"A compliment immediately becomes a harassment"

A qualitative study of young male university students’ perceptions on the #metoo movement and the changes in their attitudes
ABSTRACT

Olivia Murdock & Samantha Nadjafi

A compliment immediately becomes a harassment
A qualitative study of young male university students’ perceptions on the #metoo movement and the changes in their attitudes

In the fall of 2017, the #metoo movement began on social media to encourage victims of sexual harassment to speak up and show the magnitude of the problem, especially violence committed by men against women. The message of #metoo went viral and developed into a significant topic on gender equality. It became a global trend in countries such as Sweden, France and various other countries, which caused a storm of users to share their stories with the help of the hashtag metoo on their social media platforms. The motivation behind the chosen area of study is to comprehend opinions on the movement. In order to get a different perspective on the women’s movement the focus throughout lie on young men. The aim of this study is to examine how heterosexual male students at a university in Sweden view the movement both as a Swedish and a global phenomenon. Furthermore, the study examined if the students believe their attitudes toward sexual harassment have been affected or changed by the movement. This bachelor thesis attempted to answer the research questions and present the results by conducting focus group interviews. The presented results of the focus group interviews showed an overall positive attitude towards the purpose of the movement. However, a majority agreed that the movement had developed into something beyond its purpose and discussed the negative effects it brought with it. The participants expressed concern for the usage of the hashtag for minor incidents which eventually overshadowed the initial positive purpose of the movement. Through the study, it was furthermore revealed that the participants did not believe that a change in attitudes had occurred within themselves, even though they believed it may have brought change to other men in society.

Keywords: #metoo, sexual harassment, women’s movement, Sweden, globalization, gender roles
Table of contents

1. Introduction....................................................................................................1
   1.1 Problematization and Delimitations.......................................................1
   1.2 Disposition............................................................................................2
   1.3 Purpose...................................................................................................2
   1.4 Research questions................................................................................3
2. Previous research...........................................................................................4
   2.1 The #metoo movement.........................................................................4
   2.2 The second wave of the women’s movement........................................4
   2.3 The third wave of the women’s movement..........................................5
   2.4 Definition of concepts.........................................................................5
3. Theoretical framework....................................................................................7
   3.1 Power and consent................................................................................7
   3.2 The globalization theory and the global village.................................8
4. Methodology..................................................................................................10
   4.1 Qualitative methodology......................................................................10
   4.2 Focus groups.........................................................................................10
      4.2.1 Conducting the focus groups.......................................................10
      4.2.2 Limitations...................................................................................11
   4.4 Validity and reliability.........................................................................12
5. Results...........................................................................................................13
   5.1 Attitudes towards sexual harassment................................................13
   5.2 Patterns in society................................................................................15
   5.3 Global impact of #metoo....................................................................17
6. Theoretical analysis.......................................................................................20
   6.1 Power and consent theory.................................................................20
   6.2 The globalization theory and the global village...............................21
   6.3 Previous research................................................................................22
7. Conclusion and discussion..........................................................................24
References.........................................................................................................26
Appendix 1.......................................................................................................28
Appendix 2.......................................................................................................29
1. Introduction

In the middle of October 2017, a hashtag was used on Twitter by the American actress Alyssa Milano that became the beginning of a modern global movement. Her inspiration came from the concept of “metoo” founded by Tarana Burke, an American civil rights activist. She urged everyone, especially women, to use the hashtag metoo if they had ever been victims of sexual harassment or assault in the past. Her intention was to emphasize the number of victims rather than the perpetrators and show the magnitude of the problem (Alyssa_Milano, 2017). The movement therefore has its foundation in the United States and rapidly spread on social media platforms such as Twitter, Instagram and Facebook. The hashtag was used over 12 million times within the course of 24 hours with posts and stories of rape, sexual harassment and assault on social media. For some individuals, it was their first time sharing their stories and others were encouraged to share their experiences as well. The spread of the movement became global after a few days and within ten days the hashtag was a trending topic in 85 countries (Mediearkivet, 2017).

According to the Global Gender Gap Index, Sweden is ranked as one of the world’s most equal countries (World Economic Forum, 2016). The global movement reached Sweden a few days after its outbreak in the United States. When two Swedish female public figures shared their stories under #metoo, the movement reached a breakthrough in the country (Mediearkivet, 2017). Between the months of October and November 2017 the hashtag was used over 80,000 times from over 50,000 users, creating millions of interactions which linked Swedish individuals with the rest of the world (Bellford, 2018). According to Retriever, which is a media archive that has measured the impact of #metoo in social media and editorial media, Sweden is ranked sixth among the countries that have used the hashtag most frequently. The top five countries prior to Sweden were, in order: United States, United Kingdom, India, Canada, and France (Mediearkivet, 2017).

With the use of social media, it has been possible for individuals to reach out and spread the movement over time and borders. Awareness of the problems expressed in the movement is spreading and in today's globalized world, movements reach people on all continents because of our connection through communication technologies (Giddens, 2014). The movement involved a large number of people and various hashtags were created in relation to #metoo which focused on branches, or individuals who wanted to stand up for their actions. People who wanted to stand up for their actions were for the most parts men. Those involved who used the hashtag most frequently were women, creating the possibility for women to share their stories (Jones, 2017).

1.1. Problematization and Delimitations

The #metoo movement is a relatively new movement and the hashtag has mostly been used by women. Due to the fact that the movement was recently established, the amount of research available is limited. Since the movement spread and escalated through media and communication, most of the research found has been bound to similar subjects such as the impact and role of the medias in the #metoo movement. The development of the hashtag metoo in social media, such as Twitter and Instagram, has shown the growth of the movement. However, what we believe to be a gap in the research of the #metoo movement at the moment is men's perceptions on the movement in Sweden and globally. The study is for that reason directed towards men and the focus throughout
the study is on their views and attitudes, from a theory on power and consent as well as a globalization perspective.

Before reflecting on the purpose and research questions of the study, limitations were discussed to delimit the study to a specific area. In light of the #metoo movement's recent beginning, many aspects of the movement are yet to be researched. Firstly, the geographic limitations and the fact that it is a global movement initiated in many countries, one specific country had to be chosen before directing the focus on the movement to a global perspective. However, we are aware of the western focus in examining previous research. The concept of Western countries is also limited since it is widely debated and subjective in relation to different perspectives, such as economic, cultural and political perspectives. In this paper, western countries are defined as countries with European origin, sharing of fundamental political ideologies such as democracy, equality and human rights as well as sharing fundamental cultural aspects such as values and norms. Limitations have also been made regarding the amount of qualitative data available about the movement. Since creating and collecting empirical data to analyze is time consuming, the amount of available time had to be taken into consideration. The amount of women participating in the movement were significantly higher than men, while the perpetrators who were outed in the movement were mostly men. It was relevant to the topic to compare sexes, however one was chosen for time and resource limitations. Research about how men perceive the #metoo movement or if it has changed their attitudes became the final subject of the study. To further limit the study, an age group was chosen and more specifically the study was aimed towards university students. The study is limited to students at Jönköping University, as it is considered a representative Swedish university.

1.2. Disposition
The first chapter of this paper aims to define the scope of the research, lay out the specific purpose, and research questions for the study. The second chapter focuses on previous research relevant to the subject area and relevant concepts are also defined. The theoretical framework of the study is examined in the third chapter, where two theories are presented to be the outline for the analysis. The following and forth chapter describes the methodology with discussions regarding choice of method and possible limitations to the study. The results of the study are presented in the fifth chapter and are divided into relevant themes. Following the results, the analysis is presented based on the theoretical framework and previous research. The final and seventh chapter includes a final discussion and conclusion, as well as suggestions for further research.

