

Yes, I Used To Exercise, But . . . —A Feminist Study of Exercise in the Life of Swedish Women

Heléne Thomsson

Department of Psychology, Stockholm University, S-106 91 Stockholm,
Sweden email: helene @thomsson.pp.se

This paper provides a psychological, social-constructivist, feminist analysis of exercise as a leisure activity in the life of Swedish women. Thematic in-depth interviews with fifty Swedish women between twenty and sixty years of age were analyzed within a psychological discursive model. Exercise was found to be both dissonant and consonant with the women's construction of themselves. Exercise was considered important in relation to physical appearance, weight gain, and as an appropriate gender activity. The study also showed the women's disassociation from male-marked sports, and the restrictions imposed by family obligations and a fear of being selfish. The findings were discussed in terms of the discourses of gender-equality, womanhood, and fitness that are deeply rooted within Swedish society.

KEYWORDS: *Gender construction, discursive psychology, women's leisure*

Introduction

Is exercise a way for women to live out their socially constructed gender? Is it a releasing leisure activity, a way for women to escape stress and obligations? Are women in general not particularly interested in exercise as a leisure activity? These questions arose in the course of my research on Swedish women's work, leisure, and lifestyle (Thomsson, 1996), and called for separate analysis. This paper presents the results of that analysis.

In Sweden, as in most modern Western countries, exercise is considered a valuable leisure activity. However, an essential condition for anyone who wants to engage in exercise or other leisure activities is time (Deem, 1989; Shaw, 1991). Since most Swedish women are in the labor force, and since Sweden is often regarded as a pioneer in enabling women to combine employment and family life (Eyer, 1996), Swedish women could be presumed to have adequate leisure for exercise. However, in Sweden, as in other countries, women, especially mothers, are often expected to make the home a

This study is part of the project "Job design, health-related behavior, and health promotion in the workplace," supported by the Swedish Work Environment Fund and the Swedish Council for Planning and Coordination of Research (FRN). The results presented in this paper were also presented in my doctoral thesis (Thomsson, 1996). I gratefully acknowledge the contributions made by Marie-Louise Berg and Carina Thorehov in conducting the interviews. I am also grateful to Professor Gunn Johansson who supervised the research. The reviewers of an earlier draft of this paper contributed valuable insights. Above all, I wish to thank all those women who contributed to this study by telling about their lives.

comfortable 'leisure center' for the family, as well as staging 'special events' (such as Christmas and birthday celebrations and family holidays) for the family or other relatives (see Hochschild & Machung, 1990; Holm, 1993; Richardson, 1993). Much of women's leisure time is taken up with work that others take for granted, and that makes leisure possible for those others (Hunter & Whitson, 1991).

Leisure generally has grown in qualitative importance and has come to be more and more central in individuals' and families' lives (Roberts, 1997). At the same time, the importance of active leisure, including sport and active recreation, has also grown (Wankel & Berger, 1990). Today 'everybody' knows the importance of getting exercise to be healthy and experience well-being (see Blair, 1993; Diamant, 1991).

In the context of this emphasis on exercise, this paper provides a feminist, social constructionist analysis of exercise as a leisure activity in the life of Swedish women. I start from the assumption that the best way to reach an understanding of the complex phenomenon of women's participation in or rejection of exercise is through a discursive reading of women's own narratives.

Being a Swedish Woman

Since the 1970s official policy and ideology in Sweden have actively encouraged equality between women and men in all sectors of society. The official discourse of equality is represented by legislation and labor market contracts that prescribe goals and the means to achieve these goals. In Sweden, the concept of gender equality is generally used with reference to both the private relations between women and men, as well as their relations at work and in society. Swedish legislation interprets gender equality quantitatively, calling for an even distribution of women and men in all areas of society, and qualitatively, meaning that women's and men's knowledge, experiences and values have equal value and influence in all areas of society.

The discourse of equality implies that sex is not allowed to be a positioning or diverging factor. Everyone's position within the social system is to be determined by their individual competence and personality. According to this discourse, gender is socially constructed on the basis of the *similarity* between women and men. This means that women and men as groups are seen as being equally qualified to take care of children and home-related responsibilities, as well as to occupy higher positions in society.

But all statistics show that this official gender equality is not in fact a reality (Statistics Sweden, 1995). Women still carry the major responsibility for children, and they perform about twice as much housework as their husbands (Bäck-Wiklund & Bergsten, 1997). This implies that at the level of everyday practice, gender is socially constructed through *difference*.

The literature on feminist psychology (Gergen & Davis, 1997; Jaggard & Rothenberg, 1993; Unger & Crawford, 1992) suggests that there will be gender-restricted obstacles to activity, not only preventing time for leisure, but

also restricting women's joint activities within this rather scant leisure time. Thus, the societal structures that are visible in women's and men's lives set different opportunities for and constraints on leisure. From a feminist perspective, this social problem has to be discussed in relation to the value of women.

Theoretical Framework of the Study

The analysis of women's exercise behavior presented in this paper draws on constructionist and post-modern feminist thought (Bohan, 1997; Gavey, 1997; Gergen, 1990; Gergen, 1985; Scraton, 1994; Unger, 1992). From this perspective, all human actions are the product of social agreements about the appropriateness of the action. No 'objective' knowledge or 'reality' can be observed and described once and for all. Gender is interpreted as something that people have agreed on as an important distinguishing principle. It can therefore be regarded as a situational parameter where gendered behavior takes place. Referring to Foucault's analysis of power, feminist constructionists assert the importance of language as a carrier of contemporary discourses. These discourses act like principles, enabling the reproduction of social institutions as well as people's ways of thinking and acting (Billig, 1993; Bohan, 1997; Edwards & Potter, 1993; Gavey, 1997; Weedon, 1997).

From this perspective, 'exercise' is not a construct with an objective 'reality.' Rather, constructions of exercise reflect a phenomenon that takes shape as it is talked about. Therefore a study of perceptions of exercise may contribute to a logical understanding of the phenomenon. Swedish women's constructions of exercise as a leisure activity can then be understood in terms of the meaning of exercise in the social and historical context of Sweden today.

It is possible to identify different discourses in Sweden that reflect different ideas about women, about exercise, and about women's exercise (or women who do exercise). Analysis of some of these "women-and-exercise-discourses," and of how some Swedish women themselves give words to them, could contribute to an understanding of the social construction of exercise, and to an understanding of how and why exercise is performed in Swedish women's everyday lives. Dominant discourses related to the constructions of women and of exercise always exist within a specific context, and are also recognized by individual women who use them as standards to evaluate their own experiences and actions in their real lives.

