their lives, and within the city.
Chapter four

Research methodology

4.1 Introduction

This chapter captures the research design as well as the method employed in the study. In addition, the chapter also explains how the data was collected, treated and processed for the study. The chapter further talks about the background of the interviewees, the researcher’s positionality as well as the ethical considerations underlying the conduct of the interview. In the final discussion, the chapter throws light on the limitations and the delimitations of the study.

4.2 Research design

I adopted the qualitative research design for the study. According to Bryman (2020), qualitative research is a strategy that focuses on the implementation of words instead of quantity, numeric, or digits. The qualitative research method will help to place a focal point on the exposition of an event in its genuine state to bring meaning to the explanation people make of it in its state of occurrence (Philip 2022). The qualitative research design was selected in view of the fact that the study is intended to rely on the experiences, feelings, practices, and observations of immigrant women in relation to the celebration of multicultural festivals, other than recourse to use of statistical procedures or other means of quantification (Creswell 1998; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Denzin 1989; Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Another justification for my selection of the qualitative design is its flexibility outlook (Maxwell, 2012), implying that the design offers me the room to reconstruct the study to a greater extent, and the fact that it will guarantee the trustworthiness of the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Tobin & Begley, 2004).

4.3 Research method

The phenomenological qualitative method was adopted for the study because it provides me the space to rely on robust and strong analytical tools to capture the experiences of my interviewees (Gill, 2020). This method will allow me to study the experience of multicultural festivals by immigrant women, and investigate its relevance to their empowerment. (Groenewald, 2004; Gill, 2020; Umanailo, 2019). According to Gill (2020), Husserl’s descriptive phenomenological approach describes the importance of occurrences that show up
in the reality of the subject it has happened. As a result, the method is suitable to unravel the impact of multicultural festivals on the empowerment of immigrant women.

4.4 Setting of the study

The study was specifically conducted in the city of Uppsala in Sweden. Uppsala is 30 km and 80 km from the Arlanda airport and North of Sweden respectively. Between the years 2008 and 2018, a total population numbered 225,164, with a total net immigration in 2018 being 2,098 and 1,992 for men and women respectively. The immigrant population in 2018 was 5,202 for men and 5,349 women. Regarding the employment market in Uppsala, the health care and nursing sectors are recorded to be the most saturated in the year 2017 and 2018, with women being the most enrolled.

The city of Uppsala witnesses two popular celebrations every year. One of the notable celebrations is the Kultrunatten held on the second Saturday of September every year since 1989. This event showcases the unique culture of Uppsala, and lasts from morning until late evening, showcasing an array of exhibitions, dance shows and other culturally-relevant entertainment. The event records nearly hundred thousand participants including migrants every year and offers more than 650 celebration locations throughout the city. Kulturenas Karneval, which literally means “the “Carnival of Cultures” is a two-day colourful and magnificent occasion that comprises different nationalities present in Upsala Activities such as workshops, theatre arts and crafts, music, and food among many others are showcased during the festival. Since its inception in 2009, the carnival has become one of Uppsala’s most exciting events that many anticipate especially due to its vibrancy of representation of multiple cultures as well as its free entry which encourages many to participate. The initiative is supported and financed by the Uppsala municipality which received funding from the Swedish Government.

4.5 Interviewees

A total of 15 interviewees were chosen for the study, made up of 8 immigrant women with origins outside of Europe (4 each from West African and South American countries), 6 EU immigrant women and 1 non-EU or EEA. Though experts have prescribed varied ranges of the ideal number of participants for qualitative studies (Guetterman, 2015; Creswell, 2013; Morse, 1995), I settled on 15 interviewees for the study because at a particular point in the interview, same or similar responses were given by the interviewees (Malterud, et al.2015; Spencer et al. 2003: Lincoln & Guba, 1985).
The interviewees were heterogeneous in terms of nationality, aged from 18 to 55 years (see table 1), made up of 8, a majority were non-EU immigrants and seven EU immigrants, and have continuously stayed in Sweden for a period of more than five years. All of them were on resident permit, though they could not disclose whether temporary or permanent resident permit holders. The table 1 below shows the demographic information, including the pseudonyms of the interviewees. Though I interviewed the informant, the purpose of the interview was only meant to seek approval for the actual interview, and also direct me to the various dance organizations under his outfit. So, the informant's responses did not relate to the actual data needed for the study.

### Table 1. Demography of interviewees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Educational background</th>
<th>Role (multicultural celebration)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bint</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>South America</td>
<td>Master’s degree</td>
<td>Organizer/dancer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Odu</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>West Africa</td>
<td>Masters degree</td>
<td>Fashion designer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicky</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>South America</td>
<td>Bachelor degree</td>
<td>Security guard/hairstylist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bran</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>South America</td>
<td>Masters degree</td>
<td>Dancer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maco</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>Central Europe</td>
<td>Bachelor degree</td>
<td>Dancer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maca</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>South America</td>
<td>High school</td>
<td>Violin player</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tiny</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Central Europe</td>
<td>Bachelor degree</td>
<td>Orchestra drummer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kakra</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>West Africa</td>
<td>Masters degree</td>
<td>Dancer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ifeoma</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>West Africa</td>
<td>Bachelor degree</td>
<td>Make-up artist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bellie</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>West Africa</td>
<td>Bachelor degree</td>
<td>Fashion designer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caco</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Central Europe</td>
<td>Masters degree</td>
<td>Singer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mick</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Northern Europe</td>
<td>Bachelor degree</td>
<td>Singer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glen</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Central Europe</td>
<td>Bachelor degree</td>
<td>Dancer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fay</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Northern Europe</td>
<td>Masters degree</td>
<td>Dancer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moun</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Western Europe</td>
<td>Masters degree</td>
<td>Fashion designer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: (Field Data, 2022)

I adopted the combination of purposive and snowball sampling techniques for the study. The rationale was to guarantee quality data and responses for the study in order to enhance the reliability and validity of the results, and to afford me the opportunity to reach out to my targeted women (Bernard, 2002; Parahoo, 1997; Berg, 1988).
The initial interview was between June and August 2022, while the second one dragged towards the latter part of 2022 and early 2023. My first formal approach to the organizations such as the Kulturernas Karneval was a very challenging one starting from February 2022 via several social media messages on platforms like Facebook then followed by a formal letter, set of questionnaires, with the backing of my supervisor, which I presented through emails. Several attempts of location visits to the physical address provided by the organization all proved futile. Finally on one faithful Sunday, one of my last phone calls to an informant from the Kulturernas Karneval went through which was answered. After initial hesitation by the informant, he showed keen interest in the study, and introduced me to the leaders of the dance groups and organizations. The leaders were equally interested in the study and consequently I was invited to join the planning members and their dance rehearsals, an opportunity that made me familiar with the dancers. I am actively involved in arts and festival related celebrations, and this gives me a reasonable idea as to where and who to choose for the interview in order to get reliable and quality data based on guaranteed trust and confidentiality.