1.3. Purpose
The purpose of this study is to examine male students at Jönköping University in Sweden and their views on the #metoo movement in Sweden and as a global phenomenon. The perceptions of students and whether they have changed their attitudes as a result of the movement are analyzed. By means of two focus groups, a qualitative study examines the students views and attitudes on the movement.
1.4. Research Questions
The research questions formulated to help to reach a conclusion and fulfill the purpose are the following:

- How do Swedish students who identify themselves as heterosexual males view the #metoo movement in Sweden?

- Has the #metoo movement changed the attitudes of the male students regarding the issues brought up by the movement, and in what ways?

- How do the students view the #metoo movement from a global perspective?
2. Previous Research

The objective of the upcoming section is to provide an overview of previous research on the subject of the second and third wave of women’s movement up until today, as well as research carried out on the #metoo movement. The two waves of the women’s movement described what women’s fight for their liberation has looked like through time. The previous research displays how the study contributes to the area of research, and served as a tool for analyzing the results of the study. The first wave of the women’s movement is not examined, the study is delimited to the second and third wave because of its relevance to the topic.

2.1. The #Metoo Movement

Since the world is still in the immediate aftermath of the #metoo movement, there is not much research on the area to present for this section. However, Michelle Rodino-Colocino (2018) discussed in her article the aspect of countering cruelty with empathy which the #metoo movement consists of. She brought up risks with passive versus transformative empathy in relation to the creation of the movement in 2006 by Tarana Burke. Furthermore, as Rodino-Colocino explained, not only was the movement a way of spreading empathy among victims of sexual abuse, it also aimed to expose systems of oppression and privilege. Another aspect brought up in the discussion was the sexist statements voiced by Donald Trump and how his presidency is a symbol for the “white supremacist patriarchal power”. The #metoo movement can according to this article be seen as a counteraction towards legitimizing of white male privilege in society. The author concluded that the movement began as a symbol of empathy but later transformed into a movement which encouraged change of patriarchal structures (Rodino-Colocino, 2018).

2.2. The Second Wave of the Women’s Movement

The second wave of the women’s movement began to spread the most during the 1970’s and was to a large extent inspired by similar movements in other parts of the western societies. The second wave began with “The Feminine Mystique” published in 1963 by Betty Friedan, where she wrote about white women’s dissatisfaction of only being considered “housewives”. The demand for equal rights, economic justice and the right to control your own body were top priorities, as well as domestic violence (Barner & Carney, 2011; Kutz-Flamenbaum, 2015). The women’s movement in the United States can be seen as an influence on what developed in Sweden during the 1970’s. Although the movement in general was active on an international level, with similar debates and demands, it was mostly organized on a national and local level (Isaksson, 2007). According to Barbara Epstein (2002) the second wave of the women’s movement was the most successful one, because it evolved over time and changed the life for the modern women in the political, economic and social areas. She explained that the movement’s impact was broader and deeper than any other movement (Epstein, 2002). Carol Harrington (2015) examined the second movement as it originated in the U.S which shaped the twentieth century through its spread of knowledge. She explained how the movement and the embedded feminist knowledge in the movement created ”new” forms of problems constructed for the government and governmental institutions to manage. In her work about the movement, the woman became a category with problems in need of both national and international resolutions. The feminist movement spread to Europe and by the end of 1980 and 1990 became a wave for the demand of equal rights in Western countries (Harrington, 2013).
A different aspect of the movement was brought up by Carrie Baker (2007). Her article emphasized the diversity of the movement and how the issue of sexual harassment motivated women to collective action. In the United States, sexual harassment was significant because it concerned many women regardless of class and race. She explained that it was more rooted in personal integrity. It was a common problem they could fight against together and already by the late 1970’s the issue of sexual harassment was a dominant part of the movement (Baker, 2007). Susan Mann and Douglas Huffman (2005) researched another view on the second wave of the movement and were more critical to the diversity of the movement. In their article they stated how the oppression women of color simultaneously experienced was never fully addressed. They argued that the movement, its theories and political praxis in the United States failed to notice the concerns of women of color and different ethnicities. They drew the conclusion by describing that a movement more compatible with diversity embraces the differences and produces new ways of understanding (Mann & Huffman, 2005).

2.3 The Third Wave of the Women’s Movement
The third wave of the women's movement began in the 1991 with the case of Anita Hill and her testimony against Clarence Thomas, a Supreme Court nominee. He had sexually harassed her at the workplace, and was still admitted to the Supreme Court which induced a wave of similar sexual harassment accusations. The idea of the “third wave” became known when Rebecca Walker asserted “I am the Third Wave” after Anita Hill’s testimony (Garrison, 2000). Based on experiences coming from the United States, the third wave of the women’s movement contributed to ideas and theories of feminism. The focus in their study was to describe how the third wave brought up the idea of discrimination based on factors such as gender, race and ethnicity (Huffman & Mann, 2005). The third wave rose as a critique of the second wave of the women’s movement since it failed to include, for instance, women of color and different ethnicities. The concept of intersectionality originated in the third wave and visualized that forms of oppression are created of power relations based on race, gender and class, among others. This means that the fact that a woman is never “only” a woman and sex is not enough to explain how inequality occurs. Features of globalization also worked to help promote awareness of factors such as class and race. However, the critical view was that the third wave was a spreading of Western political and cultural norms (Huffman & Mann, 2005).

Evans’ (2015) research focused on the third wave of feminism, although she did provide a critical perspective on dividing the women’s movement into waves. The author conducted a comparative study on third wave feminist activism in the United States and Great Britain. To obtain the data for the research, the author embraced an inclusive starting point by conducting interviews with a non-homogenous group considering aspects such a race, sexuality, economic status and disabilities. Both men and women were interviewed, even though a majority involved in feminist activism turned out to be women. The author described the third wave as uncertain in its definition, while simultaneously characterized by intersectionality and as a critical reaction to the second wave. The third wave feminist activism was explained to take place on local levels, as well as across borders through the usage of internet and social media in particular (Evans, 2015).
2.4. Definition of Concepts
The section below is meant to clarify the definitions of certain concepts and how they contribute to an understanding of the meaning of the notions used in the study.

*Gender* - Defined as a socially constructed concept which express the acculturation of individuals into what is considered masculine or feminine in the given culture (Griffin, 2017).

*Gender roles* - Can be defined as the norms and behaviors expected from people on the basis of sex within certain cultures. There are attributes associated to males versus females to which people are expected to conform (Griffin, 2017).

*Patriarchy* - In a patriarchal society, men hold the power, resources and authority and women are considered to be dependent on, and inferior to men (Griffin 2017).

*Globalization* - The creation of links between people that transcend national boundaries. Distances and geographical boundaries are less important, and the internet is considered an important compound for this development (Heery & Noon, 2017).

*Hashtag* - Defined as a searchable mean of specification on the social media platform Twitter consisting of the hash symbol (#). Used to generate trending topics on the platform (Chandler & Munday, 2016).
3. Theoretical Framework

In the following section, the theoretical framework and concepts is described and later be applied in the analysis of the data materia. Two theories are applied in this study: power and consent, which focuses on gender relations, and the global village as a part of the globalization theory. The theories applied in the study helped to answer the research questions and to provide aspects on how the university students perceived the #metoo movement.

3.1. Power and Consent

In the book “Toward a Feminist Theory of the State” (1989) Catherine MacKinnon examined and discussed the concept of consent in a way which is used as a theoretical standpoint for this study. She examined the concept through the perspectives of power relations between genders, heterosexuality and sexual assault (MacKinnon, 1989). Gunilla Carstensen (2005) further discussed MacKinnon’s theory on consent in relation to sexual harassment in her study of sexual harassment in the Swedish Academy (Carstensen, 2005).