Seeing women as part of modern discourses involves seeing them as part of an ongoing system where society's and the individual's earlier experiences and future expectations are interrelated with every behavior in a complex way. This interactional perspective reflects a dynamic model of person and context. The theoretical basis of this perspective contributes to explaining the structural phenomenon (House, 1981) that members of social groups experience common situational constraints because they tend to have the same or similar social positions within work organizations and other social

structures, such as families. Individuals may often experience these constraints in terms of expectations, but on a theoretical level they can be understood in terms of discourses.

Gender and Exercise

Feminist critiques of leisure literature have been both large and serious (see Henderson, 1991). In her analysis of the content of leisure constraints research, Henderson found that any analysis of women's leisure must take into account the multidimensional and cumulative antecedent constraints, such as gender role socialization and women's status, as well as intervening constraints. By examining antecedent conditions that may affect the leisure choices open to women, their experience of such constraints as lack of time, money or interests may be better understood.

Women are often seen as having a secondary status in work and leisure (Butler, 1990). This can lead to self-fulfilling prophecies where women may actually exhibit lower ability because of their adjustment to expectations and stereotypes. These gender stereotypes are often reflected in the considerable amount of research that focuses on how women's leisure is constrained, and on the impossibility of women experiencing any leisure at all. Time, money, lack of facilities, and women's caring role have been linked to a lack of a sense of entitlement to leisure (Bialeschki & Michener, 1994; Henderson & Bialeschki, 1991; Karsten, 1995; Shaw, 1994, 1991). In the leisure literature, less attention is paid to the leisure activity itself as a source of constraint. However, as Shaw (1994) points out, many leisure activities are certainly a result of conforming to social pressure or are themselves a constraint.

Given the gender system that requires women (and especially mothers) to be responsible for the unpaid work at home as caregivers who are 'on call' around the clock (Allen, 1993; Hochschild & Machung, 1990; Holm, 1993; Richardson, 1993), many women find it impossible to schedule regular leisure activities. This may, according to Lenskyj (1988) alienate women from sport and exercise activities that are rigidly circumscribed by the clock. The gender-specific circumstances of women's lives, in particular their responsibility for the care and nurture of family members, contributes to a gender-specific perspective that Lenskyj describes as task-oriented, qualitative, and altruistic rather than time-oriented, quantitative, and self-interested (see also Helsing, 1994). The latter characteristics are the 'normal' characteristics of sports. Lenskyj also argues that gender differences in terms of strength/weakness, independence/dependence, and dominance/submission are dramatized and entrenched in many sporting activities, and that there is no place within sport for "un-maleness" or "un-femaleness". These differences may explain the resistance to women's participation in sporting activities marked as "male" and the resistance to women's attempts to transform male-defined sports.

The Female Body

Since this study is about women and exercise, discussion of the female body is relevant. Body image is an important part of the self-concept of many women (Lee Bartky, 1997; Martin, 1996). According to Butler (1990) the female body gains meaning within discourse in the context of power relations. The denial or repression of the female body produces an object that society, including women, come to deny. The socially recognized female body has come to be an illusion of women's true bodies, a culturally constructed image adjusted to cultural needs and possibilities. To have 'the right body' is, however, crucial for the individual woman, since it is through the body that a sense of being a woman or a man is constituted. As Lee Bartky (1997) states, to be 'feminine' (partly by having a 'feminine' body) is in most cases crucial to a woman's sense of herself as female and her sense of herself as an individual. Postmodern feminists treat the body image of women in terms of cultural discourses. The body is seen as a 'text' upon which culture writes its meaning (Davis, 1996). A woman's body is seen as a tool for the construction of femininity, and many of women's body-related beauty practices (which may include exercise) are effects of the normalizing regime. Davis states that it is hardly surprising that many women have difficulties feeling at ease in their bodies, since they do not, according to themselves, fit them. The body may be perceived as being abnormal or wrong in relation to who they "are" (or should be). For example, since the "ideal" body build for females is often defined in terms of extreme thinness (Lee Bartky, 1993), a great number of women participate in sport to reduce their weight (Leon, 1991; Pruitt, Kappius & Imm, 1991).

In relation to women's relatively low social value (Lips, 1994) even in a society striving for gender equality, the specific conceptions of women's lives and leisure behavior are extraordinarily diverse and constitute problems that need to be explained. The body is both the site of women's entrapment and the vehicle for their expression of themselves (Davis, 1996). Exercise may be seen both as a tool in the struggle to do this, and as a joyful leisure activity—nonwithstanding it's male mark. Consequently women are today offered several exercise activities—all of them concentrating on fitness and slimness (e.g., aerobics, step-up, body-toning, etc.). More accurately, shaping oneself as a woman, or doing gender, can be seen as a leisure activity for many women.

Method

This study is based on 50 Swedish women's narratives of exercise, captured in in-depth interviews about work, leisure and health-related behavior patterns. The results presented in this paper are part of a larger study presented in Thomsson (1996). Because exercise stood out as an important theme in relation to gender construction and a feminist perspective, this theme was analyzed separately, and the results are presented in this paper.

Subjects

All the participants worked in a large hospital in Stockholm. The aim in selecting the interviewees was to find a sample of women engaged in typical 'women's work' that would also incorporate some heterogeneity with respect to occupation, age, marital status, and children. The extent of the subjects' participation in exercise was unknown at the time of selection. Informed consent was obtained individually.

The sample ($N = 50$) comprised 26% registered nurses ($n = 13$), 52% ancillary nurses ($n = 26$), and 22% secretaries ($n = 11$). Of these 50 women, 76% were living together with a partner ($n = 38$), and 24% were single ($n = 12$); 82% had children under twenty-four years old living at home ($n = 41$); and a total of 44% had children under twelve years old ($n = 22$). The subjects were from 20 to 60 years old (average age, 36). They all worked at least 30 hours per week on daytime shifts in different wards in the hospital.

Procedure

In-depth individual interviews were conducted by either the project leader (the author of this paper) or one of two female psychology students. Each interview lasted from one to two hours. The sample was divided into three groups. One group included women without children ($n = 9$), one group included women with children under the age of seven ($n = 10$) and one group included women with both younger and older children ($n = 31$). Each woman in the first group was interviewed individually by the psychology-student who did not have children herself. Each woman in the second group was interviewed individually by the psychology-student who was pregnant at the time of the interviews. Each woman in the third group was interviewed individually by the project leader, a female psychologist with school-age children. Before starting the project all interviewers were well prepared and acquainted with the research problem. Work, leisure, and health-related behavior patterns in the women's lives were to be discussed in each interview-session, but no specific questions were worked out in advance. The aim was to have the interviewed women talk as much as possible without our asking questions. The focus was on the women's narratives, not on answers to questions. When the interviewers did ask questions, it was to clarify points that they had not properly understood, or to elicit more information about things mentioned by the woman being interviewed.

All interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed by the interviewers themselves.

Analysis of Data

The analysis was done in three steps. First, all three interviewers read all the transcribed interviews, making notes about things that seemed important, interesting, or surprising, and identified words and themes that could be used in a later coding process.

Step two was a coding process undertaken by the project-leader. In these first two steps the focus was not exclusively on exercise or leisure, but on work, leisure and lifestyle as interacting parts of women's lives.

In the third step, the analysis done by the project-leader focused on determining the meaning of exercise in women's lives.

All the transcribed interview data were computerized using the program QSR NUD*IST (Non-numerical Unstructured Data Indexing Searching and Theorizing') (Richards & Richards, 1989). This program supported the process of coding data in an index system, and facilitated searching text or patterns of coding for information about exercise and leisure and theorizing about the data.

The analysis started from unorganized data and proceeded to an overall organizing account of the data. Conclusions emerged both from the women's narratives and from a theoretical understanding of discourses and feminist psychology. The evidence and the grand account, thus, form a well-connected web of interpretations.

Since the study aimed to answer both the questions "what" and "why", the analysis had to grasp the more general structures that incorporated those eidetic constituents of the phenomenon that ran across the situated structures, or the different typologies of the phenomenon that may be of interest (Karlsson, 1990). The categories used in the analysis of data were therefore largely derived from an analytic induction of the narratives.

In line with discursive psychology (Edwards & Potter, 1993; Harré, 1995), the analysis was based on an understanding of reports and descriptions as constructed communicatively, and on an understanding of language as permitting great descriptive flexibility for doing so. Furthermore, as descriptions were embedded within the performance of situated actions, and were interactively responses to expectations and normative conditions, the analysis had to deal with issues of agency and responsibility.

This kind of analysis stimulated the generation of potentially relevant categories and concepts, and was of great value in the process of establishing comparisons (clustering, distinguishing, differentiating) necessary in the search for individual differences (Glaser & Strauss, 1979; Miles & Huberman, 1994).

The analysis also strove to find the content of each interview, each theme, and each individual (Reinharz, 1992), by adopting a stance of trying to honor each woman's point of view, method of explanation, and mode of evaluation. By using this qualitative interpretative approach, the women's own meanings and experiences emerged while at the same time their exercise behavior could be analyzed at a discursive level.

In the presentation of the findings all quoted women are given assumed names to increase anonymity.

To increase validity the results of the analysis were presented to a group of five key respondents in order to elicit feedback and critical insight into aspects not previously grasped.

Findings

Every Woman's Situation is Unique

The first problem confronting anyone who wants to do a study of women is the conceptualization of "women." "Women" as a concept presupposes some underlying similarity shared by all within the category. The question needed to be asked whether it is in any sense relevant to talk about women in general terms, or whether situational or individual differences reduce the presupposed similarity. In the study presented in this paper, all the women seemed to share a general agreement about the differences between the two genders called women and men. However, this 'common-sense' knowledge is insufficient for research that wants to explain such a complex and unpredictable phenomena as human behavior. As stated by many before (e.g., Butler, 1990; Unger & Crawford, 1992), women are seen as women and therefore they are women.

To generate valid knowledge concerning women, it was necessary to move away from the respondents own understanding towards a consideration of gender as the socialized sex of individuals. According to Connell (1993) the category 'woman' and the category 'man' can both be understood as resulting from the social interaction whereby the gendered individuals are constituted through their relation to each other. Therefore, the interviewed women have to live their lives within a discourse that presupposes that Swedish women cannot be forced to submit to the concepts of Swedish men. This means, in reality, that women are presupposed to be feminine in a socially defined way, just as men are presupposed to be masculine (i.e., male equates with activity and power, female with passivity and powerlessness).

For the women interviewed in this study, the conception of womanhood was important. They explained much of their experience in terms of "this is what women are like". When they think they are not living up to the expectations of womanhood, they tended to refer to specific situational or time-specific happenings as playing a key role in their lives. On the basis of these situational differences, they found explanations and structures for their personal situation. For example, in her interview Eva, a 47-year-old secretary stated:

"In my current situation there's not much I can do. I mean, it's easy for others to say all I've got to do is say I'm going, but it's not as easy as that. I'm just not the kind of person who can put her foot down, you know. Maybe I'm a bit of a soft touch . . . My husband has an unusual kind of job, it makes special demands on him, he can't leave work early just because I want him to. In fact, I don't know anyone whose situation is quite like mine. It's so easy for other people . . ."

Eva talked about her difficulties in taking part in social activities with workmates in the evenings. She told about her personal, unique, situation and related her personal difficulties to her personality and to her husband's specific occupation. Interestingly, every woman did the same thing. Every woman described a unique situation.

These comments imply on the one hand that the women did not expect others to share their experiences or to have similar experiences. On the other hand, they all tried to see their own situation from the perspective of others, referring to a fear of being different or maybe a fear of failing to be what they in fact were, namely women. This fear hid a lot of problems that many women had in common. These problems were shaped by the construction of womanhood, as it was defined here and now.

The Place of Sport and Exercise in Female Life

Post-modern feminist theory is non-universalistic (Fraser & Nicholson, 1997). It dispenses with the idea of women and men as subjects of history and politics, and replaces unitary notions of gender identity with plural and complexly constructed conceptions of social identity. Thus no single issue, like childcare or housing, has the same meaning for all individuals included in the category 'women'. However, because some women share some common interests and face some common 'enemies', it might be fruitful to use gender and womanhood as analytical tools.

In our interviews many women talked about the physical discomfort associated when taking part in sport activities as something "un-feminine." They used terms such as "horrible", "sweaty", "ugly", "red", and "panting." In the analysis, such statements are read in terms of the discourse of the feminine but also gender-equal women said to be normative in the Swedish society. The statements took the form of this quotation from Birgitta, a 26-year-old ancillary nurse:

"I don't want to take part in sport; I'm simply not the kind. I've been to aerobics once or twice, but I don't like all that running around, getting horrible and sweaty."

Although we had not asked Birgitta or the other women what they thought about sport, many of the women still seemed to find it necessary to explain themselves as opposed to "sweaty" sport-related un-feminine expression.