At this point, my research topic further compelled the informant to organize two sets of Kulturenas Karnevals: June 6 (on Swedish National Day) and July 2022. At the first meeting, we interacted at length and also conducted a brief sit-down interview with the informant after which he introduced me to one of the leaders of the dance organization who at the time was the only active participant of the Karneval due to the Covid-pandemic. The dancers also warmed up to me since we had something in common, which is shared interest in the arts and dance. This facilitated my interview process a lot. At this point the initial stereotype and the prejudice against me have been broken down completely. The informant of the Kulturenas Karneval and another leader of the dance group were further actively involved and showed interest in helping to organize more women for the research. My previous involvement with such celebrations served as leverage to be introduced to other dance groups and dancers. The dance group leaders were equally interested in the study, consequently I was invited to join the planning committee and their dance rehearsals. I had to make sure to be objective as a researcher on this occasion and not lose sight of my purpose while I enjoyed the artistic aspects of the research as well. I discussed the purpose of the study with 5 most reliable dancers, by virtue of their more than five years participation in Kulturenas Karneval, and their willingness to take part in the interview. I relied on the 5 dancers to choose the remaining 10 interviewees. Among the 10 interviewees were other artists like hairdressers,
make-up artists and fashion designers or costume designers who worked closely with the dancers during the Karneval periods.

4.6 Research Instrument

I practically used the interview as the instrument for the collection of data for the study. Specifically, I adopted a semi-structured interview to elicit responses from the interviewees (see Appendix 1). The rationale behind the use of semi-structured interview questions was to focus the interviewees on the topics related to the phenomenon under study while allowing them some degree of flexibility (Philips, 2022).

4.7 Data collection technique and process

I employed face-to-face and telephone techniques in administering the interviews. I used face-to-face interview technique for interviewees who, by proximity, were not too far away from me. I used the telephone technique for other interviewees too distant from me. I designed a semi-structured interview guide with open-ended questions for all the sections taken cognizance of the research objectives and the research questions. Section A seeks to elicit data on demographics of the immigrant women, section B to collect data on experiences of multicultural festivals by the immigrant women, while section C touches on the impact of multicultural festivals on the empowerment of immigrant women (See Appendix 1).

The interview was conducted in English, and each interview lasted between thirty minutes and one hour. Their ability and command over the English language stems from the fact that most of the women have higher educational backgrounds (see table 1). I interviewed ten face-to-face at their performing studios, because of their schedules and to make enough time for the interview. The remaining five interviews were done on phone and at a time convenient to the interviewees. Questions on their background, experiences of multicultural festivals and how such experiences have empowered them were asked (see appendix 1). To aid transcription of the data, the interviews were recorded with their prior approval. I observed that the women I interviewed face-to-face enjoyed the conversation better, amidst laughing and jokes owing to the personal contact during the interview, and the fact that they trusted the process due to assured confidentiality. As a result, the interviewees openly and freely gave in-depth responses compared to the five (5) I interviewed by telephone. The telephone interview lasted almost an hour on the average. I observed that they were tired at a point, which to some extent affected the quality of their responses. But overall, the interviews were successful and the aim of getting quality responses for the study was achieved.
4.8 Data analysis

Transcription is the first point of call when it comes to qualitative data analysis, especially with regards to interview data. According to Bailey (2008), the representation of audible and visible data into written form is the first step in analyzing data. It is an interpretive act rather than a mere technical procedure. After transcription exercise, the data is reviewed and reorganized into themes and categories through coding in reference to research questions. Generation of themes through coding and categorization is arguably the most common analytic approach used by qualitative researchers in relation to interviews (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009).

Mindful of aforesaid fundamentals in qualitative data analysis, the complexities and challenges associated with data analysis, an interview guide with predefined themes (see appendix 1) was designed. The rationale was to reduce the anticipated complexities with transcription, and also reduce numerous anticipated themes. As usual, data analysis began with transcription, and here the recorded interviews were produced into written forms. Conducting the interview in English made the transcription well cut-out. The transcribed data was reviewed and reorganized into themes and categories as defined by the interview guide (see Appendix 1). The rationale was to generate responses that best answer the research questions, and establish findings for the study. The two main themes were (1) experiences of multicultural festivals by immigrant women, and (2) the impact of multicultural festivals on the empowerment of immigrant women. I then proceeded to set a domain for the two themes in order to align categories. With respect to experiences of multicultural festivals, I limited it to the women’s encounters during multicultural festivals, while the domain of the impact of multicultural festivals on women's empowerment focused on the benefits the women obtained from their encounters during multicultural festivals. Under experiences of multicultural festivals, four sub-themes or categories emerged from the women's responses, thus, (1) experience of different cultures, (2) friendship and interaction, (3) source of happiness and fun, and (4) social networking. I again identified three sub-themes under the impact of multicultural festivals on women's empowerment: (1) building of self-confidence, (2) earning of income, and (3) leadership roles in performing groups. The table below shows the outcome of the themes and categorizations of the responses transcribed.

Table 2: Themes and categorizations
Main themes | Categorizations
--- | ---
Experiences of multicultural festivals | 1. Experience of different cultures.  
2. Friendship and interaction.  
4. Social networking.
2. Earning of income.  
3. Leadership roles in performing groups.

To analyze the material, I applied the thematic narrative methodology (Guest et al. 2011) mostly recognized as an insightful qualitative method to identify key issues raised by research participants.

### 4.9 Ethical consideration

I contacted the interviewees and re-echoed the purpose of the interview as well as the intent of the study, though I made the same disclosures to them at the sampling stage. I also disclosed to them the guidelines of the interview, thus average interview time, the recording aspect so as to help them have full knowledge of the in-depth of the interview. I did so in respect of their privacy, confidentiality, and to agree on the medium of communication, and also to solicit their consent. To guarantee confidentiality and some degree of anonymity, pseudonym identity (see table 1) and their regional blocs instead of their nationality were disclosed. I finally prepared an interview schedule having taken notice of days and time convenient to each of the interviewees. I then followed the interview schedule and conducted the interview. I administered questions orderly as specified in the interview guide, in English since all of the interviewees were fluent, or had considerable knowledge and understanding of the language. I gave interviewees adequate time to respond to each question. The interviewees were never coerced as they answered questions freely, and to the best of their understanding. The interview was recorded to aid analysis and discussion of the study. The interviewees were assured that the responses they provided will be stored confidentially solely for the purpose of transcription, and for the study. They were further assured of destroying the data after use and completion of the study. Mindful of interviewees’ privacy and confidentiality, I used their pseudonym (see table 1) to identify them in the discussion.