According to MacKinnon (1989), the society is built on male supremacy, a patriarchy, which trickled down from the legal system to accepted behavior of individuals. This particular system gave rise to unequal power relations between the sexes, where males are dominant and females are submissive. She argued that the entire state is male and even though progress toward equality is made, the problem of power dynamics regarding sexual violence still stands. It is important to address the fact that the theory is based on a heterosexual perspective and focuses mainly on the power dynamics between men and women and masculine versus feminine norms. MacKinnon described how power relations between men and women are mirrored in sexual relations and argued that women are socialized into a passive stance and that male domination is eroticized in the patriarchal society. Furthermore, she described sexuality as a concept defined by men, for men in society. The woman’s consent is generally not something that is taken into account. Because of these processes, rape is a reoccurring issue that is predominantly executed by men on women. Legal and social frameworks further withhold these power dynamics which in turn leads to difficulties in prosecuting rape crimes. By this, MacKinnon meant that consent is a problematic concept due to the eroticizing of male dominance and that women are expected to be submissive in sexual relations, which makes the line between consent and non-consent rather blurry, i.e. the unequal power relations are institutionalized in society. Sex crimes are, according to the theory, a matter of interpretation and it is up to the woman to prove that she did not consent. MacKinnon explained that it is assumed that the power lies with the woman to give consent or not, to say yes or no in the given situation. However, it ignored several important aspects such as underlying power structures and force. It ignores the man’s prevail on whether or not the woman gave consent (MacKinnon, 1989).

MacKinnon discusses the relations between sexuality and violence.

[...] intercourse with force or coercion can be or become consensual. [...] dominance plus submission is force plus consent. This equals sex, not rape. Under male supremacy, this is too often the reality. In a critique of male supremacy, the elements ‘with force and without consent’ appear redundant. Force is present because consent is absent. (MacKinnon, 1989 p. 172).

The pervading theme in MacKinnon’s theory was the relation between gender, sexuality and gender-based violence. She questioned the line between sexuality and violence in heterosexual
relations and the system which existed to prosecute sex crimes. She argued that rape has been
defined as distinct from intercourse but domination and violence, to some degree, was presented in
both due to the erotization of power relations. This is why separating the two has been proven
difficult, as it is, once again, up to the woman to prove her experienced violation (MacKinnon,
1989).

3.2. The Globalization Theory and the Global Village

According to Giddens (2014) the theory of globalization is integration of people’s lives and the
creation of common global experiences. The globalization theory explained the world as one, where
globalization is constant and refer to broad aspects of trends, culture, movements and events. It
explained the development of the world where nations are influenced by mass media and the
expansion of western culture. The flow of information about people and events around the world
has expanded and media mediate, for example, news, information and pictures daily to a real global
audience. Today, people are interconnected and can identify themselves with global issues and
patterns in need of social action that goes beyond national borders (Giddens, 2014).

The Internet and media gave rise to the current globalization process and has changed its scope,
impact and dissemination. Debatin (2008) explained how globalization of the information and
communication technology has led to media being at center of attention where news, events and
stories are accessible. The age of information evolved the modern globalization allowing users to
overcome being recipients, to becoming active participants. For movements to take off, media has
become a tool for political and social action where gathering, producing and disseminating news
and information are main parts. Today’s global access of information and news has changed
structures which now recognizes and addresses issues previously underrepresented (Debatin, 2008).

McLuhan (1999 [1964]) coined the theory of a “global village” as part of the globalization theory
and explained it as the world shrinking into a village on different terms. It consists of people from
different places, with social and cultural differences in their identities. However, McLuhan mostly
described Western societies included in the global village. The theory has been explained in many
aspects such as culture and politics. However, it focused mainly on the communication and media
technology. The theory viewed the world as shrinking and expanding at the same time because of
the technological advances which allowed for direct sharing (McLuhan & Terrence, 2003). As part
of the globalization process, the dissemination of movements and messages is done through
communication and media, which in order creates a global village for individuals to share and
communicate (Giddens, 2014).

According to McLuhan (1999 [1964]) the global village represented a small place where people
communicated quickly. Ideas, events and movements taking place anywhere in the world could
more easily reach people, making it easy to find information about every happening. The global
village is described as part of the globalization process and the development of information and
communication technology. It has made it possible for people all over the world to share and take
part of the same information. McLuhan continued by explaining how the population is connected to
the media environment to the same extent and people can choose to hear about any event at any
time they want (McLuhan, 1999 [1964]). Communication and messages are forwarded immediately.
McLuhan describes the global village a place where people experience important events happening around the world – and are affected by these events together. This way, people are more linked together and experience the same happening from different places (McLuhan, 1999 [1964]). Today’s actions and reactions occur at almost the same time and movements has heightened human awareness of responsibility. He explains his theory as a Western dominated village where electronic media and communication evolution is at an instant speed. The application of new global communication forms in people's lives changed the way individuals communicate with each other and brought radical change in human events (McLuhan & Terrence, 2003). The effects of people’s actions can be experienced almost instantly due to the global village. As a part of this, people are more aware of their responsibility on a global level rather than being concerned exclusively on their own small communities (McLuhan, 1999 [1964]). Besides from dissemination of news in the global village, it is also a mean of, for instance, discussion and debating (Levinson, 1999).
4. Methodology

In the following section the method used to carry out the study is discussed, followed by a description of choice of method, collection of data, and a validity and reliability discussion.

4.1. Qualitative Method

To help support our research purpose which focused on male students perceptions and views, a qualitative study was carried out. What the participants said and perceived as important, while at the same time discussing and debating their points of views, are the basis of this study. The method chosen was therefore focus group interviews to examine male students attitudes and their views on the #metoo movement. As a part of our methodology a theoretical analysis of our collected data is conducted. The analysis involved interpretation of data with the help of theories and previous research. Without theories or comprehension of the problem, it is difficult to understand what the analysis implies (Hjerm, Lindgren & Nilsson, 2014).

4.2. Focus Groups

Focus group interviews was the method of choice to help answer our research questions. Focus group interviews is a qualitative method which consists of a number of participants in an unstructured situation where the focus lies on analyzing the interaction between the participants and the openness to discuss a particular question. Conducting focus group interviews is a way to study individuals in a social context and how group dynamics affect ways of expressing an individual's opinion in relation to others. Focus group interviews differ from regular group interviews in the matter of having a certain subject in focus, which is a central part of this study (Bryman, 2011). In order to conduct the focus group interviews, Bryman's (2011) most important steps and principles in a qualitative research have been followed. The four principles regarding ethical considerations in research have also been included throughout our study. These four principles are, according to Bryman (2011), the demand for information, confidentiality, purposeful use, as well as the demand for consent.

4.2.1. Conducting the Focus Groups

To carry out this study two focus group interviews were conducted with five participants in each group. The stratifying criteria for the two groups were limited by gender, sexual orientation and nationality. All the participants were male Swedish students at Jönköping University who identified as heterosexuals and were between the ages of 20 and 25. Another criteria for the participants was the requirement to have some knowledge about the #metoo movement. The number of participants in the focus groups was limited due to the fact that smaller groups allow the individuals to bring out personal perceptions to a larger extent. The method used to recruit participants to the focus groups was to reach out to different sources through the university such as the student association “Lärande och Kommunikation” (LOK) and personal networks through social media. Through these strategies, we found two persons compatible with the criteria, who then collected other persons also compatible, which created two natural groups. Natural groups consists of people who know each other, which is favorable when analyzing group dynamics. It may also increase the chances of the participants honesty and openness when discussing more personal subjects, such as the perceptions on sexual harassment (Halkier, 2010). However, it is important to acknowledge that natural groups could provide a homogenous viewpoint, as friends might have similar opinions. An interview guide
was developed, which helped us ask the questions in the desired order and keep the conversation going which contributed to avoiding long pauses and move on if the discussion was going in the wrong direction and not providing information relevant for the research purpose. Both of the focus groups were held at different group rooms at Jönköping University, places the participants were familiar with. The focus groups were held with one day apart from each other. In both groups, we offered some coffee and asked if all volunteered to participate.