Immediately before making the statement quoted above, Birgitta said:

"I like to be at home. Making it nice for me and my husband. That's what I like. I'm the kind of person who likes peace and quiet. ."

Birgitta is a good example of the self-presentation of the majority of the women we interviewed. She explained herself as a woman, using words that show her femininity as well as her un-masculinity.

One explanation of the distancing Birgitta and many other women felt from sport is that sport and exercise were more associated with the masculine gender-role than with the feminine (see Pruitt, Kappius, & Imm, 1991). Clearly, masculine-associated behavior and appearance were prevalent in most sporting activities, and this idea was not compatible with the self-view of most of the women.

In this study only one woman took part in regular exercise to the extent of traditional exercise prescriptions (exercise intensity of 50-85% of maximal aerobic power with a duration of each exercise session of 20-60 minutes, for

3 to 5 days a week), or the newer recommendations of 30 minutes or more of at least moderate intensity activity on most days of the week (see Dunn et al., 1997).

In this study, only 18 of the 50 women did any form of exercise even *once* a week. Hence they were far from complying with the recommendations stated above. However, it seemed naive to assume that the remaining 32 women are living a sedentary life, even if their physical behavior can in no sense be regarded as exercise as defined above. These women did not identify with any sport, and did not use either aerobic or strength-training for recreation. However, their lives are filled with 'feminine activities', that often required a large amount of physical effort. As Charlotte, a 37-year-old nurse, mother of three children of eleven, ten and four years old, observed in the following quotation, women's everyday activities are often considered as enough for maintaining fitness. Charlotte said:

"When you have small children you're physically active all the time. You don't need any other kind of exercise."

Despite the non-universalistic view of women in constructuralist feminist theory, a lot of the women express their distancing from sport as a way of being women. In other words, they constructed their female lives in opposition to the male construct of sport, and as women did not feel attracted by—or in need of—(masculine) sporting activities.

Exercise as Knowledge and Obligation

The participants in this study worked in a health-care setting, either as nurses or as secretaries. This work setting may explain their self-presentation as having a very high health consciousness. This consciousness was expressed in ways like this:

"I used to exercise quite a lot before I had children. I know that exercise is important if you want to be healthy—in fact you can say it's essential."

This quotation was from Carina, a 29-year-old ancillary nurse with two children of nine and seven. Physical activity was prominent in Carina's view of important health behavior, and most of the other women shared her view. Their assumptions included a belief in developing and maintaining cardio-respiratory fitness, body composition, and stress reduction by exercise. No differences existed in terms of age, individual risk-factor profile, social and family background, or other lifestyle patterns. Women with many cardiovascular risk factors such as obesity and smoking talked about exercise as a prerequisite for good long-term health in the same way as those women who were fitter. This "exercise-is-good-for-health-discourse" provided them all with a position in the reproducing of existing norms. Exercise was seen as a health-related behavior rather than as a sport or stimulating leisure activity. The tendency was to talk about exercise in relation to its effects rather than as an interesting activity that they really wanted to do.

When we actually asked our informants about their exercise behavior the interactions went like this:

Interviewer: "You said that you have a physically active leisure, do you mean that you are doing some exercise or . . . ? (interrupted by the respondent)"

Laila, a 39-year-old ancillary nurse with no children but with a sick mother she took care of several days a week, interrupted the interviewer and said: "Yes. Yes, I used to exercise, but right now I just don't have time."

In another interview, the interviewer asked: "Are you doing some exercise then?"

Siv, a 44-year-old nurse, with two children of seventeen and fourteen years, answered: "I do generally exercise, but this time of year is so cold and dark. I'm thinking of getting going again in the summer."

These kinds of answers reveal that these women did *not* in fact exercise—right now. However, their attitude towards exercise as an obligation made it easier for them to say 'yes'. In fact, since attitudes can help to enhance self-esteem and to defend against anxiety, this distortion of fact can help them feel good.

This rather confusing result shows that although women on one hand do not like sport since it is too masculine, or un-feminine, on the other hand they wish they did some exercise since they know it would be good for them.

Being Active

Even though exercise and sporting activities are loaded with masculine activity, the construction of womanhood was also in part built on activity, though not on that kind of activity that make one "horrible and sweaty" (to quote Birgitta). The representation of women as serving others' well-being (as discussed by Butler, 1990) seems to link the attributes 'active' and 'a good woman', as can be exemplified by a quotation from Vivianne, a 41-year-old secretary, with two children of fourteen and twelve:

I'm an active person . . . I wouldn't be able just to sit around, doing nothing. I like being active—people are always saying how much I do, and I guess it's true. I've always got lots of irons in the fire, sewing, knitting . . . If I just sit on the sofa doing nothing, I get a bad conscience. If my husband comes home and I'm just sitting, then I jump up. I feel ashamed about just sitting doing nothing. Me, who's always going on about how much there is that needs doing—and I know that he doesn't mind in the least.

To understand this quotation, it may be helpful to view the social context as a source of satisfaction of various intrapsychic needs. Stories like Vivianne's may also illustrate the internalizing of existing demands in the social context. This kind of presentation of oneself as active may be a way for women to conform to what they think is the 'right' or 'good' self-presentation of a modern woman. And this 'modern woman' is not what one is born to, it is what one has to shape oneself into (see Unger, 1992; Wittig, 1992).

Having identified this rather confusing understanding of a) sport as 'masculine-marked', b) women's lives as filled with 'feminine' doings, c) ex-

ercise as an obligation for health, and d) the relationship between womanhood and activity, we now proceeded to a deeper analysis. In this analysis, the data were divided into two categories, one for women who did not exercise, and for those who did. The aim was to achieve a deeper understanding of the constraints on and motives for exercise as a leisure activity.

Findings Related to the Constraints on Exercise

Since most of the women in this study did not take part in any form of regular exercise, this deeper analysis begins with the discussion of constraints. The women's reasons for not taking part in exercise were related to several, sometimes interrelated, factors such as contextual reasons, willpower, a family orientation, time-pressure, or a fear of selfishness. Each of these constraints is discussed below.

Contextual Reasons for Not Exercising

The contextual reasons for not exercising were easy to find in the interviews. The interviewed women volunteered numerous examples of external and internal obstacles. External obstacles, beyond their own ability to influence, included their work-schedule, workload, husband's work, care of aged parents, and childcare, whereas internal obstacles were related to personality traits, tiredness and laziness. The constraints were seen as related to themselves as individuals, and were seldom analyzed in terms of the women's general situation in society. The words "if", or "if not" ("if I weren't so lazy"; "if my husband . . ."; "if my children . . .") were often included in their explanation of why they did not exercise. However the words "oppression", "secondary status" etc. were not mentioned in relation to leisure constraints in any of the fifty interviews.