### 4.10 Delimitation of the study
There are other parameters in measuring women’s empowerment. However, this study is confined to empowerment of immigrant women through multicultural festivals. Again, the study is limited to immigrant women in Uppsala, where immigrant women were sampled for the study. Hence, the results and conclusions of the study only reflect the state of empowerment of immigrant women within the setting of the study.
Chapter five

Results and discussion

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study is to analyze the experiences of immigrant women in relation to their involvement in multicultural festivals, and how such experiences have contributed to their empowerment. This chapter presents the results of the analysis of the data for the study. It also presents the detailed findings of the study through the lens of the theoretical framework of the Empowerment ladder model, and in relation to literature on women’s empowerment.

5.2 Results

The results reported in this chapter are based on the 10 face-to-face and 5 phone interviews conducted with immigrant women in Uppsala, about their experiences of multicultural festivals and the impact of multicultural festivals on their empowerment as immigrant women.

With regards to the experience of multicultural festivals by the women as spelt out in the first research question, the results identified four main themes that captured the experiences of the women interviewed: (1) experience of different cultures; (2) friendship and interaction; (3) source of fun and happiness, and (4) social networking. Equally, from the interviews emerged four themes: (1) building of income, (2) earning of income, and (3) leadership role in performance groups, underlying the findings of the impact of multicultural festivals on the empowerment of the immigrant women.

5.2.1 Experience of multicultural festival

Experience of diverse cultures

An overwhelming and far-reaching experience disclosed by the interviewees in the study was the fact that multicultural festivals expose them to different cultures. The interviewees, who themselves have different cultural backgrounds, get the opportunity to experience the music, dances and dress codes of different cultural origins. People of different cultural backgrounds attend the multicultural festival celebrations, and the interviewees recounted that they take interest in different kinds of music, dance, dress code, and food among other things. The interviewees put on dress from different cultural origins, learn and dance to their music. The
interviewees also get the opportunity to taste and eat different kinds of food for the first time. Bint, a 47-year-old South American, has lived in Sweden for more than 10 years. She has participated in the Kulturernas Karneval for more than 5 years as a dancer and an organizer of a dance group. Bint reiterated that during Kulturernas Karneval, different cultural groups from different cultural backgrounds get the opportunity to perform, and herself and other immigrant women who attend the Karneval equally get the opportunity to learn these different cultures:

“Kulturernas Karneval provides that opportunity for other cultural groups from different cultural background to perform…and a lot of immigrant women, including myself take part, and we use the opportunity to showcase the cultures of our origin, and learn different cultures as well” (Bint, South American interviewee).

Odu, a 46-year-old fashion designer from West Africa affirmed the response by Bint to the effect that the different cultural groups perform during Karneval celebration. Odu reiterated that the Karneval allows for the women to showcase and exchange their different cultural values:

“It is a way of exchanging and showing different cultures…and I always do experience different cultures whenever the events come up. For example, during Karneval celebrations, we’re exposed to different dances, music, dress code and wear make-ups to showcase our culture of origin…and sometimes different cultures” (Odu, West African interviewee).

The study further shows that celebration of multicultural festivals not only expose the women to different cultures, but they get the opportunity to showcase their cultural identity to other women from different cultural origins. Glen, a 22-year-old dancer from Central Europe argued that multicultural festival celebrations showcase different cultures on the same stage, and women from different origins connect to the diverse cultures at display:

“It is when different cultures gather in the same festival…for example, I’m into the rave culture, something that unites people from all over the world…it is obvious that you’re going to interconnect with all these different cultures [is not even only about ethnicity or nationality]. It’s about your interest as well as how you transcend these imaginary barriers of ethnicity, race, and nationality. We come from different parts of the world, and still have the same interest, and to me, that is the beautiful aspect of the Karneval and other events” (Glen, Central European interviewee).
Glen also admitted that their participation in multicultural festival celebrations go beyond exposure to different cultures to include experiences that help them overcome barriers connected with ethnicity, race and nationality.

The study observed that multicultural festival celebrations do not only foster exposure to different cultural values, but also give them a sense of oneness. Four main experiences are encountered by people who take part in the celebration of multicultural festivals. The four experiences observed by the study included exposure to diverse cultures: friendship; interaction; source of fun and happiness; and social networking. The results of the study showed that the women experienced different or diverse cultures, cultural trade-offs, or exchange of cultural symbols (music, dance, food dress). The women are not only exposed to different cultural aspects, but they equally have the opportunity to highlight their culture of origin during celebrations, and help people from different cultures to imbibe their cultural symbols as well. This result confirmed the fact that the celebration of multicultural festivals leads to fundamental relevance including cultural celebration, cultural identity and expression and social interaction with the view of building a multicultural society (Rokam, 2005; Helbert, 2006; Arcodia & Whiteford, 2007; Lee et al 2012). Again, bringing people together through festival celebrations, and exchanging cultural varieties can be seen as a potent tool to address the issues of stereotype, prejudice and discrimination that immigrants, who form minority groups, suffer in the hands of the native majority group (Kuutma, 1998; Picard & Robinson, 2006; Lee et al 2012). The celebration of multicultural festivals offers the women the opportunity to showcase their cultural aspects, and also experience different cultures. invariably, the feeling of acceptance of their culture in itself gives them self-confidence, which positions them to achieve atomistic individual empowerment. Again, the women experiencing diverse cultures implies they perform or participate together with other celebrants from different cultural backgrounds, which also present the platform for them to achieve embedded individual empowerment identified by Rocha (1997) as part of the ladder of empowerment theory.

*Friendship and interaction*

Another experience encountered by the interviewees is the fact that they are able to make new friends and interact with people from different cultural and national backgrounds. The interviewees engage in interaction with other people from different ethnic origins at ease, and explain their cultural symbols at display, talk about their historical background and the
relevance of their cultures. Maco, a 55-year-old dancer from South America, recounted elaboratively, how her participation in multicultural festivals helped her to overcome her fear as result of her interaction and friendship with other women from different cultures.