All participants were enlightened with the study’s purpose and reasons behind the focus groups. Before starting the discussions we asked for their permission to record the interviews and after getting their approvals, started with some basic information in order to continue to the first question in our interview guide (see Appendix 2). A final question was formulated to ask if the participants wanted to add something in case they did not get the chance to fully get their viewpoints heard. Our roles in the focus groups were to ask the questions and let the discussion be open for them to express themselves. It was decided to keep the focus groups unstructured and not intervene unless it was time to move on to the next question. This way we had better control over our own perceptions and avoided intervention. Important aspects of a researcher in focus group interviews are objectivity and respect for the participants views, giving the participants more ownership over the process. The discussion was only for the participants and we were seated in another part of the room to demonstrate our non-participation in the discussion. The participants openly discussed and let us know when they were ready to move on to the next question. The interviews conducted were between 30-60 minutes and two smartphones were used as recording devices for safety reasons. Two phones were used as a precaution against unintelligible audio or phone issues interfering with and disturbing the interviews. Both focus groups were held in Swedish and the transcript was done in Swedish as well. All the participants are anonymous and only referred to as "participant" and with given letter to specify the quotes in the presentation of the data material. They were all informed of their anonymity in the study and all the participants gave their approval to record the interviews with the requirement that only the researchers had access to the material. Lastly, we gave thanks for everyone’s participation and brought up the purpose of the study and their participation once more before finishing the discussions. During the process of transcription and analysis of the material, the focus was to detect thoughts and statements from the participants that were connected to the research questions which contributed to connect the results to the theoretical framework. The compilation of the focus group interviews provided material and expressions that could be categorized which supported the theoretical framework, subsequently the theoretical analysis.

4.2.2. Limitations
Before conducting the interviews we had to prepare ourselves for obstacles in the process and in our choice of method. A large part of the study was to respect the amount of time available for us to conduct the interviews. The number of focus groups was for that reason limited to two groups in order to still be able to answer our research questions thoroughly. The limited participants invited was to avoid having large amounts of data material which could have increased the risk of inaudible parts, resulting in a complicating transcription process and data analysis. When examining our roles as group leaders, we had to think differently and avoid influencing the participants. Furthermore, as female researchers, we acknowledged our approach since all participants were males, believing it could affected their responses. The idea was that every interpretation requires understanding. For
that reason an interpretation was never absolute, but it was guided by expectations and preconceptions (Thurén, 2007). Incorrect expectations may occur, but we try to amend as much as possible in the course of the interpretation process of the focus groups. In order to prevent the participants from feeling discouraged to voice their opinions, our role as group leaders were strictly to ask the questions and clarify any doubts, as mentioned before. When researching a social process and people’s views, it can be easy to see what one wants to see and how one chooses to interpret it. The matter of generalization was difficult because of parts such as the group situation, dynamics, and composition of the groups can influence the participants to express themselves differently or possibly not even speaking the truth. Our subject matter is sensitive and people can give a variety of answers in different groups, as well as being affected by other participants opinions, which makes the ability to generalize complex. Consequently the members of our focus groups cannot represent all males at Jönköping University.

4.4. Validity and Reliability

Two essential concepts when examining a scientific study is validity and reliability. Having high validity is an essential part of the study, particularly in order to be able to draw accurate conclusions. To briefly explain the concept of validity, it means that the study measures what it intended to measure (Hjerm, Lindgren & Nilsson, 2014). Since our study examined men’s perceptions and attitudes our most valuable asset was our empirical material. Focus groups also mean that the group leaders could interact in the discussion except for asking the questions. The study aims at men’s viewpoints and to refrain from interfering and at the same time letting the participants discuss together, our choice of method helped us research what we intended to. Since we had a total of ten participants the possibility to generalize was low, and our sample do not represent all male students at Jönköping University nor all universities in Sweden, nor men in Sweden of all ages. To create high validity we quoted the participants often and use their own words to present the results, also to avoid own interpretations and putting their answers in a different context. To describe our study’s reliability is a crucial part in order to explain strengths and weaknesses. Reliability refers to the trustworthiness of the study (Bryman, 2011). To avoid systematic inaccuracies, we recorded the material in two phones to avoid missing out important discussion and in case there were any doubts during the transcribing process, the recordings were repeated numerous times to detect them. Since the interviews were conducted in Swedish and translated to English, we kept the colloquial language and translated to equivalent words to avoid consequences for the reliability in our study.
5. Results

This section presents the results from the focus group interviews through three themes: attitudes towards sexual harassment, patterns in society and global effects of #metoo. These themes mainly emerged during the process of transcription and provided an overview of the empirical material which helped to present the results.

5.1. Attitudes Towards Sexual Harassment

In both of the focus groups, attitudes towards sexual harassment was a repeated topic. In the first group, the participants started by discussing the fact that sexual harassment and violence such as rape, are criminal offences and not normal behavior. The participants discussed their negative attitudes toward boys and men taking advantage of girls and women and the first group all agreed on having an attitude that meant showing respect for everyone regardless of gender. The #metoo movement did not change their attitudes regarding the issues brought up in the movement. Many of the participants in the first group agreed their attitudes had not changed quite much. This was due to poor involvement in the movement, however the participants are aware it mostly involved women. The participants all explained they considered their thoughts on the subject to be satisfactory both before and after #metoo and one participant described his attitude as ”[…] you treat people the way you want to be treated, whether you are a boy or a girl” (Participant C, focus group 1). Even though the participants in the first group agreed on #metoo not having a big impact on their attitudes, one of the participants explained how those “who feel offended and attacked by the movement may develop a more negative attitude and get angrier” (Participant A, focus group 1). In terms of attitudes towards sexual harassment, one of the participants pointed out boys and men in particular must learn to read signals and understand the fact that a ”no” can be a ”no” without words being used. Group one also addressed the issue of sexual harassment in the given scenario (see Appendix 2). One of the participants believed it depends on what happened, still no matter what, one would feel regretful and extremely bad. All agreed and another participant elaborated ”it also depends on the guy’s personality” (Participant D, focus group 1). Even though the boy may have thought the girl agreed on everything, they discussed the fact that it does not matter because ”obviously she didn’t agree” and that, once again, learning to read signals is important.

If it had happened to me, the next time I would have…in the same scenario, for example, if I flirt with a girl, one starts to think differently even if they don't say no […] If it is something half mutual and half not mutual, it is best to figure that out first. (Participant A, focus group 1).

What both of the groups further discussed was the subject of attitudes towards sexual harassment and it is a question of age and generation. In the first group they discussed that people at a much younger age may, in general, not think about sexual harassment and the consequences of it as much as older individuals. Another participant said ”I think it can affect people in our age who… are… I mean it (#metoo) happened when we are quite young..so I think it will affect us when we are older, that we think twice” (Participant A, focus group 1).

The second focus group expressed being familiar with the #metoo movement and believed sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence are criminal offences. Much along the lines of the first group, group two did not believe there had been any changes in their attitudes due to the
#metoo movement either. One participant described it by stating never feeling a need to change his attitude, but shared how him and his female friends had a jargon containing gender derogatory swear words. He had asked his friends if they felt it was strange and wrong for him to speak in this way. The participant explained they did not see anything wrong with it since, between him and them, it is their way of speaking to each other in a fun way. In addition, his friends had said they would have spoken out if he went too far with it. He claimed not feeling as if the movement had changed his attitude, but said to believe #metoo had been helpful in raising awareness about sexual harassment in Sweden.