The Use of Willpower

Some women perceived the constraint as a lack of willpower. They stated that they merely needed to face up to the task of disciplining themselves and choose more physical leisure activities. Carina, quoted above, says:

"If I really wanted to exercise, I would. Right now I can't mobilize all that willpower . . . I know that all I have to do is really make up my mind to do it."

For many of the women, good intentions regarding exercise did not lead to decisions about what activities they were willing to pursue. Often they had not even posed the problem and identified various activities in which they could feel comfortable. These activities were not always obvious. Another problem was the possibility of postponing the activity until some more appropriate time. Many of the women had established some form of sequence of steps to be taken before the activity could be actualized. There were lot of plans, but the possibility to decide *when* pushed any real action

off into the future. This attitude emerged clearly in the following statement from Sonja, a 48-year-old nurse:

"When the new work-schedule comes into operation in January I'm going to start going to the gym here at the hospital."

It also took the form used by Annika, a 29-year-old ancillary nurse, with a five-year-old daughter:

"When my daughter's a bit older I'll start doing something."

Among the features that such quotations have in common is a specific relationship to the 'will' in its different aspects. The working out of the relationship between taking part in exercise and the will within the particular circumstances that these women found themselves in caused many conflicts. This notion can be understood in relation to the discussion of Hunter and Whitson (1991), who state that women's leisure contains work that others take for granted.

Family-orientation

Since this study included women of different ages, the effect of different life-phases was clear. Several women had no sense of themselves as persons other than wives or mothers, but firmly believed that this condition only was temporary. Hanna, a 35-year-old nurse, said:

"I'm the mother of three children, aged four, six, and nine. As far as I'm concerned, they're entitled to take the front seat as long as they're small. I have my family and my job, and that's enough for me. My own time will come later."

Hanna was not motivated to find a different lifestyle because she was satisfied in the arena of family and work. She was fulfilling her female role as a mother and was not questioning this role. According to Allen (1993), however, motherhood is dangerous to women because it perpetuates the structure within which femaleness is ascribed to women and mothers, and that denies women the creation of a subjectivity and world that is open and free. In line with Allen's reasoning, the interviewed mothers had absolute primary responsibility for running the home and caring for the children, and were investing in their children and the children's development instead of their own. The children's well-being was given priority over the women's own health. However, Marianne, a 37-year-old secretary with two children of fifteen and twelve years old, stated:

"No, not really more important, but I mean, children's health is always in some way the responsibility of the parents. Their habits today lay the foundation for their well-being later on in life, and I want them to be able to say they got all the support they could get when they were kids. So my son plays hockey and football, and my daughter goes to gymnastics."

Taking responsibility for the family made women the center of the family structure. Despite the strivings for gender equality in Swedish society, women are singled out as mainly responsible for the family's well-being. Thus they know that they will be blamed in the event of trouble for any family member.

From a constructionist perspective, motherhood is a social practice that women who have children construct themselves around, within a social relationship where this mothering is 'the right', normative, and expected activity.

Explaining their situation in the way the mothers in our study did allowed them to experience freedom and autonomy in their lives. The fact that they had limited freedom of action, since they could not alter their real situation or improve the situation within and outside the family structure, did not bother them and was not the most important thing for them. They were not always content, but they were convinced that their time would come later.

However, new life-phases often bring new obligations. The middle-aged or older women talked about caring for their elderly parents and grandchildren, and some of them had no more time for leisure than earlier in their lives. Now, however, it was not because they are mothers, but because they have to construct their female life in line with the expectations for middle-aged women, and for grandmothers.

Time Pressure

Since time seemed to be a scarce commodity for most of these women, time pressure seemed to limit the number of leisure activities undertaken, regardless of the number of hours in paid labor. These constraints were especially problematic for those who were single mothers. However, the time pressure in itself can be seen as an effect of the constraining gender system that constituted the psychosocial context for the construction of womanhood in Swedish society.

The women who had families express a wish for the family to organize time together in a better way. This dream was often unattainable because of the restrictions imposed by work schedules and the organization of family members' leisure activities. However, the lives of single women were also filled with time-pressures. Time-pressure seems to be a normal or normative way of living.

The Fear of Selfishness

The fear of selfishness constituted a fundamental obstacle to recreation for the women interviewed. They saw selfishness as springing from the desire to possess and to dominate, an expression of the basic urge to of self-assertion. This constraint was exemplified by a quotation from Marja, a 34-year-old ancillary nurse with two children of four and three years old:

"Sometimes I feel I'm being really selfish when I do something for myself. . . . I can feel the way the day-care staff look at me when I drop the children there on my day off, so I can go swimming—even though I've explained to them that the swimming is like a kind of physiotherapy for me."

The never-ending difficulty of eliminating selfishness can give rise to low self-esteem and feelings of shame or guilt. As a result these women often

denied themselves and became more than wholeheartedly attached to other people. However, this unselfish behavior hid their own needs, and little by little, contributed to the formation of what might be called a normative female behavior pattern. In other words, the construction of women included unselfishness.

In conclusion, the constraints on exercise in leisure time must be understood as a complex interaction of factors related to the construction of "womanhood", as it is defined in Sweden today, in terms of a gender-equal woman who is still feminine and relational.

Why do Some of the Women do Exercise Then?

At first glance, there was no obvious difference between women who did some exercise in their leisure time and those who did not. However, a deeper analysis identified some themes in the women's interviews that might be associated with their decision to exercise. Such factors as personal goals, a bad conscience, extrinsic and intrinsic rewards, social pressure, female friends, and the importance of external appearance and weight-gain were all discussed in relation to the leisure of the more physically active women. Each of these factors is discussed below.

Goals and Motives in Exercising

Side by side with health-related reasons for exercising, there were also almost always other motives:

"I want to look good and be slim, and I want to be fit." (Marie, a 48-year-old ancillary nurse).

Often different motives converged on the same goal and the same behavior:

"I can't be happy when I'm as fat as this. And anyway I feel much better when I exercise." (Karin, a 43-year-old ancillary nurse).