“I think it’s important to understand other cultures. Racism comes from fear, and fear comes from the unknown. Once you know you don’t have any fear…these kinds of festivals give you [me] the possibility of interacting with other cultures you’ve never met. People are different from you [me] because you haven’t met them. How do you know they are bad? How do you like these cultures if you haven't explored them? If you're an immigrant and you don’t have any friends, going to these festivals opens your minds to create new connections and friends” (Maco, Central Europe interviewee).

Tiny, a 20-year-old orchestra drummer from Central Europe, reiterated the fact that her participation in the festival allows her to meet, interact and make friends with fellow instrumentalists from different social groups:

“In these places, you get to meet people from different social groups, both young and the aged, and we get the opportunity to interact and make friends. As an instrumentalist, I usually meet other musicians and players, and we socialize and make friends” (Tiny, Central European interviewee).

Bran, a South American, who usually plays the role as a security guard or sometimes does hairstyles for women, shared a similar experience. According to her, she made a new friend during her first encounter with Kulturernas Karneval. During the interview, she retorted that “As humans, we’re social people, so these kinds of places help us [immigrant women] in new places to find friends, share experiences and ideas. I made new friends in my first encounter with Karneval ”.

Fay, a 28-year-old dancer from northern Europe expressed her love for the Kulturernas Karneval and reiterated her readiness to participate whenever the Karneval is organized. Her admiration is due to the fact that the Karneval provides her the opportunity to meet new people and make new friends. She said that:

“I’m ever ready to take part in Karneval again, again. I love meeting new people and making friends, and the Karneval is a finest opportunity to do so, and will never resist it whenever it comes around”.

25
The celebration of multicultural festivals offers the interviewees the opportunity to build friendship and interact among themselves. The interviewees make new friends and interact with people from different cultural and national backgrounds. Being members of the minority groups, the interviewees could express their culture to the public, fostering cultural acceptance within the mainstream community of the city (Uppsala). This again highlights the significance of multicultural festivals put forward by Jupp (1996), Goodman (1999), Lentze (2001) and Bailey and Oetzel (2004). People do not only interact, but build friendship across ethnic origins and national backgrounds. The friendship built among people of different cultures has the potential to address the issue of negative attitudes and unequal treatment towards immigrants in the welfare system (Dias et al. 2012; Pitkänen and Kouki 2002; Schütze, 2020) as well as the different forms of exclusion, ethnic segregation and discrimination in the labour and rental market in Sweden (Ahmed et. al, 2008; Bursel, 2012; Aldén et. al, 2015). The achievement of embedded and mediated individual empowerment (Rocha, 1997) by the women is feasible in the sense that they get the opportunity to make friends during the celebration of multicultural festivals, and in furtherance interact with people from different or diverse cultural settings.

*Source of fun and happiness*

The interviewees unanimously disclosed that multicultural festival celebrations provide them opportunity to have fun, relaxation and happiness. People become fascinated and thrilled by the activities of the celebrations. In particular, the exhibitions, dance shows and other culturally relevant entertainment associated with Karneval bring excitement, fun and happiness.

Ifeoma, a 19-year-old make-up artist from West Africa, is thrilled by the activity-packed Karneval. She did not hide her excitement during her first encounter and participation. She gets the opportunity to meet nice people from different cultures, and what excites her most is the fact that she gets introduced to new dances:

“It’s fun meeting different people from different cultures, and the people are very nice too. What excites me most is the moment when you’re introduced to new dance moves, and in no time, you’re able to perfect the moves, and you’re good to go. There’s no more excitement than this”. (Ifeoma, West African interviewee).

The Karneval does not only make the women happy but provides them the opportunity to celebrate and have fun with their families. Bint, a 47-year-old dancer from South America,
admitted that her son and the family sometimes join her in the dance performance, and the whole family becomes happy. Brain, 42 years old, admitted that she and her partner have fun together and love doing cultural dance at Karneval. So, the Karneval does not only make the participant excited and to have fun, but it strengthens family bonds or togetherness.

“My son sometimes joins us to dance, and he becomes happy as I’m. When I’m happy, all of us in the family are happy. [they indirectly], the family is happy seeing me doing what I’m happy about, and like doing best, and that makes me happy and excited”. (Bint, South American interviewee).

Another source of happiness admitted by the interviewees is the fact that the Karneval provides them the opportunity to do what they like doing, and that in itself makes the interviewees happy. Mick, a 20-year-old singer from northern Europe said she became excited singing at the Karneval and seeing a lot of participants dancing and cheering her on. Tiny, a 20-year-old psychiatrist from Northern Europe, admitted that she is a lover of music and dance, and that she becomes happy when the Karneval gives her the opportunity to do what she likes to do always.

“Nothing makes me excited and happy than singing in front of a large crowd, and seeing them dancing and grooving, and cheering me on. It’s an extraordinary experience, and makes me want to perform whenever the Karneval is around” (Mick, Northern European interviewee).

The celebration of multicultural festivals creates the platform for the women to have fun, and get over their loneliness and stresses. Women do not only listen and dance to music, and learn new dance moves of different cultures at display, but they get nostalgic feelings and happiness. Women witness and participate in performance of cultural music, dance and other varieties of entertainment activities (Rokam, 2005; Helbert, 2006; Arcodia & Whiteford, 2007; Lee et al, 2012), and thus, the celebration serves as a source of happiness, fun and provides opportunity for the women to manage their loneliness and stress as a result of fear, racial sentiments and stereotype against the minority group (Duff, 2005). Stress and loneliness are major obstacles to achieving self-confidence. The fact that the celebration of multicultural festivals helps the women to manage their stress and loneliness, and this boosts their self-confidence. Achieving self-confidence puts the women in readiness to achieve atomistic individual empowerment identified by Rocha (1997).
The issue of social networking was central to the experiences of the multicultural festivals by the interviewees. Kulturenas Karneval and other celebrations allow interviewees to meet different social groups, particularly women of the same profession, career, and colleague performers.

Maco is a 55-year-old dance performer during the Karneval celebration. She admitted that through participation in the Karneval, she got connected and built contacts with other students in other universities during her school days. Not only did she build a network with fellow students, but her participation in the Karneval helped her overcome loneliness:

“As a student then, I felt lonely upon my arrival in Sweden, but through the Karneval, I’m able to establish contact and build a network with students from other universities and different cultures. This network goes beyond the Karneval stuff, and now we share ideas on our academic work” (Maco, central Europe interviewee).

Kakra, a 25-year-old student, currently pursuing higher studies in one of the universities in Sweden admitted how her participation in the Karneval has helped her connect with fellow dancers. She reiterated receiving dance videos for rehearsals:

“I usually meet fellow dancers, and we build contact, and later [after the Karneval] contact one another, and discuss how we can improve our performance in the next celebration. I sometimes receive dance videos from colleagues [through our network] for rehearsal purposes”. (Kakra, West African interviewee)

Apart from the network and connection that the Karneval establishes among students and dancers as reiterated by Kakra and Maco, it also builds a network among professional colleagues, particularly fashion designers who were interviewed in the study. Odu, 46, a West African fashion designer recounted how her participation in the Karneval has helped to establish and build contact with other fashion designers, and attributed her career resuscitation to her participation in the Karneval celebration:

“I’m forever grateful to the celebration of Karneval. My involvement in the celebration has connected me to other fashion designers from other cultures, and such a network has resuscitated my fashion career, which had a nosedive when I first came to the city” (Odu, West African interviewee).
Bellie, 21 years and from West Africa, believes the participation in the Karneval goes beyond connecting with other fashion designers to include integrating their wares in the Uppsala city. To her, participation in the Karneval celebration helps to introduce her art works to the participants, especially during the exhibition.

“As a [central African], it was very challenging to introduce and integrate my local fashion designs and wares in the city. My artwork was completely hostile [unknown] to the people in the city. But fortunately for me, taking part in the Karneval exhibition has gotten people to like my wares” (Bellie, Central African interviewee).

One of the interviewees admitted understanding Sweden's fashion industry better through the social networking with other fashion designers – who had better insight of the fashion industry in Sweden – through her participation in the Karneval:

“When I came to the city [Uppsala], I was very new, and knew nothing about the fashion industry in the city. But my participation in the Karneval exhibition enabled me to establish contact with colleagues, who were on the ground, and well informed about the fashion industry” (Moun, West African interviewee).

Celebration of the Karneval does not only foster friendship and interaction among women of different ethnic and national origins but creates opportunity for the women to transform their friendship and interactions into permanent social networks. The celebration of the Karneval is an occasion for the women to exchange contact and build permanent networks particularly in areas of interest, profession or vocation. This result validates the argument that multicultural festivals serve as a platform for social connectivity and interaction (Kuutma, 1998; Picard & Robinson, 2006; Lee et al 2012). Social networking is very vital to group formation, and once the Kulturenas Karneval presents the women the opportunity to build social networking in itself prepares them to achieve mediated individual empowerment and socio-political empowerment identified by Rocha (1997) as part of the ladder of empowerment. The mediated individual empowerment is achieved by the women by virtue of the fact that the social network built fosters interaction and at the same gives them the opportunity to form various interest groups for training programs related to the Kulturenas Karneval celebration.

5.2.2 Impact of multicultural festivals on women’s empowerment

Building of self-confidence
One of the areas of empowerment established by the study is the building of self-confidence. Multicultural festivals empower the women by building their self-confidence and boldness. Women are able to get over shyness and other socially related phobias arising from all forms of social exclusion and discrimination (Schütze 2020, p. 425). Performing in front of a large audience spurs the self-confidence of performers, and this was confirmed by the study.

In one of the revelations, the interviewees are able to overcome shyness and receive approval for their performances. This in itself gives them a sense of social acceptance and a starting point of their empowerment. Odu admitted that receiving praises for her group’s performance makes her confident:

“I play [perform] in front of people and that gives me more confidence. People tell me that the [our] group sounds amazing, and that gives more confidence”. (Odu, West African interviewee).

A majority of the interviewees are able to overcome fear of the issue of race, social discrimination and other forms of social exclusion. Through the participation in the Karneval, the interviewees are able to get over the nervousness as result of their perception or experiences of racism and social discrimination. Ifeoma, a 19-year-old make-up artist, admitted her encounter and participation in the multicultural festivals erases fear of racism, and helps to overcome nervousness:

“Honestly, I had a different view concerning the issues of race, discrimination against people of different races, and that made me nervous at first, but my encounter with festivals has erased my fear. I now have a sense of belonging and feel confident”. (Ifeoma, West African interviewee).

Multicultural festival celebrations, such as the Kulternas Karneval, helps to build self-confidence among participants. This revelation is overwhelmingly asserted by the interviewees. In a short response by Bint, a dance group organizer during Karneval celebration said: “It has given me joy, and given me more confidence to dance in front of people. At first, I could not have done that because I would feel shy”.

Multicultural festivals contribute to building self-confidence and assertiveness among people, especially the performers during celebrations. Through performances, performers manage their shyness, anxieties, fears and build a strong personality for themselves. As pointed out by Berger and Neuhaus (1977), multicultural festivals help to moderate fear and marginalization,
not only for immigrants, but for all people facing any downgrading issues in the society. Again, the building of self-confidence and assertiveness lay foundations for people to achieve the three dimensions of empowerment (Rawland 1997). People having belief and confidence in themselves propels them to develop the capacity to negotiate and influence decisions particularly in the celebration of multicultural festivals, and proceed to form groups and corporations with the ability to influence political structures in shaping the celebration of multicultural festivals. Building self-confidence in people through multicultural festivals helps individuals to shape their psychological empowerment. People do not only develop self-confidence, but they equally have confidence in their traditions and cultural values (Zimmerman & Rappaport, 1998; Scheyvens 1999). Building of self-confidence by the women will vividly translate into achieving atomistic individual empowerment identified by Rocha (1997), as part of the ladder of empowerment.

Participation and leadership in community organization

The study shows that celebration of multicultural festivals provides opportunities for performers to form, participate and lead various community dance groups. Women who have keen interest in multicultural festivals form organizations or groups primarily to teach others how to dance and perform at the Karneval.

Bint, 55 years old, is a South American immigrant who has lived in Sweden for more than 10 years. She is also a veteran dancer and leader of a dance group, though she admitted being a leader prior to her participation in the Karneval. Her role as dance group leader provides her the opportunity to teach others how to dance, and equally invest in the group as well.

“I’m the leader of my organization before joining the festival. I’m part of many boards, I’ve been dancing in my group also before the Karneval. For instance, in my organization, we give every woman from different countries to dance with us in the Karneval. I show them that they can dance at any age. And teach them the steps to dance, and help them not to be shy, and feel comfortable. I don’t get paid for doing this. I would rather invest in it, but for me the joy is important for me. I get paid from my regular job, and that’s how I provide for my personal needs. As a chairperson of my organization, I’ve to be economically independent, so I’ve to put money into the organization”. (Bint, South American interviewee).

Glen, is from central Europe and 22 years of age. She recounts that she plays the role of security during the celebration of Karneval. She is able to stop women from passing with
drugs and alcohol, and such a role has helped her empowerment process because she is now able to tolerate people who dislike her for her firmness.

“It has empowered me. I learn how the machinery works in developing the programme. And the latest one that has empowered me is that it is [tolerable] for someone to dislike you. I’ve worked with that one whole summer because I’m in charge of security and I don’t allow people to pass drugs and alcohol, and people hate me…I say thank you. It makes me a stronger person. I want to do my thing, have fun, and provide information for people” (Glen, Central European interviewee).

The celebration of multicultural festivals provides the chance for women to invest using their own private resources. One of the interviewees also admitted investing in Karneval, though she did not specify how she carried out such investment. Maco, is a national from central Europe as well, and 55 years of age. She admitted investing in the Karneval without necessarily expecting economic returns. She plays different roles including fixing tables, directing traffic, and bouncer without receiving a wage. To her that is the only way she could contribute to the community organization.

“I do it because I like it. I invest into it. It does not come back [return on investment] economically, but [I get the returns] in a different type of way and wealth. For me, it is wealth in a different kind of way. I do anything: fixing tables, directing traffic…I can do anything. I bounce, I sell, I buy…bring it on, and nothing is impossible. When you’re in it for a long time, you [will] learn how to do anything” (Maco, Central European interviewee).

Multicultural festivals empower people to participate and take up leadership roles in community organization. The women are motivated to form organizations, dance and cultural groups, and directly get involved in the celebration of festivals. Responses from the interviewees show that multicultural festivals help women to develop the ability to interact effectively within the community and take part in community activities (Hashemi et al 1993; 1996). Women are empowered to form community groups to influence decisions on, and the organization of festivals. This helps the women to achieve a collective dimension of empowerment (Rawland, 1997; Scheyvens, 1998). Thus, the study suggests that women are empowered politically through the celebration of multicultural festivals, as they get the opportunity to form stakeholder groups and influence the organization of the festivals in Uppsala (Cusack & Dixon, 2006; Timothy, 2007). Again, the women taking up leadership roles in their dancing groups and being able to influence the celebration of the festivals helps
them to achieve both mediated individual empowerment and socio-political empowerment (Rocha, 1997).

*Earning of income*

First, the study shows that multicultural festivals can be a source of income generation. Though the festivals are meant mainly for fun, relaxation, friendship and foster social interaction, the women whose vocations are directly connected with festivals sell their wares during exhibition fairs, particularly fashion designers. Three of the interviewees who are into fashion design recount how the Karneval exhibition stands provide the platform for them to sell their wares.

Bellie, a fashion designer from West African admitted that though she participates in the Karneval not only to make friends, but gets the opportunity to sell her wares, and the marketing platform associated with the Karneval gives her the impetus to continue production. To her getting patronage for her products makes her feel that her product is accepted, and it gives her encouragement as well. The assertion by Bellie was affirmed by her compatriot – both from the same region and profession – Odu, who said “participating in the festival celebration is like killing two birds with one stone”. That is, she makes fun and at the same time gets the opportunity to sell her products.

“Economically, I make sales of my products. I also make friends. It gives me more courage to continue what I do because people like my clothes and products” (Bellie, West African interviewee).

The revelation by Bellie and Odu, is supported by their professional colleague, Maco from Central Europe. Maco is able to make sales at the exhibition, and she reiterated her surprise at the volume of sale. She also recounted establishing business contact:

“I didn’t only have fun and exhibited my wares, but I was overwhelmed at the sales I made, and the business contacts I established” (Maco, central Europe interviewee).

The study shows that the celebration of multicultural festivals may create opportunity for some of the participants, especially those engaged in sale of artifacts and other wares closely linked to the festivals. The women who are fashion designers do not only participate to have fun but make income by selling their wares to the celebrants. Thus, the celebration of multicultural festivals provides a platform for the distribution of economic resources in the city (Scheyvens, 1999; Timothy, 2007; Ahmed et al, 2016). The festivals may guarantee
women a source of income, which places them in a position to make life choices and decisions independently and control their lives even within adverse conditions and environment (Hashemi et al 1993; Kabeer, 2005). The women can be in a better position to provide the personal needs and take control of their lives. They can contribute financially to their dance groups and help provide costumes for their performances. Atomistic individual empowerment is achieved by the women through the income earned through the sale of festive wares, which provides the platform for them to achieve both mediated individual empowerment and socio-political empowerment (Rocha, 1997).

5.3 Discussion

This chapter answers the research questions and discusses the results of the study through the lens of the theoretical framework of Rocha’s ladder of empowerment, while also relating the findings to the previous literature on women’s empowerment. It moves further to look at the extent to which the theoretical framework to study has been used in the research findings, thus by analyzing the achievement of the levels of empowerment as well as the incremental linkages.

The results of the study provides insights or can show that the involvement of immigrant women in the celebration of multicultural festivals has an impact on their empowerment. The women in the study can build self-confidence and harness their self-worth through their exposure to diverse cultures, acceptance of their cultural symbols by other celebrants, and through building friendship and interacting with other people from different cultural and national backgrounds. The ability of the women in the study to develop self-confidence even amid fear, dislike, and hate, as recounted by one of the women in the study relate well with the Ladder of Empowerment Theory (Rocha, 1997) and the psychological empowerment as explained by Zimmerman and Rappaport (1988), and by Scheyvens (1999). This is because the atomistic individual empowerment is concerned with the individual developing a sense of self-confidence, self-belief or self-worth, which marks the beginning of the control of their lives and attending to their needs by themselves (women). The building of self-confidence by the women in the study also corroborates the psychological dimension of empowerment advanced by Scheyvens (1999). The increased opportunities for the women in the celebration of multicultural festivals will help to decrease a sense of fear, racial sentiments, and
marginalization as retorted by one of the women in the study, as suggested by Berger and Neuhaus (1977).

The fact that the women in the study can socialize with other people during celebration of multicultural festivals, build social connections through friendship and networking empowers the women socially. The women in the study feel accepted through the acceptance of their cultural symbols. This further validates the social dimension of empowerment, thus the context of unity or cohesion among society groups including women, youth, and the elderly leads to social empowerment (Scheyvens, 1999).

Another level of empowerment that emerged has to do with the ability of the women in the study to participate and take up leadership roles in the community organization through the celebration of multicultural festivals. Some of the women in the study have set up organizations to focus on training people to acquire new cultural symbols such as dance, music and clothes. This empowers them at the community level, and gives them a sense of participation. The ability of the women in the study to participate and lead in the celebration of multicultural festivals validates the claim that political empowerment manifests vividly when community stakeholder groups, including ethnic groups, women, and the poor, are given the same opportunity to determine their own future (Timothy, 2007; Cusack & Dixon, 2006). The leadership roles by the women, and their ability to participate in communities reflects the embedded individual empowerment advanced by Rocha (1997). The women organize themselves into dance and other performance groups, building social networks with fellow participants, as noted among the women who are fashion designers, culminating in the achievement of embedded and mediated type of empowerment. Thus, as groups, they can bring their expertise and knowledge to bear on the celebration of multicultural festivals.

The study also establishes that the celebration of multicultural festivals has the potential to empower immigrant women whose skills and career relate to the festival celebrations. The results of the study demonstrate that some of the women in the study, for example the fashion designers, whose activities relate to the festivals earned income from the sale of their products. This confirms the assertion that the economic dimension of empowerment talks of the empowerment of communities through the economic benefits deriving from their economic advantage, either directly or indirectly in the long run of time (Scheyvens, 1999; Timothy,2007).
The study also establishes that multicultural festivals provide the women an opportunity to build or have access to social networking of their own by connecting with other participants either in the same profession, vocation or the academia. As revealed mostly by the women who are into fashion designers, they are able to connect with their colleagues, and that in itself helps in understanding the Swedish fashion terrain. Thus, it helps the women to break the barriers of discrimination and social exclusion, which as has been cited as one of means to make the labour market inaccessible to immigrants in Sweden (OCED, 2014; Purnell & Paulanka, 1998; Higginbotham, 1997; Hutchinson & Smith, 1996; Lewis, 1991).

I move further to look at the extent to which the theoretical framework, Rocha’s (1997) Ladder of empowerment, has impacted the study by focusing on the achievement of the levels of empowerment by women. From the results of the study, it is evident that the atomistic individual empowerment – which is reflected in self-confidence – is achieved by women. The results of the study show that the women unanimously confirmed that participating in the celebration of Kulturenas Karneval has dispelled, to a greater extent, all forms of fear that hitherto inhibited their confidence in the city. Atomistic individual empowerment is also manifested from the standpoint of the women in fashion design, who are able to earn from the sale of their wares, thus the women in the position to provide for their own basic life needs or necessities that form the basis of their control. Once the women are self-confident, and able to control and provide for their basic needs, they can be assertive in the social groups they belong to, culminating in the achievement of embedded individual empowerment. In the study, it is observed that the women organized themselves into groups, and were able to influence the group's performances during the celebration of the Karneval.

The third level of empowerment, thus the mediated individual empowerment (Rocha, 1997) is manifested by the women as a result of their respective roles performed during the Karneval celebration. The fact that the women play respective roles (as singers, dancers, make-up artist, security guard among others) during the celebration of the Karneval place them in a position to interact, influence and strengthen their social relations, particularly with other celebrants from different cultures. With regards to the achievement of socio-political and political empowerment, there is no vivid or convincing manifestation by the women in the study. However, I argue that the fact that some of the women are able to mobilize or invest their private resources in their groups towards the Karneval celebration, without any economic consideration, falls within the purview of socio-political empowerment as posited by Rocha (1997). The political empowerment, at a glance, is not directly achieved by the
women, obviously attributable to the fact that their non-Swedish citizen status. However, I argue that political empowerment can be achieved by the women by virtue of their goodwill as long-lasting participants can influence legislation and policy direction regarding the celebration of the Karneval and other related festivals in Sweden. The women can influence decision making regarding the celebration of the Kulterenas Karneval. That is, the women's views and suggestions can influence the decisions of the Chairman. The ladder of empowerment theory has been useful to the study providing an assessment tool for measuring the types of empowerment attained by immigrant women as a result of their participation in multicultural festivals, and their progress of empowerment.

Chapter six.

Conclusion, limitation of the study and recommendations

6.1 Conclusion

The review of the literature and the interviews give a clear picture of the experiences of immigrant women that impact on their empowerment because of their participation in multicultural festivals. The study confirms the direct and convincing attainment of the first three levels of empowerment as espoused by Rocha (1997), thus atomistic, embedded, mediated individual empowerment by the women. The women’s participation in the celebration of the Karneval ignites their self-confidence, which culminates in not only forming, but assertiveness in performance groups, and ultimately influencing their social relations. The study further shows that socio-political empowerment is subtly achieved by the women, while there is no trace of achieving political empowerment.

This study unearths the potentials and opportunities in the multicultural enclave, and their efficacies to empowering immigrant women in the Uppsala city. The study confirms that
multicultural festivals are potential tool for the integration of the women in the city, The study draws the attention of the immigrant (women) to explore the celebration of multicultural festivals as an alternative tool – other than seen as a conduit for fun and relaxation – to harness their integration in Uppsala and other cities in Sweden, considering the cumbersomeness connected with mainstream integration processes and structures established by the Sweden government.

6.2 Limitations of the study

Every research conducted is characterized by problems and this study is no exception. First and foremost, the issue of trust by the women is likely to limit the quality of responses from the interview and the results of the study in general. In spite of my personal contact with the women, they still exhibited some degree of doubt. The mistrust was borne out of their past experiences as immigrants, particularly the discriminations, challenges and frustrations suffered in the hands of some immigration officials. Some of them exhibited a residual psychological and emotional trauma. Though I constantly assured them of the confidentiality of their responses, the doubt they expressed can limit the efficacy of the responses collected, and the overall findings of the study.

Secondly, the validity and reliability of qualitative studies can be challenged due to a few numbers of participants or informants usually chosen for such studies. This study is no exception, despite the painstaking approach in data collection and processing, the fifteen interviewees chosen for the study I would like to state that the number is likely to impair the validity and reliability of the results of the study. Further studies in or on the same field should consider a greater number of participants, so the validity and reliability can be achieved. A longitudinal quantitative study can be conducted to validate the results of these studies, which I may consider in future studies.

Thirdly, 7 out of the 15 women selected for the study are European immigrants, and the remaining 8 from outside Europe. Hence, the results of the study represent a mixed inclination of European women, and women outside Europe. In view of this, the results of the study are neither representing entirely the views and inclinations of non-European women nor European immigrants in Sweden. However, it is most likely that non-European immigrant women may experience a harder time integrating than their European counterparts. This calls for further research of similar nature involving non-European women to ascertain their perspectives or inclinations on the empowerment of women through the celebration of
multicultural festivals. Additionally, the perspectives outlined by the results of the study emanated from women whose vocations were directly related to multicultural festivals in Uppsala, hence the results of the study do not reflect the standpoints of women whose vocations and pursuits are directly linked to the celebration of multicultural festivals.

Fourthly, most interviewees have higher educational backgrounds, pursuing various vocations and professions. These extraneous variables – thus, their level of income, educational background, and leadership roles they occupied in their groups – can potentially impact on their empowerment independently.

Lastly, the study acknowledges the fact that qualitative research cannot independently verify self-reported data. As a result, another limitation of the study has to do with the biases of the interviewees, that the researcher could identify at firsthand. Thus, the result of the study is strictly based on the face value of the data collected through the interviews.

6.3 Recommendations

In view of the conclusion and the limitations of the study, the I make the following recommendations:

1. Further studies on the same phenomena should be conducted or undertaken in other cities of Sweden, or in other countries to validate deeper the results of this study. A longitudinal quantitative approach will be suitable to deepen the validity and reliability of the maiden findings as shown by this study.

2. The immigrant women, and by extension, their male counterparts should be sensitized on the potentials of multicultural festivals to their empowerment and integration process in the Swedish communities. This will help them to explore multicultural festivals through participation in addition to the mainstream integration processes and structures established by the Sweden government.

3. Organizers of multicultural festivals, particularly the Kulterenas Karneval should review their programmes so that it will be attractive and bring about the participation of the immigrant women. Publicity can be intensified together with performance models that will display more the cultural identities of the immigrants who form the ethnic minority groups in the Sweden communities.

4. Governments and communities should not only ensure the celebration of festivals as a medium to preserve ethnic cultures, foster cultural plurality, and to promote tourism Community integration models must include the celebration of multicultural festivals,
and the key stakeholders and practitioners giving the needed resources and training for the purpose of effective community integration and building of good multicultural societies in the city, which ultimately leads to the fulfillment of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG 11),

5. Additionally, for further studies, it will be a worthwhile academic exercise if the academia researches the trend of integration of immigrant women in their host cities and women's empowerment.

References:


Umanailo, B. C. M. (2019). Overview of Phenomenological Research


Appendix 1: Letter to Kulturernas karneval

March 24th, 2022

To: Kulturernas Karneval

Thunbergsvägen 3H

751 20 Uppsala

Hello,

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST IN YOUR ORGANISATION FOR MY MASTERS THESIS RESEARCH

I am Ehmeli Dzifa Amengor, a second-year master’s student at Södertörn University in Stockholm. I study Leadership for Sustainable Development. One of my interests lies in Culture and Creative arts. Recently, in project management, I studied multi-cultural and
creative businesses in Stockholm such as Subtopia in Botkyrka municipality. My research was about how this organization promotes the various cultural Businesses in the Botkyrka Municipality in relation to practical sustainability under the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. (SDGs). This is in line with Culture which is newly added as the fourth perspective of Sustainability.

As part of my final year research thesis, I am inspired to conduct more research on multicultural organizations and festivals and how they empower immigrant women in Uppsala. Last summer, I attended your event at the English park which was very colourful and great. I therefore was inspired and decided to make Kulturernas Karneval my first choice to bring to light regarding how immigrant women are being empowered and how the festival is helping to build the city of Uppsala while meeting the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. I am confident that the research findings will be very beneficial to your organization in many ways.

With the support of my supervisor, Eva Karlberg, I would like to request of you to give me the opportunity to conduct my research and interview the managers of Kulturernas Karneval and the immigrant women who partake in this festival in various aspects. This will facilitate my research findings. Considering this, I would like to book an appointment with you to discuss in further details other interesting matters which may be relevant to this subject. Please, let me know if you or anyone else in your organization are interested and when a meeting would be suitable for you. I am flexible regarding time and place.

Thank you and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Kind regards,

Ehmeli Dzifa Amengor

Masters’ student

Leadership for Sustainable Development

Södertörn University

Huddinge, Stockholm.
Appendix 2: Interview guide

Dear Interviewee,

I am a student at Södertörn University undertaking a thesis on the topic of the impact of multicultural festivals on the empowerment of immigrant women. This thesis is a partial fulfillment of academic requirements at Södertörn University. In view of this, I am conducting interviews to elicit data for the study. You are reminded that the data collected would be treated with utmost confidentiality, however, only authorized persons of the university will have access to the data. Though selected by the researcher, your participation in the study is voluntary, and you are reserved the right to withdraw from the study as and when you intend to do so. It is not mandatory to answer all questions, and you are to answer the questions to the best of your ability and understanding. The interview would be conducted in English. Nevertheless, you are entitled to an interpreter to explain interview questions to
your understanding. I hereby ask for your informed consent to participate in this interview and your permission to record the interview.

Thank you for your understanding. Do you have any questions before we start?

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS

This section elicits responses on the demographic details of the respondents.

Marital status:
Married Single Separated

Divorced Widow

Level of education

SECTION B. EXPERIENCE OF MULTICULTURAL FESTIVALS

This section elicits responses on the experiences and participation of immigrant women in multicultural festival celebration.

1. Which multicultural festival/s have you experienced or participated in since your arrival in the city?
2. What influenced you to participate in the festival?
3. Can you share your experiences of participating in the festivals?
4. What new cultural events or symbols did you experience during the celebration of the festivals?
5. Which cultural events from your origin did you display during the festival celebration?

SECTION C: IMPACT OF MULTICULTURAL FESTIVALS ON THE EMPOWERMENT OF IMMIGRANT WOMEN.

This section seeks to collect data on how experiences and involvement of the immigrant women in multicultural festivals have impacted on their empowerment.

6. In your view, how has your experiences from your participation in multicultural festivals contributed to your empowerment?
7. Give four empowerment areas that multicultural festivals have helped you to achieve.
8. What role/s have you played in the celebration of multicultural festivals that you think have empowered you individually?

9. What activity or community level participation do you engage in during the celebration of multicultural festivals?

10. How do you feel in the city after your participation in the celebration of multicultural festival?

Appendix 3: Pictures of Kulturernas Karneval in Uppsala

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Figure removed from digital version due to copyright