[…] but like I think, I do not think my moral has changed, so that I’ve gotten like this completely new revolutionary idea of how I look at women and harassment […] and that it highlights the perspective in a way so that more and more people become aware about the fact that you can’t behave like this, there will be consequences […]. (Participant G, focus group 2).

The participants in the second group brought up different aspects which had help shape their attitudes towards sexual harassment, such as how they had been raised and their personalities. They drew parallels between people who harass and rape women, and mental illness and overall abnormal behavior. Group number two moreover discussed how the movement may have influenced men's attitudes, both negatively and positively. Even if the participants did not believe the #metoo movement had any impact on them, some positive features were discussed.

"[…] I do not feel that #metoo caused me to lay there and bite my nails like, shit now…now I'm going to get outed in a Facebook group or something like that…but of course it has also, it has led to further having an eye-opener […]” (Participant G, focus group 2).

One participant brought up another positive aspect: how the movement was getting attention and showing the amount of victims, making the problem more visible. Regarding attitudes after #metoo, what both groups discussed was the ability for people to think more about the consequences and developing a different mindset. Both groups discussed this matter particularly in terms of male co-workers and executives and their attitudes in the work environment. The first group explained the fact that the #metoo movement should be considered a well needed reality check for many men. The group continued to discuss what the gender equality looks like in Sweden and one of the participants explained that some men needed this much more, particularly the Swedish television host Martin Timell. Furthermore, a negative aspect brought up in the second group was the discussion of whether #metoo has gone too far, making the line to what is offensive or not blurry. The participants argued how after #metoo one hardly dares to flirt with someone without it resulting in the other person feeling offended. "Imagine I’m at a café and then…I meet a girl that…looks very nice like and…kind, should you like…is it the "metoo-card" right away if I say hi you look nice?” (Participant I, focus group 2). For instance, the second group discussed how flirting has become complicated in the following example:

Participant F: A compliment immediately becomes a harassment… it feels like -

Participant H: It’s like (contradictions) all the time it feels like, we’re struggling against each other-

1 The “metoo-card” was explained as a way to blame someone by using the example of the card, a football reference, which was compared to the "racist-card".
Participant F: Whatever one says, it’s immediately the metoo-card.

Moving on, regarding sexual harassment after the movement, a participant in group two clarified one issue not mentioned in the discussion of #metoo. One of the participants addressed what he believed to be a neglected side of the movement: the importance to address the men who observe that kind of behavior without intervening. The participant explained the man standing quietly next to the man who behaves badly towards a woman, without taking action as equally guilty.

Then there is another effect that is not mentioned which I’m… ehm… deeply, what should I say… deeply concerned about…it is that men did not stop it before… if I see that someone does something to a girl over and over again, you see this kind of stuff doesn't happen once and then it’s over…like the jargon the person Martin what's his name had. (Participant F, focus group 2).

In the second group, they viewed the scenario (see Appendix 2) as different from person to person, and one of the participants said “you strongly have to question how you…what kind of judgment you have if you can’t even read a thing like that” (Participant G, focus group 2). They discussed on the fact that whatever happened, one would feel regret but also anger and disgust. There was a discussion on a different scenario where a person experiencing a situation in one particular way and finding out the other person experienced it differently. The participants were discussing misunderstandings regarding consent. One participant said it would have made him feel sad since in the end, it would still be his fault for making her feel uncomfortable. One of the other participants shared another view and said "[…] if it’s a man and a woman…and they are doing things together, how is the man supposed to know if she doesn’t signal clearly? This…for me is uncomfortable, do you understand? […]” (Participant H, focus group 2). Another participant mentioned that #metoo has become a weapon girls use when they dislike someone.

Unfortunately, I wish with all my heart that it was the other way around, that it really was right, that it (#metoo movement) went to the right direction but…it gets…a little bit like this, girls use this power when they don’t like someone, like yeah now you are harassing me, now you’re doing this, they start to use this because like…it’s like…their way to speak up, that like I don’t want anything to do with you…it’s like that…yeah…you get my point. (Participant F, focus group 2).

5.2. Patterns in Society

A theme reoccurring in both interview groups was patterns in society. Such aspects were used by the participants to explain certain behaviors of men and women, as well as what could lie behind the emerging of the #metoo movement.

The emerging of a community of safety from the start of the #metoo movement was frequently discussed among the group participants. Group one explained how the movement started with famous people coming out with their stories which made it easier for others to stand up to their abusers as well. The participants further discussed that many victims might not have had the courage to speak up before, but when seeing others sharing and not being alone in this matter, felt more encouraged to do so as well. One participant stated “Yes, famous people have shown that it gives an affect and that it’s not unsafe to come out with… when you’ve been abused” (Participant A, focus group 1). However, group one agreed that women and girls would have more opinions on
the subject of the #metoo movement than men and boys in general. The participants explained how it might be difficult for men to understand. Group two had a different perspective regarding this subject and focused more on how the emerging of the movement affected men in society. For example, the outing of high status men who were accused to be sexual predators. However, they did discuss the aim of the movement and agreed that it was positive to make everyday sexism more visible and show how common it is.

But I think it has some to do with that so many cases like, that has to do with something of sexual nature is hushed... maybe because of shame... and that the #metoo movement lifts the issue more, like that it exists everywhere [...]. (Participant I, focus group 2).

In both groups, an aspect discussed thoroughly within this theme was power relations, between genders and between social statuses in society. Both groups discussed the way people of high status in society made it easier for other victims to speak up as well when they came out with their stories on sexual harassment. The participants in both groups discussed that it becomes easier when people knew they were not alone and the fact that they would have the support of people with higher status. The groups further brought up certain celebrities who were outed as sexual predators in the movement, such as Harvey Weinstein in the United States and Martin Timell in Sweden. They had both taken advantage of their position to sexually harass and abuse women within the industry. In group two, they discussed whether it had been a certain jargon at the workplace where it had been accepted to refer to women with a degrading language, using words such as “whore” and “slut”. Group one focused their discussion on the subject of the power of the individual, where the man’s status made it possible to behave in a certain way without consequences.

I think the main reason why it (the #metoo-movement) started now is because, I don’t know, as a boss I think you have that power [...] even when they know they are doing something wrong but still get away with it, it has kept going like it’s ok nothing will happen I’m the boss. (Participant A, focus group 1).

In the second group while discussing the scenario (see Appendix 2), the participants expressed that they would rather have a friend raise concern about their behavior if they had been discriminative towards women, rather than hearing it from other people later on. One participant expressed it as “The same way a girl doesn’t want to be labeled as a whore, a man doesn’t want to be labeled as behaving this way”, “No, you don’t want to be a creep” another added. Both groups did, however discuss that it is common in workplaces that men protect each other, the male jargon would prevent speaking up against predators. Group one, for example, brought up the issue in relation to the outing of Martin Timell and explained that the television network had kept the issue internal before the movement, and did not proceed to take action against his behavior until after he was publicly accused. The participants further discussed this issue and how the movement has affected other workplaces in society.

[…] I think employers have started to handle it now, more than before, how to view equality… rape and those kind of things, that they view them as very serious… they did before too but, never really brought it up seriously, even if it was seen as something serious. (Participant C, focus group 1).
Focus group two also addressed this issue and proclaimed that this male jargon can be seen in many companies. In this discussion, the participants in group two agreed this phenomenon could be explained by the fact that these workplaces are characterized by an older generation. Differences between generations was discussed in both groups. Group two brought up the issue of many workplaces being dominated by the older generation, which might have an impact on the accepted behaviors and values of the staff. However, the participants also discussed the younger generations, both the one they themselves belonged to and the one coming after.