Since exercise tended to be a constant source of bad conscience for these women when they knew it is a prerequisite for long-term health, engaging in some exercise activity was releasing in several ways. Doing some (not necessarily strenuous) exercise at least once a week, and maybe combining this exercise with some weight-reducing domestic activities such as dieting, meant that several goals were changed to decisions and hence could be accomplished. This change may result in a sense of satisfaction as well as in increased well-being. Ulla, a 53-year-old ancillary nurse, stated:

"I felt for a long time that I could do with taking some exercise. Now I go swimming once a week, and it feels really great . . . One less thing to have a bad conscience about."

The two goals that almost always coexisted were weight-reduction and health. The individualistic view in modern Swedish society is that individuals are responsible for both their weight and their health. Thus doing some exercise was a good way of exorcising guilt.

Extrinsic Versus Intrinsic Motivations

Individuals' motivation to exercise was categorized in terms of extrinsic versus intrinsic rewards. Extrinsic rewards, such as better long-term health and weight reduction, seemed to appear more in the more moderate exercisers because these had a satisfaction that was independent of the actual activity. Intrinsic rewards were more frequently mentioned by women who were regular exercisers and seemed to be related to a somewhat higher amount of exercise. These intrinsic rewards, over which the women have a high degree of control, were often an integral part of the activity itself. These motives included the feeling of "being a tennis-player", of enjoying feeling muscles working, feeling happy, lucky, and so on. These two different kinds of motivation were often additive as expressed in the following quotation from Lisbeth, a 51-year-old nurse:

"When I started playing badminton it was mostly to help me lose weight. But now I do it mostly because it's so much fun."

Coping with Time-pressure

The responses of those women who did not exercise might suggest that having too much to do would exclude women with small children and women with a high workload and time-pressure from the group of regular exercisers. However, if exercise is a coping strategy, it could have the opposite effect. Of course, time-pressure and fatigue may limit the number of hours spent on exercise, but it did not prevent the women interviewed from taking part in some exercise at least once a week, as illustrated by Annelie, a 30-year-old secretary:

"Of course, there are some days when I'm so tired that I feel like skipping work-out, but I know that once I get there and get started I feel great. It feels good just to have done it. One's done what one has to do."

For some of the women the satisfaction that came from the fact that "one's done what one has to do" regarding exercise was pronounced. Time-pressure, however, often got in the way of this attempt.

Social Pressure to Exercise

The regular exercisers tended to describe a kind of conformity to expectations that they had not always internalized themselves. People in their environment, members of their work group and other female friends and relatives have considerable power to influence their behavior and make them conform to exercise in their leisure time. Ann-Catrine, a 43-year-old ancillary nurse stated:

"My workmates go to the gym here at the hospital. So when I started working here there were really no two ways about it, I had to go too. I mean, I couldn't say I didn't want to, or didn't feel up to it, not when everybody else was going. There was very strong pressure to go."

The women often stated that if they had to do the exercise alone, they would not continue. This can be understood as an effect of women's ten-

dency to be relational, rather than instrumental (Chodorow, 1978). But it can also be seen as an effect of normative expectations of how a modern woman should act and look (Butler, 1990; Lee Bartky, 1993).

Shaping the Body

Most of the women had a tendency to be extremely critical of their own bodies and had difficulty in accepting themselves unless their bodies fit a certain ideal of slimness. This view has to be understood against the background of a culture where the shape of the body is no longer related to age (in some senses not even to sex) and disposition. The body is often seen as something separate from the woman herself, that she has to master or alter. To put it another way, the prevailing standards for acceptable appearance and body shape were internalized by many women and were an important part of the reflexive construction of identity. This idea found expression in forms such as this quotation from Margareta, a 46-year-old nurse:

"I'd really like to lose a few kilos here and there. I can see how I'm slowly letting it slip, turning into a granny. Me, who thought she would always stay young with a young figure."

The fact that the gender-system requires women to be slim and fit to be beautiful and to have value was almost never discussed by the women themselves. However, as stated by Davis (1996), beauty-struggles (as exercise may be seen) may be a way for women to act upon the world themselves, as knowledgeable and active subjects within the gender-system. They are, as they say, "doing what they have to do"; i.e. producing a body that is recognizably feminine in appearance (see Lee Bartky, 1993).

Concluding Remarks

The main purpose of this study was to understand what exercise as a leisure activity means to Swedish women. The official social discourse in Sweden is predicated on gender equality: women and men are regarded as being equally qualified to take care of children and home-related responsibilities, and as having the same rights and duties in work and society. In other words, gender is socially constructed on the basis of similarity between women and men. Yet statistics show that this official gender equality is not a reality in the everyday lives of most Swedish women. A second, 'hidden', discourse subordinates women and assigns them major responsibility for household duties and other peoples' well-being, in particular, the well-being of their own families (if they have any). In these terms, women's gender is still constructed through being good mothers and wives, and having nice homes, rather than through self-realization and careers (Thomsson, 1996). This implies that at the level of everyday practice, gender is socially constructed on the basis of difference.

Another important discourse in the life of Swedish women relates to fitness. Every Swede knows the importance of exercise for health, weight control and fitness. For Swedish women, appearing fit is an important aspect

of gendered practice. This study analyses 50 interviews with Swedish women in order to examine the social construction of exercise, within a situation characterized by the sometimes contradictory discourses of equality, subordination and fitness.

Women's responsibility for the family's well-being and their attachment to the arena of family and work, discussed by writers such as Unger and Crawford (1992), is one of the more well-established discourses to which the women interviewed found it necessary to conform. Women's choices about mothering (Allen, 1993; Hochschild & Machung, 1990; Holm, 1993; Richardson, 1993) and a 'female lifestyle' do not take place in a social vacuum. This is true even in a society that, like Sweden, strives for gender equality and equal rights for women and men. Women who choose to be so attached to their own work and leisure activities that they fail to take care of their families may be censured and negatively stereotyped (Jackson, 1994). In line with this, the women interviewed in this study expressed a fear of being selfish, and hence refrained from activities that would be good for them. The fear of selfishness constituted one of the most powerful and pervasive obstacles to recreational behavior for the women interviewed.

For many women, sport and exercise seem to be incompatible with their individual *modus vivendi* or female self-expression (Smith, 1987; 1991; Wittig, 1992). This was certainly true of the women interviewed in this study. Gendered discourses seemed likely to push women's relations to exercise in a "female direction", since every woman in our sample was striving to be "womanly". They claimed that they had no time for exercise since they had to avoid being selfish and felt responsible for the family's (and especially the children's) well-being. They felt that they had no right to make demands on their husbands that might disturb their careers, or even their workdays, even though they knew that in terms of the discourse of gender equality men have to take equal responsibility for the care of their children. Moreover, many of the women did not want to take part in sporting activities since they did not want to appear "sweaty", "red" and "ugly". They did, however, also know that the gender-system requires women to be slim and fit to be beautiful. In keeping with the individualistic views of modern Swedish society, they knew that they were responsible for their appearance, weight and health, and hence should do some exercise. The findings thus show that gender stereotypes can be a source of considerable error if used to predict individual behavior, since the stereotypes can result in either the adoption or rejection of complex behaviors, such as exercise.