[…] but the new generation, they don’t give a shit. We can clearly notice that they, they don’t care they do whatever’s on their mind whatever it is, so I think it will be a new trend, other conditions for them in particular. So I don’t think #metoo will last that damn long, even if I wish it would […]. (Participant F, focus group 2).

Group two continued the discussion and related the issue to what role the internet and media has had in raising different generations, bringing up examples of in which ways the internet impacted their, and younger generations.

[…] I really have gotten that feeling that like, the generation that is growing up now like… We are also kind of raised by the internet but not really in the same way like, my little brother who is 12 years old like… the internet is everything to him. (Participant G, focus group 2).

Although the general opinion of the younger generation in group two was negative, one of the participants believed the openness in the modern media might contribute to erasing certain taboos. He addressed that YouTube, for example, might have reduced the taboo on talking about sex in the way that many YouTubers are more open about such subjects in their videos. Focus group one also had a more positive view on the younger generation and mentioned that issues such as sexual harassment are brought up in schools now to a larger extent than in previous generations.

5.3. Global Impact of #Metoo

When the question of the #metoo movement and its global dissemination was presented, the first focus group agreed on the fact that it was the world-famous people in the United States who made it a global phenomenon. The participants explained, as mentioned previously, how famous people shared their stories about their lives, sensitive stories in particular, others felt encouraged to share their stories as well. One participant said "If…a non-famous person had done that it would not be as big at all.” (Participant E, focus group 1). The participants discussed how the world-famous people opened up for individuals to share, which they believed had created a global community showing people there were others who had similar experiences.

One of the participants in group one was in Mexico when the #metoo movement broke out and he did not experience the movement in the country as a big happening at the time. He recalled it starting in Sweden before it hit Mexico and said he was surprised since "Sweden has come far with like, questions regarding feminism and that it should be equal” (Participant A, focus group 1). He explained his awareness of the fact that compared to Mexico the equality is considered to be further along in Sweden, although still not everyone is satisfied with the situation. Another participant agreed and said that it is quite similar in most of Asia as well, it did not reach most countries and
will probably not have a big impact there. It was described more as a Western movement which Sweden was a part of even though “news and trends reach many because of today’s media” (Participant C, focus group 1).

Continuing, the first group also discussed how the #metoo movement became global thanks to social media where it began. Even though the participants did not feel very involved in the movement, it was through different social medias they had seen its spread. One participant believed that the global spread and impact of the movement was positive since people will think twice, hopefully making both girls and boys feel safer. There were some disagreement whether the movement had been effective in making it completely safe to tell your story. Some participants believed that nothing is one hundred percent guaranteed, it may have helped a lot of people to share their stories, but it still exist many who do not dare. All participants agreed on the fact that #metoo has created a platform where people can share their personal stories. When discussing deeper about #metoo as a global phenomenon, both group participants believed that the movement had become a trend people followed where some individuals did not share a story, they simply used the hashtag. One participant said “I am not super involved but…I’ve gotten the picture that it is a little…like, if you see something negative with it some people just like go with the flow” (Participant B, focus group 1). Another participant elaborated and gave another example how the global effects could have had a negative impact. He explained that ”[…] everyone is blamed just because… just because we are men, like we are in the #metoo movement… that’s the only negative thing I can say about it.” (Participant A, focus group 1). In the group, all seemed to agree on the fact that global media will slowly stop writing about the issue. One participant said one reason for that could be that there are not enough financial profits anymore. All agreed when participant C in the first group said ”Media doesn’t bring it up anymore… they probably don’t make any money out if it anymore, but hopefully it will be brought up at workplaces and such.”

Group two discussed several aspects within the theme, starting with the topic of sexual harassment as a global problem. The participants explained sexual harassment as a universal issue which was brought to the surface with the way the #metoo movement encouraged victims to tell their stories. One of the participants in the group further connected the discussion to a general change going on in the world.

Yes, and at the same time a change is happening in the world, more and more countries are becoming more democratic, more freedom of speech and more and more have the courage to speak up […]. (Participant H, focus group 2).

Even though the movement was discussed as a global phenomenon, the group members questioned how and if it had an effect in developing countries or if it was limited to Western countries only. They discussed countries such as Saudi Arabia, Thailand and the Czech Republic, where prostitution is common and the #metoo movement has not caught on.

[…] it feels like #metoo became a middle class riot kind of, people talk a lot about that it’s mostly celebrities and stuff and of course, in the media you can’t out like a truck driver “Bosse, 35” you know, nobody cares about that […] but still, these countries that have like, structural problems with equality like caste in India, and in some parts of like Asia and Africa where they have such
structural problems that these women, they don’t benefit from #metoo at all […]. (Participant G, focus group 2).

Group number two continued on to explain how in these parts of the world, human rights organizations such as Amnesty can specifically point out what aspects needs to be improved in order to progress towards equality. One participant argued that issues such as the right to vote and the right to work are easier to detect as changeable whereas in countries such as Sweden, there are already laws for equality.

[…] for us westerners, so to speak, it’s more about… there are structural problems and that’s not something that is in the institutions, and then maybe #metoo is an important kick start to discussing these questions. But then I also think that in the long run it’s about, somehow talking about values with the surroundings to like, come closer to where I think we all want. (Participant G, focus group 2).

Additionally in the second group, another aspect within this theme was the impact of social media. The participants discussed that the global access to social media may have been a large contributing factor to the rise and spread of the #metoo movement. One participant argued that sexual abuse and sexual harassment are issues characterized by shame, which has prevented victims from coming out and seeking help, but then seeing through social media that you are not alone could be encouraging, which another participant agreed on.

[…] everyone who’s been exposed to something like this seeks someone to talk to about it and feel like, you’re not alone in the whole thing. Like imagine yourself being a victim, so to speak, and you don’t know anyone else who’s been through something similar and then suddenly someone pops up on Facebook that… yeah #metoo, then maybe you start talking and in that way find comfort […]. (Participant I, focus group 2).
6. Theoretical Analysis

In the following section the results are analyzed based on the theoretical framework and previous research.

6.1. Power and Consent Theory

The research questions regarding the attitudes before and after the movement, as well as how the students viewed the movement in Sweden are analyzed in this section. Power dynamics was a constant issue present in the result from the focus group interviews. The roles of heterosexual men and women and their behavior towards one another regarding aspects of sexual nature can be seen throughout the result. The participants further brought up power relations in the workplace in relation to celebrity outings in the #metoo movement, which highlights the theory of power and consent by MacKinnon (1989).

The distinction between sex and rape as a crime, which is brought up in the theory of power and consent, was discussed in both groups where all participants agreed that rape and other sexual violence are criminal offences and not to be considered normal behavior. Some agreed that a person who commits such crimes must be plagued with mental illness. However, in other parts of the dialogues, the participants discussed the difficulties of knowing where the line is drawn between flirting and harassment after the #metoo movement. Several participants brought up that they no longer felt comfortable to flirt with women due to the risk of being labelled a “creep” or accused of sexual harassment. This can be explained by the erotization of dominance and male power in society that MacKinnon (1989) examines, which leads to a difficulty to make a clear distinction between consensual sex and sexual abuse. Even though some of the participants did express a need for men to develop an ability to read signs of non consensual signals from the woman. It was rather clear throughout the discussions that they believed it to be the woman’s responsibility to prove her reluctance, as well as proving her innocence and position of victimization in the case of accusation of harassment or abuse. This can likewise be explained by the theory of power and consent in the sense that it could be caused by unequal power relations between men and women in society. MacKinnon (1989) explains that due to the erotization of dominance and submission, the matter of harassment and abuse is up to interpretation making it the woman’s responsibility to prove her experienced violation. The participants further discussed this matter in relation to the #metoo movement, which they considered to be positive in the aspect of exposing the commonness of sexual harassment and decreasing the shame associated with the issue. However, the participants brought up how the movement had gone too far in the sense that it was abused by its partakers. This further confirms the theory of the structure in society putting the responsibility on the woman to prove her innocence. The responsibility is placed on the victim instead of the perpetrator (MacKinnon, 1989).