The fact that all the women interviewed in this study worked in a hospital may have contributed to their rather high level of health-knowledge (Thomsson, 1996). Many of the women interviewed experienced a dissonance between their actual lifestyle, their knowledge and assumptions, and—maybe most important—the normative behavior, in words and actions, that they assumed to be required of 'a good woman'. Consequently, they often defined their personal behavior in ways that they considered more favorable, rather than being strictly accurate. This can be explained in terms of well-

established psychological consistency theories (Festinger, 1957) that state that when an individual becomes aware of an inconsistency between her/his assumptions and behavior, she or he will be motivated to make cognitive changes that are not always strictly logical.

Discursive analysis of interviews (see Edwards & Potter, 1993; Potter & Wetherell, 1987) makes it possible to deal with the naturally occurring content of talk within interviews that do not explicitly focus on the variable in focus, in this case, exercise. The way the women interviewed organized their talk illuminated their actions, their constructions, and the variability of their views regarding exercise. Specific features of the women's narratives were seen as products of construction processes, and part of the analysis focused on these processes (see Bohan, 1997; Gavey, 1997; Gergen, 1990; Gergen, 1985; Scraton, 1994; Unger, 1992). Discourse analysts claim that to understand a phenomenon, one has to look in detail at the ways people use the concept (see Bohan, 1997; Billig, 1993; Edwards & Potter, 1993; Gavey, 1997; Weedon, 1997). The analysis in this study, therefore, focused on searching for the context the women described when talking about exercise. Since the women's talk or narratives were seen as actions, variations in these narratives according to the different interactional contexts they were constructed to serve provided an important analytical tool.

Discourse analysis deals with the process of understanding reality and ones' own mind (see Edwards & Potter, 1993). Thus this paper can be seen as an attempt to highlight several aspects of women's handling of exercise in their own minds and in reality. Different ways of thinking about exercise and womanhood are seen to interact, and contribute to an understanding of women's choices and decisions regarding lifestyle.

An important aspect of a gender study is the consciousness of women as objects (Connell, 1993; Gergen & Davis, 1997; Unger & Crawford, 1992). In line with this, women's appearance was taken as a given in this study. Ideals for the female figure vary over time and across cultures, and the Swedish cultural norm for the female body resembles that of a young man or a young girl (i.e. muscular, slim, with almost no subcutaneous fat, except in the bust). As in Davis' (1996) discussion of cosmetic surgery, women's desire to exercise must be seen in relation to the desire for a slim and 'fit' body, that is, the desire to do gender. This desire is a product of both general discourses that treat women as objects, and of women's striving for agency. It may be appropriate to view women who exercise to reduce their weight and to achieve fitness as agents who use their knowledge to shape their lives—albeit within a context that they cannot improve. Viewing women as agents who actively and discursively construct a sense of self, involving an active (more or less conscious) integration of available discourses (see Harré, 1995) seems to be an accurate feminist explanation of women's exercise behavior.

What then does this study contribute to leisure research? As stated in many studies in the '90s, our understanding of women's leisure is unsatisfactory and incomplete (Bialeschki & Michener, 1994; Henderson, 1991;

Henderson, & Bialeschki, 1991; Shaw, 1994; 1991). Feminist theory assumes that the oppression of women is part of the way the world is structured (see Weedon, 1997; Wittig, 1992). Therefore one task of feminist studies is to explain how this structure trickles down into the lives of individual women. This structure can take different shapes, but it certainly affects women's leisure, as is shown by the fact that while the concept of exercise as a leisure activity is familiar to everyone in Swedish society, exercise is always considered in relation to general and personal discourses and contexts.

Since Swedish society is characterized by fairly aggressive official political striving for gender equality, and by a democratic political discourse, in which the discourses of female subordination and imposed fitness are well hidden, the present study suggests that further research is needed into the construction of women's leisure activities within other societies.

References

- Allen, J. (1993). Motherhood: The annihilation of women. In A. M. Jaggar & P. S. Rothenberg (Eds.), *Feminist frameworks*. 3rd ed. (pp. 380-385). New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Bialeschki, M. D., & Michener, S. (1994). Re-entering Leisure: Transition within the role of motherhood. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 26, 57-74.
- Billig, M. (1993). Rhetorical and discursive analysis: How families talk about the royal family. In N. Hayes (Ed.), *Doing qualitative analysis in psychology* (pp. 39-54). East Sussex: Erlbaum (UK) Taylor & Francis.
- Blair, S. N. (1993). Physical activity, physical fitness and health. *Research Quarterly of Exercise and Sport*, 64, 365-376.
- Bohan, J. S. (1997). Regarding gender: Essentialism, constructionism, and feminist psychology. In M. M. Gergen & S. N. Davis (Eds.), *Toward a new psychology of gender: A reader* (pp. 31-47). New York: Routledge.
- Butler, J. (1990). *Gender trouble: Feminism and the subversion of identity*. London: Routledge, Chapman and Hall.
- Bäck-Wiklund, M. & Bergsten, B. (1997). *Det moderna föräldraskapet. en studie av familj och kön i förändring*. Stockholm: Natur & Kultur.
- Chodorow, N. (1978). *The reproduction of mothering: Psychoanalysis and the sociology of gender*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Connell, R. W. (1993). *Gender & power*. Oxford: Polity Press.
- Davis, K. (1996). From objectified body to embodied subject: A biographical approach to cosmetic surgery. In S. Wilkinson (Ed.), *Feminist social psychology: International perspectives* (pp. 104-118). Philadelphia: Open University Press.
- Deem, R. (1987). Unleisured lives: Sport in the context of women's leisure. *Women's Studies International Forum*, 10, 423-432.
- Diamant, L. (Ed.) (1991). *Psychology of sports, exercise and fitness: Social and personal issues*. New York: Hemisphere.
- Dunn, A. L., Marcus, B. H., Kampert, J. B., Garcia, M. E., Kohn III, H. W., & Blair, S. N. (1997). Reduction in cardiovascular disease risk factors: 6-month results from project Active. *Preventive Medicine*, 26, 883-892.
- Edwards, D., & Potter, J. (1993). *Discursive psychology*. London: Sage.
- Eyer, D. (1996). *Motherguilt*. New York: Times Books.
- Festinger, L. (1957). *A theory of cognitive dissonance*. California: Stanford University Press.