The participants further explained that even though men need to improve their skills of reading signs of non consensual behavior, it is important for the woman to be clear about her desires and intentions in a situation of flirting in order to avoid misunderstandings. From this discussion, one
could interpret the participants answers as believing women being the ones obtaining the sexual power since their responsibility is to approve or decline the sexual advances. The notion of sexual power is further something brought up by MacKinnon (1989). However, according to the theory, this belief ignores other important contextual aspects which could affect the woman’s ability to be clear, such as feeling threatened by physical expressions, fear of sanctions such as losing a job, or other underlying power structures (MacKinnon, 1989). The participants did take this into account to a certain degree when discussing power relations within workplaces or status differences, but not in relation to their personal experiences.

Another aspect which was discussed in the groups was the power dynamics related to status. The participants discussed celebrity outings that made the tabloids during the heat of the #metoo movement and pointed out links between high social status and the protection of the perpetrators. They further developed these thoughts by describing such behavior as common in many workplaces in society. The participants said male jargon in workplaces made sexist slurs accepted and even the protecting and hiding of harassing behavior by certain high status staff members and executives. In the #metoo-movement, a vast majority of outed sexual abusers were high status men. This can be explained by the patriarchal system which trickles down from the legal system and institutions to the behavior of individuals, which MacKinnon (1989) highlights in the theory of power and consent. Furthermore, the dominant versus submissive form of sexuality, which according to the theory, is romanticized in society, explains the abuse of power from these high status men, and the way they are protected by their peers (MacKinnon, 1989). In relation to this, the participants discussed the fact that since these structures were revealed in the #metoo movement, companies may take more precaution and apply stricter investigations regarding sexual harassment in the future. The participants brought up that since it was revealed that not even some of the most successful men could get away with this kind of behavior, perhaps men in similar positions will be more cautious after the movement.

6.2. The Globalization Theory and the Global Village

The following section of the analysis helped to answer the research questions regarding the students’ views on the movement in Sweden and as a global phenomenon. The occurrence of the movement is explained by the participants as global because of the participation of the world famous people in the United States. These individuals were considered role models who opened up for more people to share their stories under the hashtag #metoo. Parallel to this particular idea is that the spread would not have been as wide and reached as many if, as the participants put it, an “everyday person” had taken the initiative. In light of the fact that these admired people encouraged victims to come forward in front of a global audience on social media, the results showed that sexual harassment became a global issue, developing into a movement. Referring to it as a new community, equivalent to a new global platform. People took part and shared their stories which reached people beyond their own nation’s borders and have the ability, as McLuhan (1999 [1964]) explained, to experience events together when being part of the global village. Media has become one of the main concepts in the globalization theory, which can explain the fact that people can be outside of their home country and still have massive access to news happening all over the world. In the first group, one participant compared the situation of #metoo happening at home and abroad and drew the conclusion that it had a bigger effect in Sweden. Other countries were highlighted, such as
Mexico, Saudi Arabia and Thailand, regarding the low influence the movement has had on particular countries. An explanation could be that countries such as Sweden, one of the most equal countries but with existing structural problems are more receptive to movements such as #metoo. As explained in the theoretical framework, two specific features of the globalization process and attributes of the global village is its westernization and developed communication technology. People respond faster to trends and have better interaction with individuals as an effect of better communication. The results of the focus groups showed that the #metoo movement can be considered Western dominated, and much of it due to the media attention and the social media usage. It is shown that social media and editorial media have been contributing factors to help reach people and letting them be inspired by the movement.

According to McLuhan (1999 [1964]) the interaction between people in the global village and the access to news and stories, creates a global audience. The results revealed that #metoo has become a trend people follow. The globalization of the movement has made a great amount of people follow the trend at a short period of time, some highlighted reasons were people’s desire to be part of the community or simply support the movement. The global phenomenon could lose its purpose when being overused, which was reflected by one of the participants and described as going too far. Another participant pointed out that those who use it based on other intentions are more ”attention seeking”, yet it should be noted that all the participants experienced the movement as a reminder of what the gender equality actually looks like, especially in Sweden. As previously mentioned, the movement occurred for the most part in Western countries and one of the reasons behind the commencement could be the fight against sexual harassment are issues countries such as Sweden, could afford to protest. The movement has been described by the participants as Western and the issues, for instance sexual harassment, brought to the surface and breaking taboos could be considered as part of the Western culture. Similarities are found in the third wave of the women’s movement, and Huffman and Mann (2005) criticized the movement for not being representative to the rest of the world more than the Western parts. It is shown from the results that other countries still lacking democracy and established equality laws, may lack the ability to create change in conjunction to the #metoo movement since issues such as sexual harassment are deeply rooted and there may still exist be taboos around the subject.

Several of the participants explained some negative effects of the movement, such as putting pressure on men and generalizing them in the movement. Secondly, and in comparison with the globalization theory, too much emphasis have been put on media. As one of the participants pointed out, the media, specially editorial media, has the power to make the decision not to write about the movement anymore. This could be explained by reasons such as considering the movement having low impact, no economic benefits or perhaps believing that men are being generalized in the movement.

6.3. Previous Research

This section of the analysis contributes to the understanding of Swedish males’ attitudes towards the #metoo movement and their views on the movement as a Swedish and global phenomenon.
Isaksson (2007) described the second wave of the women’s movement as an international phenomenon, yet organized on a local level. This could be seen in the #metoo movement as well, since the participants discussed the movement as a global phenomenon but with different major events in each country. The movement has its foundation in the United States and quickly expanded in various countries, particularly in Sweden. The United States has been influential to Sweden before in similar events as Isaksson (2007) explained. Along the lines of the second wave of the women’s movement in the United States, similarities in demands and issues could be found in the movement in Sweden (Isaksson, 2007). Furthermore, Barner and Carney (2011) demonstrated through their research how, during the second wave of the women’s movement, domestic violence was brought into the spotlight which led to the issue becoming more known to the public. This also led to laws being strengthened in favor of the victims. In the results from our study, the participants discussed that the #metoo movement has led to sexual harassment being more debated and highlighted as an issue. The participants further discussed how the movement might have led to strengthening of rules and regulations at workplaces and in society as a whole. As suggested in previous research, Baker (2007) described sexual harassment as a significant matter in the second wave of the women’s movement. Allegations of sexual harassment was also recognized in the third wave, as well as the focus of the #metoo movement. The same way famous people paved the way for others to share their stories, the Anita Hill case sparked a wave of sexual harassment accusations (Garrison, 2000). In conjunction with this, the results showed that sexual harassment had not been taken seriously despite being a serious issue. However, as the previous research has revealed, sexual harassment was on the agenda already in the second and third wave of the women’s movement. The issue of sexual harassment was described by Baker (2007) as a way of connecting women across racial, economical and status borders, which was also an aspect brought up by the participants in our study in relation to the #metoo movement. The participants described how women with high status coming out with their stories encouraged other women to join the movement as well. However, the suppression of the experiences of women of color in the second wave of the women’s movement brought up by Mann and Huffman (2005) can also be connected to the discussion from our study. The participants brought up that women in countries outside of the Western world were not included in the #metoo movement and their experiences of sexual harassment were therefore excluded from the debate. Women of color and different ethnicities were more included in the third wave, and despite it being considered Western, it helped establish a concept explaining the occurrence of inequality by interconnecting social categories which can be used to describe the occurrence of the #metoo movement. The results from our study can further be connected to the previous research by Evans (2015). In her study, it was revealed that third wave feminist activism was to a large extent carried out through online medias (Evans, 2015), which is true for the #metoo movement as well, as the participants of our study discussed to be a main reason for the rapid spread of the movement. As mentioned before, the third wave was characterized by an intersectional perspective to a larger extent than the second wave, which Evans (2015) finds in her research as well. The results from our study revealed that even though the participants believed the #metoo movement to be westernized, it did include people of different status, race, and ethnicities.
7. Conclusion and Discussion

The purpose of the study was to examine male students at Jönköping University, their perceptions and attitudes on the #metoo movement. With the help from a qualitative approach the study tried to create understanding for the participants views and attitudes. In the study, three aspects were underlined: the global part of the movement, the issue of sexual harassment and patterns found in societies. The question of attitudes intended to describe changes in attitudes before and after the rise of the #metoo movement.

Since the area of the #metoo movement is fairly new in the field of research, this study contributed with a qualitative study on the area. Even though statistical data has been collected on different aspects of the movement, there is a lack of qualitative studies thus far. Therefore, the study contributes to form a picture of what affects the movement has had on the Swedish society, or more specifically in what ways it has affected young men in Sweden.

In the study, the findings showed how the male students viewed #metoo as a reminder of the way women are being treated and the fact that women to a greater extent are subjected to sexual harassment, in contexts such as their working environment. The movement, as the participants viewed it, was vital to open the discussion of sexual harassment and other issues regarding inequality. As one of the participants pointed out, the movement exposed internal inequality problems kept hidden, specially in the entertainment industry, even though Sweden as whole is viewed as gender equal. At the same time, the participants brought up the influence the movement had on the global arena, which most of the participants perceived as generally less influential. The majority described #metoo as part of a westernized process. For that reason, it is possible to draw the conclusion that they believed a majority of countries will not be affected by the movement, except from countries such as Sweden. In both focus groups, their beliefs were that the media in several countries will discontinue the discussion on the movement although the participants anticipated the continuation of the topic at workplaces and schools. There existed a consensus in both groups where attitudes seemed to have remained the same, both before and after the movement. However, both groups stated that others in need of it, may have changed their attitudes. Both groups agreed that in consideration for many men in society, the movement was a well needed reality check. The #metoo movement was also described as a movement with generational differences, younger people were more exposed to it in comparison to the older generation, due to the use of internet and social media. The common points of the discussions in the groups were that the movement challenged the patriarchy, developed a more critically thinking of one’s own actions and the platform famous people shaped for victims to share their stories. More thoroughly, the #metoo movement have had profound power and enabled a new way for women to share their stories of sexual harassment and at the same time find comfort and connection with individuals who have undergone similar experiences. The collection of stories shared under #metoo has made women’s subjections to sexual harassment a debated topic.

There were some problems and limitations in the collecting and analyzing of data, which are important to point out. Since the transcriptions were mainly based on recordings from the interviews, there were parts where it was impossible to hear the participants because of, for example, mumbling, speaking too quietly or several participants speaking at once. This in turn
could have had effect on the presentation of results since some important comments might have been lost in the transcriptions. However, in this case there were no major parts of the interviews that were lost, which lowers the risk of having lost important content. Another issue with the collecting of data could be the honesty of the participants when expressing their opinions. For example, peer pressure or not wanting to disagree with one’s friends could have affected the data. Although the research aimed for complete honesty among the participants, we did choose to use natural groups in order to reach a more natural and comfortable setting for the discussions.

The subject of the study is considered sensitive and Halkier (2010) described the advantage of having fewer participants under these circumstances, for instance transcription and analyzing of data had to be taken into consideration due to time limitations. Other methods and options were reviewed, especially semi structured interviews. However, those options were excluded. For the reasons to reduce the researchers participation and to increase the openness of the discussion, focus groups was the most fitting choice. To criticize the role of the leaders and allowing participants to have more "ownership" over the interviews can lead it in another direction making the group leaders lose balance over their engagement in the study (Bryman, 2011). However, since the size of the groups was limited to five participants per group, it was easier attain control over the discussion and they were respectful in the matter of letting each other conclude their points of view. Although, some risks with the qualitative methodology are our preconceptions which could have affected what we chose to identify and examine. The collected material does not provide a comprehensive picture of the problem, its effects and consequences. The results presented in the study are not possible to generalize nor is it possible to ascertain the effects presented in the #metoo movement. Although, it is possible to perceive it as an inspiration for further research, as well as continuing in the areas highlighted throughout the study.

In general, more research on the field of the #metoo movement is needed to contribute to a broader understanding of the movement and its possible effects. However, to contribute to the field of research more specifically, this study could be replicated on a larger scale to extend the possibility to generalize. For example, a study which includes students from several universities in Sweden would create a possibility to form an overview on Swedish university students opinions on the issue in general. To extend it even more, the study could be replicated in other countries, and perhaps a comparative study would contribute to a broader understanding of how males view women’s movements and if it occurs differences among countries. Furthermore, a study which focuses on another age group or compare different age groups of men would contribute to a larger understanding of males opinions in the Swedish society. Answering questions regarding how different generations view the movement as well as sexual harassment in general, is another possibility when comparing age groups. Another aspect for further research could be to examine this study’s, with students or not, research questions from a female viewpoint to reveal how women view the movement. A comparative study could be conducted as well, researching men and women’s views on the movement and applying different perspectives on the study.
References

Alyssa_Milano. (2017, October 15). If you’ve been sexually harassed or assaulted write ‘me too’ as a reply to this tweet. [Twitter post]. Retrieved 2018-05-02 from: https://twitter.com/alyssa_milano/status/919659438700670976


Appendix 1

Intervjuguide

- Kan ni berätta lite allmänt om vad ni vet om #metoo rörelsen?

  - #Metoo-rörelsen har ju blivit ett globalt fenomen, varför tror ni att den har fått så stor spridning?
    - Varför blev den så stor just nu?
    - Hur tror ni att det globala samhället kommer att påverkas av #metoo rörelsen i efterhand?

- Hur ser ni på #metoo rörelsens spridning i Sverige?
  - Tycker ni att rörelsen har påverkat Sverige?
  - Finns det positiva och negativa aspekter?

- Hypotetisk scenario
  - En kille är på en fest med några vänner, och det finns en tjej där som han blir intresserad av. Saker händer mellan dem under kvällen och killen får några dagar senare reda på att tjejen han träffade har sagt till sina vänner att hon kände sig obekväm av situationen, och sexuellt trakasserad av honom. Hur tror ni att killen kommer att reagera på detta?

- Har #metoo rörelsen förändrat era attityder gällande de problem som tagits upp i rörelsen?
  - Om ja, hur har det fått er att tänka annorlunda?

- Finns det något mer ni skulle vilja ta upp, eller utveckla något svar från diskussionen?
Appendix 2

Interview-guide
The following questions and statements were presented during the focus group interviews and they were asked in the order they are stated below. The questions were all written down and asked in Swedish.

- Can you please tell us what you know about the #metoo movement in general?

- The #metoo movement has become a global phenomenon, why do you think it spread so widely?
  - Why did it become so big right now?
  - How do you think the global community will be affected by the #metoo movement in retrospect?

- How do you view the spread of the #metoo movement in Sweden?
  - Do you believe the movement has affected Sweden?
  - Are there any negative and positive aspects?

- Hypothetical scenario
  - A guy is at a party with some friends and there is a girl there that he becomes interested in. Things happen between the two of them during the evening and the guy later finds out that the girl he met has told her friends that she was uncomfortable with the situation and sexually harassed by him. How do you think the guy would react in this scenario?

- Has the #metoo movement changed your attitudes regarding the issues brought up in the movement?
  - If yes, in what ways has it made you think differently?

- Do you have any additional thoughts you would like to discuss or elaborate from the discussion?