- Fraser, N., & Nicholson, L. J. (1997). Social criticism without philosophy: An encounter between feminism and postmodernism. In D. Tietjens Meyers (Ed.), *Feminist social thought: A reader* (pp. 132-146). New York: Routledge.
- Gavey, N. (1997). Feminist poststructuralism and discourse analysis. In M. M. Gergen & S. N. Davis (Eds.) *Toward a new psychology of gender: A reader* (pp. 49-64). New York: Routledge.
- Gergen, K. J. (1985). The social constructionist movement in modern psychology. *American Psychologist*, 40, 266-275.
- Gergen, M. M. (1990). A feminist psychologist's postmodern critique of postmodernism. *Humanistic Psychologist*, 18, 95-104.
- Gergen, M. M., & Davis, S. N. (Eds.) (1997). *Toward a new psychology of gender: A reader*. New York: Routledge.
- Glaser, B., & Strauss, A. (1979). *A discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research*. New York: Aldine.
- Harré, R. (1995). Agentive Discourse. In R. Harré & P. Stearns (Eds.), *Discursive psychology in practice* (pp. 120-136). London: Sage.
- Henderson, K. A. (1991). The contribution of feminism to an understanding of leisure constraints. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 23, 363-377.
- Henderson, K. A., & Bialeschki, M. D. (1991). A sense of entitlement to leisure as constraint and empowerment for women. *Leisure Sciences*, 13, 51-66.
- Hessing, M. (1994). More than clockwork: Women's time management in their combined workloads. *Sociological Perspectives*, 37, 611-633.
- Hochschild, A., & Machung, A. (1990). *The second shift: Working parents and the revolution at home*. New York: Judy Piatkus.
- Holm, U. M. (1993). *Mothering and praxis: A feminist-philosophical treatise*. Göteborg: Daidalos.
- House, J. (1981). Social structure and personality. In M. Rosenberg & R. Turner (Eds.), *Social psychology: Sociological perspectives* (pp. 525-561). New York: Basic Books.
- Hunter, P. L., & Whitson, D. J. (1991). Women, leisure and familism: Relationships and isolation in small town Canada. *Leisure Studies*, 10, 219-233.
- Jackson, R. (1994). *Mothers who leave*. London: Pandora.
- Jaggar, A. M., & Rothenberg, P. S. (1993). *Feminist frameworks: Alternative theoretical accounts of the relation between women and men*. 3rd ed. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Karlsson, G. (1990). Facts and meaning: An examination of their role in psychological research from a phenomenological perspective. *Scandinavian Journal of Psychology*, 31, 248-258.
- Karsten, L. (1995). Women's leisure: Divergence, reconceptualization and change—the case of the Netherlands. *Leisure Studies*, 14, 186-201.
- Lee Bartky, S. (1993). The feminine body. In A. M. Jaggar & P. S. Rothenberg (Eds.), *Feminist frameworks.. Alternative theoretical accounts of the relations between women and men* (3rd ed.) (pp. 454-461). New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Lee Bartky, S. (1997). Foucault, femininity, and the modernization of patriarchal power. In D. Tietjens Meyers (Ed.), *Feminist social thought: A reader* (pp. 92-111). New York: Routledge.
- Lenskyj, H. (1988). Measured time: Women, sport and leisure. *Leisure Studies*, 7, 233-240.
- Leon, G. R. (1991). Eating disorders in female athletes. *Sports Medicine*, 12, 219-227.
- Lips, H. M. (1994). Female powerlessness: A case of 'cultural preparedness'? In H. L. Redtke & H. J. Stam (Eds.), *Power/Gender* (pp. 89-107). London: Sage.
- Martin, E. (1996). *The woman in the body*. London: Open University Press.
- Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook* (2nd ed.). London: Sage.
- Miller, J. B. (1976). *Toward a new psychology of women*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Norman, P., & Smith, L. (1995). The theory of planned behavior and exercise: An investigation into the role of prior behavior, behavior intentions and attitude variability. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 25, 403-415.

- Potter, J., & Wetherell, M. (1987). *Discourse and social psychology: Beyond attitudes and behavior*. London: Sage.
- Pruitt, J. A., Kappius, R. V., & Imm, P. S. (1991). Sports, exercise, and eating disorders. In L. Diamant (Ed.), *Psychology of sports, exercise and fitness: Social and personal issues* (pp. 139-151). New York: Hemisphere.
- Reinharz, S. (1992). *Feminist methods in social research*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Richards, L., & Richards, T. (1989). *Old goals, new goals: Toward the next generation of qualitative analysis programs*. Victoria: La Trobe University.
- Richardson, D. (1993). *Women, motherhood and childrearing*. London: Macmillan.
- Roberts, K. (1997). Same activities, different meaning: British youth cultures in the 1990s. *Leisure Studies*, 16, 1-15.
- Scruton, S. (1994). The changing world of women and leisure: feminism, 'postfeminism' and leisure. *Leisure Studies*, 00, 249-261.
- Shaw, S. M. (1991). Women's leisure time: using time budget data to examine current trends and future predictions. *Leisure Studies*, 10, 171-181.
- Shaw, S. M. (1994). Gender, leisure, and constraints: Toward a framework for the analysis of women's leisure. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 26, 8-22.
- Smith, D. (1987). *The everyday world as problematic: A feminist sociology*. London: Open University Press.
- Smith, D. (1991). Writing women's experience into social science. *Feminism and Psychology*, 1, 155-171.
- Statistics Sweden (1995). *Women and men in Sweden: Facts and figures*. Stockholm: SCB.
- Thomsson, H. (1996). *Women's opportunities for well-being: Studies of women's work, leisure and health-related behavior patterns*. Doctoral dissertation. Department of Psychology, Stockholm University.
- Unger, R. K. (1992). Will the real sex please stand up? *Feminism and Psychology*, 2, 231-238.
- Unger, R., & Crawford, M. (1992). *Women & gender: A feminist psychology*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Wankel, L. M., & Berger, B. G. (1990). The psychological and social benefits of sport and physical activity. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 22, 167-182.
- Weedon, C. (1997). *Feminist practice & poststructuralist theory*. 2nd ed.. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Wittig, M. (1992). *One is not born a woman*. Hempel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf.