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**Master thesis**

**Experiences of physical education  
and its contribution toward sport  
and physical activity**

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## Abstract

**Aim of the study:** The aim of this study was to acquire knowledge about 15-16-year-old girls' experiences and attitudes toward physical education, and to see if they perceived the subject to have any impact on their sporting participation or their physical activity in leisure, with possibility to strengthen PE's role as a health promoting arena. **Methods:** A single case study conducted in an elementary school southeast in Norway. Data was collected by eight focus-group interviews, with a total of 35 'sporty' girls in 10<sup>th</sup> grade, as well as short questionnaires in front of the interviews, which mapped their background information. The last step of the process was conducted with a thematic analysis with an inductive approach. **Findings and conclusion:** The findings showed a diverse range of experiences of the subject, but it mainly emerged positive attitudes toward PE. The PE teacher was emphasized as significant relative to all aspects concerning the subject. It was not found any contribution of PE to affect sports participation, either to start or continue with sports, as primary and secondary socialization involving family and friends were the most common contributor for developing a sporting habitus, and also their sports participation. There was though found a relationship from sports to PE, as those who engaged in organized youth sport in leisure were more physically and mentally prepared for PE. The girls' perceptions of PE's impact on PA in their leisure were varied, but suggested that there is a relation between the two, especially during the personal exercise period. PE teachers do not fulfil their expected roles as contributors toward inspiring to physical activity. **Key words:** *Physical education, youth sport, physical activity, girls, PE teachers, public health*

## Norsk sammendrag

**Formålet med studien:** Formålet med studien var å få kjennskap til erfaringer og holdninger til kroppsøvingfaget hos 15-16 år gamle jenter, og få kjennskap til deres oppfattelse av om kroppsøvingfaget på noen måte bidrar til deres idrettsdeltakelse eller fysiske aktivitet på fritiden. Dette med mulighet for å styrke kroppsøvingfagets rolle som en helsefremmende arena. **Metode:** Det har blitt gjennomført en case studie ved en ungdomsskole sørøst i Norge. Datainnsamlingen skjedde ved åtte fokusgruppe intervjuer med totalt 35 idrettslige jenter i tiende klasse, og korte spørreskjema som omhandlet deltakernes bakgrunnsinformasjon som ble utdelt og innsamlet like før intervjuene. **Resultater og konklusjon:** Resultatene viser et bredt spekter av opplevelser knyttet til kroppsøvingfaget, men i hovedsak positive holdninger til faget. Kroppsøvingslæreren ble fremhevet som særdeles viktig i forhold til alle aspekter ved faget. Det ble ikke funnet noen påvirkning av kroppsøvingfaget til idrettsdeltakelse, verken til å starte med idrett eller til å fortsette i senere tid. Primær og sekundærsosialisering med familie og venner ble fremhevet som den største påvirkningsfaktoren på utviklingen av 'idretts habitus', og dermed også til å påvirke deres deltakelse innen idrett. Funnene i studien viser et forhold mellom idrett og kroppsøving, ved at de som var involvert i organisert idrett var bedre fysisk og mentalt rustet for kroppsøving. Det var varierte oppfatninger av kroppsøvingfagets innvirkning på fysisk aktivitet på fritiden, men resultatene tyder på et forhold mellom de to variablene, spesielt i løpet av egentreningsperioder. Kroppsøvingslærere oppfyller ikke deres påtenkte roller som inspirasjonskilder for fysisk aktivitet. **Nøkkelbegreper:** *Kroppsøving, idrett, fysisk aktivitet, jenter, kroppsøvingslærere, folkehelse*

## Table of content

<b>Acknowledgements</b>	<b>II</b>
<b>Abstract</b>	<b>III</b>
<b>List of tables</b>	<b>VI</b>
<b>Chapter 1: Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Chapter 2: Literature Review</b>	<b>3</b>
2.1 <i>Physical activity in Norway</i>	3
2.2 <i>Physical education and health promotion</i>	3
2.3 <i>Sports and physical activity</i>	5
2.4 <i>Sports participation in Norway</i>	6
2.5 <i>Physical education and sports</i>	6
2.6 <i>Physical activity and sport. Which direction?</i>	9
2.7 <i>Perceptions, experiences and attitudes of physical education</i>	9
2.8 <i>What affect attitudes, perceptions and experiences of PE?</i>	10
2.9 <i>Key concepts</i>	14
<b>Chapter 3: Research question</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Chapter 4: Methodology – A qualitative approach</b>	<b>18</b>
4.1 <i>Mixed method approach</i>	18
4.2 <i>Study design</i>	20
4.2.1 <i>Case study</i>	20
4.2.2 <i>Explanatory sequential mixed methods</i>	21
4.3 <i>Data collection – instruments</i>	22
4.3.1 <i>Interviews</i>	22
4.3.1 <i>Questionnaire</i>	24
4.3.3 <i>Focus groups</i>	24
4.4 <i>Sample</i>	26
4.4.1 <i>Sampling strategy</i>	26
4.4.2 <i>Sample justification</i>	27
4.5 <i>Analysis</i>	28
4.5.1 <i>A number of decisions</i>	29
4.5.2 <i>The procedure</i>	30
4.6 <i>Ethical considerations</i>	31
4.7 <i>Reliability, validity and generalizability</i>	32

<b>Chapter 5: Findings</b>	<b>34</b>
5.1 <i>The girls' experiences with PE</i>	34
5.1.1 PE teacher	34
5.1.2 Satisfaction with PE	35
5.1.2 Factors contributing to negative attitudes and experiences	37
5.1.3 Structure of PE	42
5.1.4 Content	43
5.2 <i>PE as a contributor to girls' sporting lives and their PA in leisure time</i>	45
5.2.1 The girls' sporting lives	47
5.2.2 PE's contribution towards starting sports	48
5.2.3 PE's contribution toward continuing with sports	50
5.2.4 PE's contribution towards PA in leisure time	51
5.2.5 Relationship between sports and PE	54
<b>Chapter 6: Discussion</b>	<b>55</b>
6.1 <i>Experiences, perceptions and attitudes toward PE</i>	55
6.1.1 Public health perspective	64
6.2 <i>PE's contribution toward sports and physical activity</i>	65
6.2.1 Public health perspective	70
6.3 <i>Limitations</i>	71
6.4 <i>Further Research</i>	72
<b>Chapter 7: Conclusion</b>	<b>73</b>
<b>List of references</b>	<b>77</b>
<b>Appendix 1a: NSD document</b>	<b>88</b>
<b>Appendix 2: Consent form</b>	<b>90</b>
<b>Appendix 3: Interview guide</b>	<b>92</b>
<b>Appendix 4: Questionnaire</b>	<b>93</b>
<b>Appendix 5: Coding</b>	<b>94</b>

**List of tables**

Table 1: Summary of the girls' experiences distributed on the different sports \_\_\_\_\_ p. 46

## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

One of the main public health problems of the western world is believed to be the increasing amount of diseases associated with changes in lifestyles over time (Frew & McGillivray, 2005; Health Directorate, 2014, Institute of public health, 2010), and the World Health Organization (WHO) states that insufficient physical activity (PA) is considered to be one of 10 leading risk factors for death worldwide (WHO, 2015). The benefits of PA are well documented (McKenzie & Lounsbery, 2013; Boreham & Riddoch, 2001; Biddle cited in Green, 2008), especially in a health context (Winsley & Armstrong, 2005). WHO has proposed increased PA as the leading strategy for fighting the current obesity epidemic, and other diseases associated with changes in lifestyle (WHO, 2015). An increase in the PA level would possibly provide significant health benefits for all age groups in a population level, in terms of increased functionality, decreased risk of disease and overall improved quality of life (WHO, 2015; Boreham & Riddoch, 2001). More than half (56%) of all WHO Member States (Norway as one of these) have developed policies that emphasize, among other things, increased levels of PA among the population, especially among the younger section of the society (WHO, 2015; Hansen, et al. 2008; Green, 2008; Sallis et al. 2012; WHO, 2003; Health Directorate, 2014).

School, and physical education (PE) in particular, is viewed as a crucial vehicle for encouraging health-related physical activity among children and youth (Green, 2008; Sallis et al. 2012), which also is part of an overall strategic plan for the mobilization of improving public health in Norway (The ministries, 2004). As the aim of the Norwegian PE curriculum states, PE shall inspire students towards a physical active lifestyle (Department of Education, 2015), and it is widely expected that PE should play a key role in inspiring PA among students. One of the reasons why the subject is believed to promote PA is by encouraging

sports participation among the younger section of society (Green, 2008), but there remains a dearth of evidence showing any effect of regular PE (let alone) on young peoples' involvement in organized youth sport (Green, 2014). It would therefore be valuable to examine if students perceive PE to have any impact on their sporting lives.

While the focus of my study was the link between PE and leisure sport, the youngsters utilized the freedom of semi-structured interviews to talk about their perceptions of PE more broadly. Hence my findings made me change my research questions more toward students' perceptions of and experiences with PE. The literature review will include research concerning both topics, as the chapter was changed and adapted the new research questions after the findings emerged. This was because the researcher found it essential for the discussion of the findings concerning the students' experiences of the subject. When searching for literature about experiences with, and attitudes and perception of PE, the researcher found several studies concerning girls who were struggling with the subject, but nothing about 'sporty' girls enjoying PE. In addition to the lack of research on the topic, Mitchell, Grey and Inchley (2015) stated that there is a need for in-depth, qualitative case study research providing detailed accounts of girls experiences in PE.

This thesis will present findings from eight focus-group interviews of 'sporty' 15-16-year-old girls from one secondary school in Norway, regarding perceptions and experiences of PE, in addition to data from short questionnaires conducted in front of the interviews. The aim of the study was to become familiar with how or if 'sporty' girls perceived PE to impact their sporting lives, and by that health related exercise (HRE), in addition to getting a broad but detailed insight of their experiences with PE, and perceptions of the subject.



## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

The literature review will refer to previous research and some statistical data in the field. There are two main categories that will be presented, concerning (i) PA, PE and sport, and its link toward public health, and (ii) perceptions, experiences and attitudes toward PE. Two key concepts will be emphasized at the end of this chapter, habitus and socialisation, that later will be discussed with the findings of this study.

### **2.1 Physical activity in Norway**

Although Norway is ranked as one of the top countries worldwide, in terms of health status (18<sup>th</sup> of 145 countries)(Bloomberg, 2012), there are growing concerns with the health status of Norwegians. As for this matter, the Norwegian Health Directorate developed, in 2014, new, clear and concrete recommendations for PA for both children and adults. These were mainly 60 minutes daily for children and youth, and 30 minutes daily for adults (Health Directorate, 2014). In 2011 there were only 43% of 15-year-old girls that met these recommendations, and respectively 58% of the boys. That equals one half of the youth population in Norway, not meeting the recommendations of daily PA level.

### **2.2 Physical education and health promotion**

According to WHO (2003), a number of scientists highlight the importance of childhood as the foundation for the establishment of good health in adulthood. Adult health is a result of collected social and biological influences throughout the life course. This illustrates the importance of early life as a foundation for establishing good health and healthy habits in adulthood (WHO, 2003). In the light of the fundamental view that PA is one of the key determinants of health, school as a social arena, and PE in particular, is viewed as a crucial vehicle for encouraging health-related physical activity among the younger section of the society (Green, 2008; Sallis et al. 2012). “Consequently, PE has the potential to influence

young people's involvement in lifelong physical activity" (Kjønniksen, Fjørtoft & Wold, 2009, p. 151). According to McKenzie and Lounsbery (2013) PE has got an important role in reducing sedentary behaviour, and contributing to population health. HRE in PE has emerged and become a central part of the subject (Harris & Penney, 2000). Harris and Penney (2000, p.252) have described PE as "critical in educating and providing opportunities for young people to become more independently active for life". Hence the subject is seen as a perfectly suitable vehicle for the promotion of healthy active lifestyles among young people (McKenzie in Green & Thurston, 2002), which contributes to defining PE's role in public health promotion (Harris, 2010). Hills, Dengel and Lubans (2014) claim that foundations for PA behaviours are set during early life, and school can contribute significantly to shape young people's activity behaviours, by PE-teachers as the main drivers.

PE as such a tool is also part of an overall strategic plan for the mobilization of improving public health in Norway (The ministries, 2004). Policies in countries worldwide state that health promotion is the main goal of PE (Telama, Nupponen & Pieron, 2005). Indeed, as with many other countries it is widely assumed that PE in Norway not only can, but also should play a key role in the promotion of health among children and youth (Green, 2008). The aim of the Norwegian PE curriculum is, according to the Department of Education (2015), to inspire students towards a physical active lifestyle, and a lifelong joy of movement. In Norway several policy documents refer to PE as a crucial arena in the context of public health work (The ministries, 2004; Ministry of health, 2003). Not only is PE assumed to provide an appropriate setting for health promotion during school time, *directly*, through PA in PE classes, but also *indirectly* through preparing children for a lifetime of regular PA, by increasing the children's knowledge, skills and understanding towards health promoting exercise. These are the results that Trost (2006) refers to in his chapter in the *Handbook of Physical Education* as how PE can best contribute to promote public health. This way is

assumed to lead to changes in the student's *attitudes*, and as a consequence, their health related behaviours (Green, 2008; McKenzie & Lounsbery, 2013).

In Norway today we are witnessing an on going debate reflecting upon the understanding of health in PE. Both PE teachers and students acknowledge the subject mainly to benefit health issues, such as 'treatment' to inactivity and sedentary behaviour among Norwegian children and adolescents. This way the subject's role in schools is defended as a subject beneficial toward student's physical health (Aspen & Dowling, 2009; Brattli & Moen, 2015). According to Moen and Green (in Brattli & Moen, 2015) both current and prospective PE teachers tend to justify and legitimate PE in terms of its contribution to youngsters' PA. This way of promoting the subject stands in contrast with the overall aim of PE in several countries, which is based on providing student with both knowledge, skills, abilities and confidence to perform PA throughout their lifetime (Sallis et al. 2012; Department of Education, 2015). It is not only the PA aspect of PE that is important within a health context. PE has got an intrinsic value, as well as the movement of joy, and the bodily movement has a special quality of experience (Arnold, 1979, Säfvenbom, 2010; Ommundsen, 2005).

### **2.3 Sports and physical activity**

PE can also contribute to young people's PA *indirectly*, by encouraging sports participation (Green, 2008; Roberts & Brodie, 1992). As Green (2008) and Waddington (2000) states, there are probably few ideas, which are as widely and uncritically accepted as linking sport and exercise with good health. The relationship between sports and HRE is in the wind among the growing amount of sports scientists nowadays, concerned with demonstrating that sports participation makes people fitter, and for that matter, healthier. Participation in organized youth sports may increase the likelihood of being physically active later in life (Trost et al. in Kjønnsen et al. 2009). Roberts and Brodie (1992) demonstrate that sport promotes health benefits to people, independent of socio demographic status. In

other words, it does not matter if you are male or female, young or old, rich or poor, you will still experience benefits within health while participating in sport. The same study emphasizes the contribution of sport participation in promoting health related behaviours, associated with use of tobacco and alcohol consumption. Those participants that were playing sports were more likely to not smoke, and have a small or moderate alcohol consumption compared to those that did not play sports. Policies promoting sport as a vehicle for health-related PA as a suitable means of combating the supposed health crisis are widespread. The Norwegian government emphasizes in its several White paper documents the importance of sport as a vehicle to promote PA among the population (The royal ministry of culture, 2012; The ministries, 2004).

#### **2.4 Sports participation in Norway**

The Norwegian Olympic and Paralympic committee and Confederation of Sports' (Norwegian acronym: NIF) overview of the membership numbers of Norwegian sport clubs shows high rates of memberships, and the numbers has increased from 300,000 memberships in 1955 to more than 2 millions in 2010. 45% of Norwegian adolescents were members of a sport club in 2012, and only 15 % say they have never been members, which is a relatively low number. Sport participation in Norway especially among children and adolescents can therefor be characterized as very high, as when 85% of all children and youth at some point in their lives have been members of a sport club (Seippel, Strandbu, & Sletten, 2011). It can be assumed that the high rates of PA level among Norwegian adolescents can be related to the high rates of sports participation among the same group (Vaage, 2015).

#### **2.5 Physical education and sports**

One of the means by which PE is believed to be well placed to promote health-related PA is by encouraging sports participation among young people. The main argument for PE as a contribution to sport participation is the fact that it captures a broad audience, of all children

between the age of 6-16 (Green, 2008). The Norwegian PE curriculum emphasizes sports as one of the key elements in the subject, as well as exercise and lifestyle, and outdoor life (Department of Education, n.d.). Nowadays PE in Norway seems to be dominated by an emphasis on sports performance rather than exercise as a tool for health (Moen, Westlie, Brattli, Bjørke & Vaktkjold, 2015). Traditional youth sports are and have been dominating PE for decades (Smith, Thurston, Lamb & Green, 2007), and the term 'a sportified PE' has become widely used (Vlieghe, 2013). Moen (2011) discovered in her PhD in physical education teacher education (PETE) that the 'sportification' of PE is maintained and developed in PETE, among other reasons because they follow standards for teaching skills developed by NIF, with emphasis on instruction as teaching style. A comparative study of PE among Scandinavian countries showed a common factor, that PE emerged as an 'activity subject' with particular focus on sports (Annerstedt, 2008). The subject is most beneficial for adolescents who is used to the logic and value system of organized sports, hence those who participate in organized youth sports (Säfvenbom, Haugen & Bulie, 2015).

Several studies believe there is a positive relationship between enhanced PE and participation in PA in leisure (Trudeau & Shephard, 2005; McKenzie, 2003). As mentioned earlier, the aim of the Norwegian PE curriculum is to inspire to a physical active lifestyle, and a lifelong joy of movement (Department of Education, 2015). According to Ommundsen (2003) experiences in PE may influence participation in PA in leisure, and give positive attitudes toward PA in general, by giving students opportunities to experience and not least appreciate PA. PE and sport are typically seen as important tools to PA especially among the younger section of the society (Sallis et al. 2012). The subject may also stimulate students' intentions to attend physically active recreation, typically in the form of sport, in their leisure time, but there remains a dearth of evidence showing any, as Green (2014) calls it, "PE effect".

Kjønniksen et al. (2009) found that there is a moderate relationship between attitudes toward PE and participation in organized sports in adolescence, as PE is the primary arena for many children to experience regular physical activity, learning different types of movement skills and developing attitudes toward PA in general. This may influence participation in organized sport in leisure by enhancing the desire to be more physically active. But also vice-versa, adolescents may transfer skills from their participation in sports into PE. In addition to investigating adolescents' perceptions of PE, Säfvenbom et al. (2015) examined the relationship between youth sports and autonomous motivation for the subject. Concerning the relationship between attending organized sport and perceptions of PE, they found that 7 % of those who did organized sports did not like the subject. The remaining 93 % liked PE, of them 31 % would prefer it to be provided differently. To compare, among those who were not involved in organized sports, 24% did not like the subject, more than three times as many as those doing sports. It emerges a link between being involved in organized sports and attitudes toward PE. If PE is presented in a way that overlaps too much with how competitive youth sport is organized and performed, the subject will most likely enforce positive attitudes, motivation, behaviour and experiences of those already involved in such activities. Those who have never been involved in any competitive sports cultures, or those who have bad experiences with sports could get the same factors reinforced in a negative way (Säfvenbom et al. 2015). In other words, those who have dropped out of sports can experience PE as a "flash-back" towards their sport participation, and associate PE with negative energy. As mentioned earlier, the subject is therefore most beneficial for adolescents who participate in organized youth sports (Säfvenbom et al. 2015). Säfvenbom et al. (2015) also indicated a significant relationship between self-determined motivation toward PE and involvement in organized youth sports, as well as PA level in total. Those who participated in organized youth sport and had a higher physically activity level in general also had a higher levels of

motivation for PE than others. Attending organized youth sport may enhance attitudes toward PE, because students are likely to develop physical skills and psychological confidence during participation in organized youth sport (Martens & Seefeldt in Kjønnsen et al. 2009).

## **2.6 Physical activity and sport. Which direction?**

As seen, it is hard to locate the direction of this relationship, whether students get involved in sports because they have positive attitudes toward PE or whether they like PE because they are involved in sports. As Green (2014) states, there exists no evidence that regular PE, let alone in itself, has any significant role to play (directly or indirectly) in facilitating young people's involvement in and adherence to sport, either at the time or in their future lives. It may be widely believed that a causal relationship between PE and youth sport exist, but any relationship may be false, inasmuch as observable patterns in PE and youth sport may be caused by confounding variables, such as age, gender, social class and influence of significant others, because PE is experienced in context (Van den Berghe, Vansteenkiste, Cardon, Kirk & Harens, 2012). If there in fact is a correlation between the two variables, it would not be clear which direction the causal relationship is working (Green, 2014). Regardless of the direction of the relationship, learning physical skills in early life, both in organized youth sport and in PE may affect the probability for people engaging in PA in adulthood positively, by retaining these skills (Kjønnsen et al. 2009).

## **2.7 Perceptions, experiences and attitudes of physical education**

There is lack of research on adolescents' experiences with PE in Norway. The country needs, like other nations, data from national samples of adolescents explaining their perceptions and experiences with PE, how they are motivated to attend the subject, and to what extent they enjoy it (Säfvenbom et al. 2015). As Mitchell, Gray and Inchley (2015) state, previous research highlights “...*the importance of conducting in-depth, qualitative, case study*

*research which provides rich, detailed and meaningful accounts of girls PE experiences”* (p.606). Säfvenbom et al. (2015) have recently published very interesting research concerning Norwegian adolescents’ perceptions of PE (aged 12-19). Like previous research (Kjønniksen et al. 2009; Andrews & Johansen, 2005; Imsen, 1997), their study shows high scores of enjoyment in PE. More than half (56%) of the adolescents were satisfied with the subject, indicating that Norwegian adolescents report positive attitudes toward PE in general. But there is a decrease in positive attitudes along with increased age, and girls report less positive attitudes towards the subject than boys. PE. These numbers are disturbingly, as Kjønniksen et al. (2009) report girls’ attitudes toward the subject to be the strongest predictor of their PA participation in later life. Positive attitudes and enjoyment in PE is essential for the impact of positive experiences of movement activities and further PA involvement (Green, 2014; Dismore & Bailey, 2011; Hashim, Grove & Whipp, 2008) and to reach the aim of the PE curriculum, to inspire to a physical active life style and lifelong joy of movement (Department of Education, 2015). This shows the vital importance of knowing what student experience and what effects their experiences and attitudes.

## **2.8 What affect attitudes, perceptions and experiences of PE?**

As Green (2014) states, positive attitudes towards PE has got an impact on students’ learning and enjoyment in PE, and is considered a necessary component in encouraging an active lifestyle (Dismore & Bailey, 2011). Enhancing students’ attitudes therefore becomes central to achieve the aim of the PE curriculum, to inspire to a physical active lifestyle and a lifelong joy of movement (Department of Education, 2015). In addition, enjoyment in PE is, by Hashim et al. (2008) considered crucial in the recreation of positive experiences of movement activities and accordingly further involvement. PE is, as mentioned earlier, a popular subject, and according to Ballin and Johnson (In Kjønniksen et al. 2009) and Kjønniksen et al. (2009) there exist multiple reasons why the subject is well received among



students. PE is usually held away from the classroom, for students to join activities in a different more recreational context, offering student's new and diverse experiences from those provided in academic disciplines. PE as recreation from everyday school life as well as mastering physical skills may contribute to student's motivation toward PE, by giving them a sense of achievement.

A body of literature shows students with negative attitudes toward PE, and especially girls not engaging in PE, resulting in a relatively high number of inactive girls within PE classes (Mitchell et al. 2015; Säfvenbom et al., 2015). Olafson (2002) revealed female PE students to truly hate the subject, even if they enjoyed being active in their leisure. It was not the PA part of PE they did not like, they blamed other contributing factors, like the official curriculum, the PE-teacher, intolerant peer relations and the masculinity of the subject. Other studies (Fisette, 2011) show girls that were concerned about being watched and judged by their bodies and skill abilities when they performed physical activity during PE, mainly from peers, but also from teachers. This made them feel uncomfortable and unsafe, which again lead to development of negative attitudes toward PE.

Andrews and Johansen (2005) did a study on Norwegian girls at the age of 16 -20 that were unhappy with PE. They found several different factors contributing to girls' participation in the subject, especially in relation to content, body focus, peers and PE-teachers. As Carlson (1995) found, development of negative attitudes toward PE often relates to content with no or little variation, especially when for example team games dominate sessions. Students are likely to become bored if they perceive insufficient challenges, and are presented with the same activities year after year. Kjønniksen et al. (2009) suggest that the variety of the Norwegian curriculum can explain the positive attitudes toward PE over time in Norway, and that attitudes are affected by how PE is practiced in different schools, among other things, the variety of content in the sessions. A study of Rikard and Banville (2006) of high school

students' attitudes of PE revealed that development of positive attitudes towards PE requires a variety of interesting activities that produce active participation and a sense of fun.

In Andrews and Johansen's (2005) findings, it emerged that content based on boys' terms, with ballgames, was central within their PE sessions. Girls felt run over by boys that were physically superior, and girls often had to participate in activities they were not comfortable with, which led to their resignation. Boys' interests were often better addressed than girls' by a significant higher proportion masculine activities rather than feminine. Girls emphasized that boys were rarely confronted with girly activities such as dancing and aerobic, and when they were, they did not attend the activity. The PE content depended very much on the teacher, as the teacher often had activities he or she was comfortable with. The importance of the PE-teacher is also highlighted in Inchley, Kirby and Currie (2008), where the teachers are emphasized as important role models for students. Positive teachers supporting and helping students, showing them how to perform activities with good attitudes are significant factors in shaping students' attitudes toward PE. Research suggests that PE teachers have such a position that they can influence girls' experiences in PE by offering them the opportunity to choose activities, how to conduct them and with whom (Smith, Green & Thurston, 2009). Mitchell et al. (2015) located a positive outcome from teachers consulting with girls about which activities they would like in PE, listening to them and responding to their needs. Enright and O'Sullivan (2010) found that negotiating the curriculum, giving girls the opportunity to impact their own curriculum was central for participation in PE, because they experienced leadership and responsibility for the changes. Same experiment was done of Mitchell et al. (2015), resulting in girls being more confident and comfortable participating in PE. Making changes in the Norwegian curriculum, adapting it more against adolescents' need for quality in PE may contribute to promote lifelong PA and secure a healthy lifestyle (Kjønniksen et al. 2009). Girls' motivation and learning is enhanced when PE teachers focus

on providing appropriate challenges with applicable activities with some level of choice (Standage & Gillison, 2007). It does not necessary mean that giving students' a choice of activity will lead to changes in their engagement, but the fact that PE teachers attempt to make a better environment in class can have a huge effect on the students. Listening to students and involving them in teaching and learning processes make a positive contribution to students' experiences of PE (Mitchell et al. 2015; Standage & Gillison, 2007). In the study of Mitchell et al. (2015), girls who experienced a lack of choice in PE felt no control or autonomy over their experiences, which led to a negative attitude of the subject.

Concerning body image, Andrews and Johansen (2005) revealed that PE is an arena with large focus on body and appearance, affecting girls' participation and effort in PE. To escape showering, girls stayed relatively stationary so they could avoid sweating. Similar findings were discovered in the study of Mitchell et al. (2015), with discomfort about sharing showers and feelings of self-consciousness, which had a negative effect on girls' participation in PE.

The basis of assessment in PE is changed multiple times over the last decades, with different emphasize on effort, attitudes, ability to cooperate, skills, theory and individual prerequisites. It was in 2012 determined that effort became part of the assessment in PE again, after some years of absence (Department of Education, 2012). The Norwegian PE curriculum only contains aims of competence to be achieved during secondary school, but not how to assess students other than by their competence and effort. It is up to each teacher to interpret the aims of competence, and conduct an educational program to reach these in the best possible way, by evaluating the students by their effort and competence. It is important that the teacher makes it clear what is expected of the students, and what they need to accomplish to achieve the different grades, both in forms of effort and competence. Neither the PE curriculum nor the Educational Act gives any recommendations of using tests as assessment

for students, as none of the aims of competence is formulated in a way that tests should be necessary. This gives teachers freedom to do what they prefer. As the Educational Directorate says, the best way of using tests in PE is with aim to give students knowledge about how tests work, not to specialise students' physical or technical skills (Department of Education, 2012). It is also not allowed to divide classes by genders on a temporary basis, only in exceptional cases, as the Educational Act § 8-2 (2014b) states.

## **2.9 Key concepts**

### *Habitus and socialization*

Habitus is a sociological concept constructed by earlier life experiences, perceptions of reality and experiences as for example childhood and education (Wilken, 2008). Each individual's habitus will determine how one act, think, taste, perceive and evaluate the social world around us (Engström, 2010; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992; Haug & Horverak, 2009). Habitus is often associated with the more familiar expression 'habits' in the way that it affects and directs us in our choices, without us thinking of actions or reactions in retrospect (Engström, 2010). The individual is very capable of acting independently, but at the same time, the goals are always affected by the habitus possessed by the individual (Bourdieu, 1995). The concept devotes its attention towards two interacting processes, where the individual first acquires knowledge and makes it meaningful, and thereafter converts this knowledge into practical acting (Wilken, 2008).

The concept has got its roots in the corporeal, and is a body condition where the social part is embedded in the body. This can be explained by remembering with our body equally as we remember with our head. "Spinal knowledge" is a highly suitable expression where one can say that cultural norms is anchored in the body, and lies outside the consciousness of the individual (Wilken, 2008). Such examples could be how we walk, sit, stand and act in different situations. Bourdieu is familiar with using the expression "practical logic and logical

practice” to explain ordinal everyday choices. Our every day actions are unconsidered and outside conscious control. What we do is more important than the knowledge we possess, and our daily choices get autonomous (Williams, 1995).

Socialization is a broad topic concerning different subjects that will surely interest everyone (Roberts, 2012). Over the years the concept has got several definitions, but the idea that people shape and form other people is central to all of the definitions (Thurston, 2014). Roberts (2009) has made a deep understandable definition that explains the essence of sociology in a good way: “The influence of society on the development of the person, whereby society actually becomes part of the individual, who internalises the knowledge and beliefs, and build a personality, enabling him or her to become a full member of society” (p. 270). In other words, socialization is about people getting affected by external factors.

Habitus can often be compared to individual socialization, even though it exists on a deeper level in terms of how individuals orientate themselves in everyday life (Engström, 2010). Habitus is a product of both primary and secondary socialization, where the primary socialization might be of greatest significance (Wilken, 2008). The primary socialization is the initial and potentially most influential form of socialization of a child, expected to be the nearest family like parents and siblings (Thurston, 2014; Roberts, 2009; Green, 2010). The significance of early life socialization can be claimed to lie in the impact of individuals’ habitus (Green, 2010). It gives individuals understanding of what is right and wrong, and gives a guidance to how one should act later in life (Wilken, 2008). Although the primary socialization has got the greatest influence on habitus (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992), it does not mean that secondary socialization is not important. Secondary socialization is all that follows beyond the family where people inevitably experience socialization processes, such as school, friends, work, sport clubs and so on (Green, 2010; Thurston, 2014; Roberts, 2009).

Bourdieu reviews habitus as “slow but changeable” expressing that there is possible to impact a child’s habitus over a longer period of time (Wilken, 2008).

Even if socialization is an on going process throughout life, the significance of early life experiences, within the family in particular, should not be underestimated (Green, 2010), as the later stages of socialization build up on the foundations laid early on (Roberts, 2009). When it concerns youth sport, young people’s ‘sporting habitus’ tend to originate from their socialization, and are expressed when youth make sporting and leisure lifestyle choices (Green, 2010). The term ‘significant others’ is well used in the world of socialization, revolving other people with significant influence on individuals thoughts and practices, commonly friends and peers for young. Families and friends tend to be important contributors in sports socialization, and towards the development of a sporting habitus (Green, 2010). “Parents provide the earliest opportunities and experiences, financial and emotional support” (Stroot, in Green, 2010, p. 170). “If the parents are not actively involved, nor intentionally provide sporting experiences for the child, the chance that the child will be exposed to the sporting world at an early age is limited” (Stroot, in Green, 2010, p. 170). Concerning youth sport, PE-teachers are according to Green (2010) also expected to be in the category of significant others, as well as coaches and teammates.

Young peoples early attachments towards sports appear to have a deep impact on their sports involvement in later life. Their predispositions towards PA tend to be deeply rooted during childhood and youth. Socialization into sports at a young age can be very significant for lifelong participation in sports (Green, 2010).

### **Chapter 3: Research question**

Previous research says it is widely assumed that a causal relationship between PE and sports exist, but which direction it works can never be proven because of confounding variables. It is, however, possible to show a correlation between the two variables, to see PE's potential contribution to increase sport participation and by that improving overall health, to find out if PE can be a tool for encouraging young Norwegians to engage in health-related PA via sports participation. Following research question was developed based on previous research:

- Do 'sporty' girls experience PE to impact their sports participation in leisure?

As mentioned in the introduction, the findings of this study revolved around the girls' perceptions and experiences of PE in general, which made the researcher develop a new primary research question as well as the old one was adjusted and held as secondary research question. The following questions are the ones that will be examined in this study.

- How do 'sporty' Norwegian girls experience PE?
- And do they perceive PE to affect their sporting life or their PA in leisure?

## **Chapter 4: Methodology – A qualitative approach**

In the methodology chapter the chosen approach and study design will be explained and substantiated, together with details of sampling strategy, data collection with its instruments, data analysis, and ethical considerations.

The ontological and epistemological standpoint adopted is constructivist, based on understanding participants constructed meanings of a social phenomena (Bryman, 2012). Constructivism is by Bryman (2012) considered an ontological position, and is typically seen as an approach to qualitative research. Social phenomena and their meanings are constantly being conducted by social actors, and produced through social interaction (Bryman, 2012). The researcher's own meanings about the social world will affect the research (Bryman, 2012), because the interpretation will be shaped by the researcher's own experiences and background (Bryman, 2012; Creswell, 2014). The issue of this study will be an ontological one, as the researcher, as well as social constructivists (Creswell, 2014), believes that all individuals develop subjective meanings towards specific objects, through their experiences.

### **4.1 Mixed method approach**

A qualitative research approach emphasizes words rather than numbers in the collection and analysis of data (Bryman, 2012), and focuses upon interpretations based on the participant's meanings (Creswell, 2014; Malterud, 2013). People's experiences and perceptions are the main focus of the approach (Malterud, 2013), and it renders the complexity of a situation (Creswell, 2014). This is exactly what this study is about, finding students' experiences of PE, and their thoughts around PE as a contributing factor for their sporting life or PA levels in their spare time.

Considering the research question of this study, and research (Creswell, 2014; Brinkmann & Tanggaard, 2012) saying that a qualitative research approach seeks to explore and understand the meaning of individuals or a group concerning a social or human problem,



a qualitative method with interviews could be the best fit for this study. What the researcher seeks to answer in addition to the girls' experiences with PE is not only if they perceive PE to play a role in their sports participation, but also how it occurs. In order to do so, their perceptions of the role of PE in promoting and developing their sports participation needs to be known. This requires a discussion or a conversation with the girls, to get substantial answers. The method for collecting data will mostly be qualitative, as a quantitative questionnaire with a qualitative element, in the form of open-ended questions, would be likely to just "scratch the surface" of the deeper, more fulsome response that the researcher is looking for. Partly because it would deny the researcher the opportunity to ask follow-up questions of the kind available in a semi-structured interview (Bryman, 2012).

It could be suitable to use a short questionnaire focused upon what the students do in sporting terms in their leisure lives to get a deeper insight in a possible relationship between PE and sports. Also to look for any correlation between which sports they do, and their experiences of PE. Necessary background information about the sample could then be collected in descriptive statistics, which can be useful later in the interviews. A short questionnaire at the beginning of the interviews will result in a mixed-methods approach, involving a collection of both qualitative and quantitative data (Bryman, 2012; Creswell, 2014). Some researchers suggest that this contributes to a more complete understanding of the research problem than either one of the two approaches would give let alone (Fredriksen, Gundelach & Nielsen, 2014; Creswell, 2014). Although a mixed-methods approach will be applied, the qualitative part will dominate because the quantitative part mainly will be used to identify background information about the sample.

There are both strengths and weaknesses with qualitative and quantitative approaches, and it would as Bryman (2012) suggests, be a possible way of thinking to combine the two, in a mixed method research. Mixed method research is a relatively new methodology originating

around 1980-1990, grounded in work from individuals in various fields (Bryman, 2012; Creswell, 2014; Frederiksen et al. 2014). Until now there has been several different terms of the expression, like integrating, multimethod, synthesis and mixed methodology, but the most used term used in research nowadays is mixed methods (Bryman, 2006), which best expresses the fact that both qualitative and quantitative methods are involved (Bryman, 2012). To apply the method, it must be appropriate to the research question or research area of the researchers concern. One can easily fall into the trap of thinking, “more is better” but there is, as Bryman (2012) emphasizes no point collecting more data than required. A strength using mixed methods, which is also the main reason for my choice of mixed methods, builds on the fact that one can build a database on another. In other words, you can adapt your second data collection built on the answers of the first. This type of design is referred to as explanatory sequential mixed methods (Creswell, 2014), and will be further explained in chapter 4.2.2 Explanatory mixed methods.

## **4.2 Study design**

Based on the qualitative domination in this study, a research design both for mixed methods and qualitative approach has been selected. The analysis will mainly be focused upon the respondents’ meanings, but of course their background information will also be taken into account.

### *4.2.1 Case study*

The research question is essential for choosing a research design, and influences the choice (Malterud, 2013). In this study the research questions concern ‘sporty’ girls’ experiences of PE, and if they perceived PE to affect their sporting lives. Such a social phenomenon is complex, and the challenge is to apply a strategy of research that is able to explain and sort this information (Yin, 2014). As Bryman (2012) observes, one normally associate case studies with qualitative research, based on the fact that a case study design

often favour qualitative methods such as unstructured interviews. A case study design revolves around the complexity and particular nature of one specific case, such as a single community, family, organization, event, person, or in this case; a single school (Bryman, 2012). In other words, Creswell (2014) describes it as an in-depth analysis of a single case, or as Roberts (2009) puts it, a detailed investigation of a single case, where the aim is to increase insights into meanings which gives us a better understanding of the phenomena. Such cases are bounded by time and activity, and the researcher uses a variety of data collection procedures to collect detailed information (Creswell, 2014). Ying (In Bryman, 2012) distinguishes five different types of case studies, one of them the representative or typical case, or as Bryman (2012) prefer to call it, exemplifying case. Within an exemplifying case, the circumstances and conditions of an everyday or commonplace situation are to be captured. The students' perceptions of PE are seen as a commonplace situation, because they experience PE every week, making this study exemplifying.

#### *4.2.2 Explanatory sequential mixed methods*

For the mixed method approach, an explanatory sequential design was used. This design revolves around first collecting quantitative data, than using a qualitative data collection to explain these results deeper, and in more detail (Creswell, 2014). The design is considered *explanatory* on the basis of the explanation of the original data afterwards, with the qualitative data. And it is considered *sequential* because of the chronological order in the phases in the process, first the quantitative part, followed by the qualitative part (Creswell, 2014). The process of explanatory sequential mixed methods would be similar to the way this study was facilitated, considering the short questionnaire upfront of the interviews mapping some background information about the participants' sporting lives, rather than explaining the findings with qualitative data, it was seen in context with it.

### **4.3 Data collection – instruments**

There are several steps included in the data collection phase. One of them is using instruments such as questionnaires or interviews to collect data material (Creswell, 2014). The data collection strategy for this study consists of both qualitative interviews and quantitative questionnaires, with the main emphasis on the qualitative interviews.

#### *4.3.1 Interviews*

“A interview is a conversation that has a structure and a purpose” (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 3). Research interviews stand out from regular conversations because the partners in the interviews are not equal. The researcher controls the conversation, by introducing a broad topic, and critically follows up on the participants’ replies. With qualitative research interviews, the researcher seeks understanding of the social world, from the participants’ perspective, by getting familiar with their thoughts and experiences (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Most research interviews have got a certain degree of structure, because the researcher affects the interview based on the aim of the interaction (Parker, in Brinkmann & Tanggaard, 2012). There are three major types of interviews based on their construction; structured, semi-structured and unstructured (Bryman, 2012; Creswell, 2014).

In a structured also called standardized interview (Bryman, 2012), there is no room for the interviewer to make changes in the predetermined questions during the interaction (Brinkmann & Tanggaard, 2012). The schedule needs to be followed strictly and questions are read exactly the way, and in the same order as they are written in the schedule, usually specific and close ended (Bryman, 2012). Unstructured interviews have got the opposite construction, as the researcher has got a list of prime topics or issues that should be covered, without any strict schedule (Bryman, 2012; Brinkmann & Tanggaard, 2012). The questioning style is usually informal, with sequence and phrasing of questioning that varies from time to time based on the different participants (Bryman, 2012).

The final major type of interviews, and the type of structure applied in this research, is called semi-structured. This type of interviews seek to find descriptions of the interviewees' meanings of a specific social phenomenon (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009) like this study seek to find the students' perceptions and experiences of PE and its contribution toward sports participation. "It is neither an open everyday conversation nor a closed questionnaire" (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 27), but can be seen as a mixture of both (Creswell, 2014). The semi-structured interviews are conducted within limits of a set interview guide (see Appendix 3), a script that more or less structures the course of the interview (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). The interview guide consists of a list of subjects or issues that should be covered during the interaction (Bryman, 2012). In a semi-structured interview there is usually series of general questions, where the sequence can vary (Bryman, 2012; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). The guide can be followed up closely or not; as the interviewer has got no boundaries as regards the guide (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

There are both strengths and weaknesses by using qualitative interviews. They are well suited for situations where the researcher wants to examine various aspects of human experiences (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015), which is the main purpose of this study, to find the girls' perceptions of social phenomena, more precise PE. It is as Bryman (2012) states, the flexibility of the interview that makes it so appealing. The procedure of the interview does facilitate spontaneity to a certain extent, and according to Kvale and Brinkmann (2015), it is a better chance to achieve unexpected spontaneously answers if the procedure of the interview is spontaneous. The weakness with having this spontaneity is of course the challenge of structuring the interview in the analysis (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). It especially fits well when this study involves examining the perceptions of a limited amount of participants, compared to large populations that require a large amount of informants (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015).

The interviews were conducted in February and March 2016 at a secondary school southeast in Norway, and contained questions about the girls' perceptions and experiences of PE. The questions were general and open ended without set replies, with the idea to let girls bring their own thoughts rather than putting ideas in their head. The researcher tried to be very careful during the interviews to avoid the very nature of the questions, out of fear of encouraging the respondents to assume that a relationship exists, and then look for answers in retrospect. Following this procedure led to respondents not mentioning any relationship or impact of PE in their sporting lives, so the researcher had to ask them the questions directly. This will be mentioned as a limitation of the study. Not putting ideas in the participant's heads by implying different answers is an essential skill for the qualitative approach (Bryman, 2012), however, the researcher felt obligated to ask the questions concerning the research question as the respondents did not mention it themselves, to get an idea of their thoughts concerning the subject. The research questions of the study were later changed, as a big part of the data concerned their perceptions and experiences of PE in general.

#### *4.3.1 Questionnaire*

A short questionnaire was collected at the beginning of the interviews. The questionnaire contained simple questions about their background information concerning their sporting lives. This data was later used during the interviews to give the researcher a better understanding through the conversations, as it is easier to conduct the interviews when the researcher is familiar with the background information of the sample. The questionnaire is attached in Appendix 4.

#### *4.3.3 Focus groups*

There are several ways to conduct qualitative interviews, such as one-to-one, by telephone, or in focus groups (Creswell, 2014). One-to-one interview, also called individual interview, involve one interviewer and one interviewee (Bryman, 2012), and is the most

widely used academic interview (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). If the purpose of a study is to brighten how individuals orientate concerning a specific topic in their life, individual interviews are the most suitable (Halkier, 2012). The estimated number of students in 10<sup>th</sup> grade at this school was about 200. It could be interesting to talk to participants one to one, to get a deeper more personal response, but as this is a case study on a specific secondary school, it would be preferable to talk to as many students as possible. With focus group interviews 35 respondents were reached, a proportion of nearly 20% of all 10<sup>th</sup> graders at the school. A focus-group interview typically emphasizes several participants' meanings towards a specific topic (Bryman, 2012) where the optimal number of participants varies between six and ten (Creswell, 2014; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). However, because of the young age of the participants in this study it was deemed better to have closer to the minimum of recommended participants in each group, in order that they were more likely to talk in a relaxed environment conducive to discussion. The final number of girls per group varied between three and six. The structure in these kinds of interviews is normally un-structured or semi-structured, so that the participants thoughts and meanings are elicited (Creswell, 2014). One can say that the focus-group phenomena contains elements of both group interviews, where the emphasis is based on a number of people discussing several topics, and focused interviews, where the participants are selected on the basis of their experiences of a certain phenomena, and asked about their perceptions regarding that specific subject (Bryman, 2012).

The aim of the focus-group interview is to explore different views on a certain issue, so that they later can be reflected during the analysis (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). People interacting with others tend to memorize supplementary aspects concerning a particular topic, which is positive for the researcher, as the data will become more current. This is seen as one of the main strengths of this type of interview (Bryman, 2012). A weakness regarding this type of interview is the fact that the control the moderator possesses of the interaction is reduced.

The conversation may flow freely, and occasionally steer around the topic. This was experienced during the data collection, and was one of the reasons why the research questions of this study later was changed. The interview transcript also got some chaotic and time consuming, as Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) enlightens. Another weakness that is applicable in this study is the sample includes relatively young participants, which can be demanding during the interview sequence, considering their possible childishness. The challenge for the interviewer was to ask the right questions in a proper way, so that the interviewees remained focused and severe. There is a risk with such a young sample that some will get shy, and therefore afraid to express their opinions. To avoid this, the researcher asked questions directly to them, so that there was a more even distribution of the respondents' statements.

#### **4.4 Sample**

The study involved eight focus group interviews with 35 grade 10 youngsters at a secondary school situated in the southeast of Norway. Two girls did not meet for the interviews because of sickness. The school has a total of about 600 students distributed on three grades, 8 to 10, with about 200 students in each of the grades. Each grade is then divided in 8 classes, with approximately 25 students in each class. The school is located in a county with 194,433 inhabitants (estimated in January 2014) (Institute of public health, 2015), and is a little below the Norwegian average socio-economically (Statistisk Sentralbyrå, 2013). The city looks better than the county, with an unemployment percentage just below national average (2,2%). The number of city inhabitants (totally 20,563 estimated in January 2014) with higher education is equal to the national average, and bullying among 10<sup>th</sup> graders at secondary school is significantly below the average (Institute of public health, 2015).

##### *4.4.1 Sampling strategy*

Even if qualitative samples do not aim to be statistically representative, there is a need for a sample strategy in the ground (Liamputtong & Ezzy, 2005). To avoid gender issues



during this study, it would be an advantage to select only one of the sexes. This amounts to purposive sampling, where the researcher “strategically selects information-rich cases to study, cases that by their nature and substance will illuminate the inquiry question being investigated” (Patton, 2015, p. 265). In other words: the power of the purposive sampling is in-depth studies of cases that are filled with appropriate information (Patton, 2015), which very well relates to the aim of this particular study, getting deep thoughtful meanings of students’ experiences with, and perceptions of PE and its contribution to their sports participation. The criterion for sampling was ‘sporty’ girls in 10<sup>th</sup> grade, and the requirement for ‘sporty’ was taking part in sport beyond school at least three times a week. This exact PA measure was chosen because it is a commonly used measure in PA statistics in Norway, and by using this as a criteria, one make sure that the girls actually are doing sports on a regular basis. In order to identify a pool of ‘sporty’ girls, the researcher was depended on help from the PE teachers that had to select students fitting the criteria ‘sporty girls’.

#### *4.4.2 Sample justification*

In order to justify the choice of sample, three main reasons will be explained. (i) The latest published report on statistics of PA levels among the population in Norway (Vaage, 2015), shows that PA levels increases during the age 6 to 15, and peaks in the age 16-19. The sample of this study contained adolescents at the age of 15-16, because the PA level increases in this cohort, and one is likely to hit a target group having high PA levels. That is an important criteria of the purposeful sampling, getting participants relevant to the research question, that possesses information about the topic the researcher seek to study (Bryman, 2012). Although there has been convergence in sports participation, and boys are more likely than girls to be non-participants in sport (Green, Thurston, Vaage & Mordal-Moen, 2015), we know from statistics that overall school-aged girls are less physically active than boys in the same age group (Vaage, 2015; Whitehead & Biddle, 2008), and it is a need for more

understanding of Norwegian girls' perceptions and experiences of PE (Säfvenbom et al. 2015). It would therefore be interesting and necessary to focus upon girls rather than boys. (ii) The reason why the informants need to be sporty is because the researcher needs to talk to people that possess information about the topic, concerning PE and sport. If none-sporty girls attend the study, they cannot tell if PE affects their sporting lives. (iii) In this study there were methodological benefits of doing focus groups with girls. Additionally the researcher is a girl her self, and during these kinds of settings, with girls at the age of 15-16, it could be more calming for them to talk to a young girl with the same sex as themselves, rather than boys talking to the opposite sex. As Kvale (1996) writes, a successful interviewer is knowledgeable, familiar with the content and the context. The researcher as a young girl doing sports herself can seem calming for them because she is familiar with their point of view. Having a particular experience, or the same background does significantly affect the interpretation of a conversation (Bryman, 2012). In this study, the groups consisted of participants surrounding each other both in school, during daytime, but also in their spare time while they do sports. They were therefore likely to have common interest and opinions (Kitzingers in Bryman, 2012).

#### **4.5 Analysis**

This analysis was conducted in the spirit of hermeneutics, as with everyone conducting qualitative research, insofar they believe interpretation and understanding contributes in explaining people's behaviour. Hermeneutics means interpreting meaningful human action, and involves what Max Weber has called "verstehen", meaning empathetic understanding, as the researcher generally, but also in this study tries to see the point of view of the participants, in order to understand their view of the world (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015).

The semi-structured focus group interviews was recorded and transcribed, and this data together, both the written text and the sound recording, constituted the data material for

the consecutive analysis (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). In order to conduct the analysis, the data was transcribed from verbal data to written form (Braun & Clarke, 2006). For this study, a thematic analyse was selected: “Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.79), which is widely used in qualitative research. It provides a flexible and useful research tool with possibility to provide rich, detailed and complex account of data, and can offer a more available form of analysis, especially for those who find themselves early in a qualitative research career (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The justification for using this type of analysis is as Braun and Clarke (2006) emphasize it, the first qualitative method of analysing researchers should learn, and that it is suitable for inexperienced new researchers, with its flexibility. There is an absence of clear and concise argument of what is actually is, or guidelines on how to go about doing it (Braun & Clarke, 2006). With its theoretical freedom it becomes flexible and useful for analysing qualitative data, which is one of the great benefits of thematic coding (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

#### *4.5.1 A number of decisions*

Thematic analysis includes a number of decisions that needs to be considered and discusses. One of the decisions is at which level the themes are to be identified, at a semantic or a latent level. For this analysis the latent level is chosen as it goes beyond the semantic level and identify or examine the underlying ideas of the data. Identifying themes on a latent level requires interpretative work (Braun & Clarke, 2006). During the coding procedure, the researcher “read between the lines” and gave the data codes based on the researcher interpretation of the data and the wholeness of the data collection process.

As mentioned earlier in the method section, a constructionist paradigm is selected for this analysis, as the girls’ meanings and experiences are socially produced and reproduced

(Burr, 1995), and a constructionist framework seeks to theorize sociocultural context (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

There are two ways of conducting thematic analysis, inductive and deductive. In this study, an inductive style of research was applied, which is a process of coding without trying to fit the data into a pre-existing coding frame (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This is essential as the researcher in this study has got data regarding experiences and attitudes, where it is important to pay attention to the data, to find any relevant themes, rather than focusing on previous findings on the topic, trying to fit the data in predicted boxes. The themes are strongly linked directly to the data themselves, as the themes are developed on the basis of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

#### *4.5.2 The procedure*

The first step of analysing starts when the researcher begins to look for patterns of meaning and potential interesting issues while transcribing and reading the raw data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). All the way from the interviews were conducted the researcher “played around” with different statements interpreting and looked for potential contexts to place the meanings. Afterward statements or incidents that appeared interesting and relevant was broken down from data extract into summarized unit of meanings, and given initial codes that were supposed to reflect the main substance of the content (Hjälmhult, 2014; Braun & Clarke, 2006). The codes were again categorized in different themes, which were broader than the codes, as themes often represents patterned response or meanings within a data set, and capture important content in relation to the research question (Braun & Clarke, 2006). It varies if a theme is given little or much space in a data set, so it is important that the researcher determine what a theme is. According to Braun and Clarke (2006) one need to retain some flexibility rather than setting rigid rules. Criterion for themes in this study was valuable response or meaning relevant for the research question, preferably patterned.

According to Hjälmhult (2014), the more themes will lead to a richer material, so the researcher therefore searched broad and for diversity (Glaser, 1998). The themes were checked if they worked in relation to the coded extract, and a map with different themes with underlying codes was sketched. The final part of the coding procedure was when the researcher recognized what was most significant in the collected data material (Hjälmhult, 2014), in other words: the core themes were selected (Bryman, 2012). An example of the coding procedure is attached as appendix 5.

#### **4.6 Ethical considerations**

Research revolves around collecting data about people, from people, and it is important that researchers are aware of the ethical issues that may arise at some point during their research processes (Punch in Creswell, 2014). Such issues are applicable, regardless of type of method and apply at all stages of a research process (Creswell, 2014). The researcher should at all time protect the research participants, and develop a relationship of trust with them, so that they are comfortable participating in the research, sharing their points of view with others (Creswell, 2014). The respondents of this study was first informed about the study by their teachers at the elementary school, and signed a consent form where they agreed to participate. No respondents were forced into signing as the project was based on volunteerism. The researcher applied to Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSD), and got approval for implementation of the project. Together with the supervisor, the researcher made some modifications in the study, resulting a change in the sample from adolescents aged 16 to 15. Notification of change was sent to NSD, which approved it.

Concerning confidentiality no identifying data will be published. The sound recording was stored according to the National Committee of Research Ethics (2012), and was immediately deleted after transcribing the interviews, both on the voice recorder and on the

computer where it had been stored. In order to protect personal information, codes replaced the respondents' names.

#### **4.7 Reliability, validity and generalizability**

Reliability and validity in a case study design depends on how far the researcher feels that that these factors are appropriate for the evaluation of the specific case (Bryman, 2012). In this case study, the researcher considered both validity and reliability as sufficient because the focus group interviews resulted in data corresponding with the research question, and according to Roberts (2009), a measurement that measures what it is suppose to, is valid. The respondents came up with generous data underpinning their perceptions of and experiences with PE, as well as their thoughts around PE as an influencing factor on their sporting lives and physical activity level in their leisure time. As Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) say, the reliability concerns to a great extent the process from the raw data to the codes and themes, and as explained earlier this analysis is conducted following the guidelines of the thematic analysis.

According to Bryman (2012), a single case study cannot be representative. Identifying typical cases that can be used to represent a certain class of objects is not something case study researchers believe in. The same applies for this study, it is not generalizable, but it can contribute to discussion of PE, and how sporty girls in elementary school in Norway experiences the subject.

As mentioned, the researchers own perception about the social world will affect the research (Bryman, 2012). In the same way, the knowledge the researcher possesses about the field in advance can affect the essence of the study. As Malterud (2013) says, all research depends on the researcher to have a critical and reflective attitude to his or her own understanding of the field. Especially in qualitative research, in the data gathering process, it is important that the researcher has got an objective position without biases, so that the

respondents naturally submit the data. The researcher's position in this process has mainly build on curiosity and interest for the subject, as he is genuinely interested in how these students experience the subject, to get a better understanding of how students perceive PE, which is very relevant for her future job as a PE teacher. The researcher has tried to be as objective as possible in order to make the respondents come up with their own thoughts, without affecting them with any opinions.

## Chapter 5: Findings

Through the analysis, the respondents brought their reactions on two key themes in accordance with the research questions of this study. The key themes involved the *girls' experiences with PE*, and *if they perceived PE to impact upon their sporting life or PA levels in their leisure*. The results are divided in two sections based on the key themes. The girls' responses were numerous and varied, and it turned out to be a significant difference between the respondents' reactions in the different classes. The respondents were given codes in order to make the study anonymous, in addition to making it easier for the researcher to recognize who said what.

### 5.1 The girls' experiences with PE

All the following subthemes were constructed by the respondents in the way that they were naturally mentioned, when shared their perceptions and experiences with PE.

#### 5.1.1 PE teacher

Concerning experiences of the subject it is worthy mentioning the PE teacher. The PE-teacher has got a massive effect on all the subthemes within the results; experience of the subject, content, the structure of PE and the possible contribution towards sports and PA. "The teacher has everything to say when it comes to how we experience the subject. It is the teacher who is supposed to inspire us in PE, so of course it affects us how the teacher appears" (3.3). A good teacher results in a good subject. "Different teachers bring different content, organization and different experience of the subject" (8.4). Two of the groups actually appointed the PE teacher as the *main reason* to why they do not like the subject. There was a great variation towards if girls were satisfied or not with their teacher. Which also in a large extent affected their enjoyment in PE. Five of eight groups were satisfied with their PE-teacher, one group did not comment on it, and two groups were not satisfied.



Comparing their sports with their perceptions of their teachers, the researcher found that their perceptions were independent of which sports they did, showing no relationship between the two. One group in particular perceived the teacher to have a lack of knowledge. “It seems like he/she do not know anything... And then we don’t learn anything either, when the teacher does not know” (2.3). Another group perceived the teacher as a motivational source. “Our teacher focuses upon inducing motivation and joy of movement which is extremely important. So I find it very good, and I am happy we have our teacher this year” (5.4).

Attitudes and level of knowledge did stand out as essential for making a good PE environment. The teacher’s attitude often affected the student’s attitudes. Not just attitudes, but the total radiance was something the students noticed. Like for example which clothes they wear. “It is uninspiring too see the teacher enter a PE class with causal or regular clothes. You show respect for the students by putting on gym clothes before class, and show that you actually care about PE” (3.1). Most of the girls mentioned that they found it inspiring when the teacher attended the activities, as it helped to raise the intensity level, and gave a sense of achievement for the students that managed to beat the teacher. Those girls who had a teacher who participated together with the students found it pleasing, while those experiencing teachers who never participated found it uninspiring.

### *5.1.2 Satisfaction with PE*

The majority of the girls were satisfied with the subject, independent of which sport they did. They experienced it as fun and rewarding, and exciting when they were introduced to new exciting activities. New activities offered challenges, and a sense of achievement containing sports one did not know one could cope with. “I like to work practically with the body, so I think PE is very fun. We can learn things that we never knew we could master” (7.4), said a girl who did athletics five times a week. Even if she did sports on a regular basis, she still got challenged in PE. All the respondents were physically active in their leisure time,

and some emphasized their positive relationship to PE on the basis of their enjoyment of being physically active. All of the girls were looking forward to the next PE class, even if they were not satisfied with the subject. Much because of the social part of the subject, that they did activities with each other made it fun. Someone even said that there was nothing missing at all, that it entirely was a great subject. They were glad to have such an important subject in school, not necessary because the subject was so great, but for several different reasons. One of the reasons in particular was the recreation from everyday school life.

Independent of both classes and sports *all the groups* highlighted PE as a recreation from everyday school life, and saw PE as an opportunity to be physically active rather than being sedentary inside of a classroom. “I think it is good to get away from the desk, and kind of have a break, so we don’t have to sit still all the time” (4.5). They found it pleasing to be able to perform physical activity during school, when they liked PA in general. Those who had PE in the morning emphasized the subject as a refreshing start of the day. “I love PE very much, because I get very fresh after being in physical activity rather than being sedentary inside a classroom paying attention to the teacher all day. So it is pretty refreshing to move the body” (7.4).

The class environment was also emphasized with its valuable impact from three groups. When they were asked questions about the importance of a good environment in class, they illuminated it as *very* important. Girls from one of the classes expressed that most of the students in their class enjoyed PE because of the great class environment. They supported each other and had fun rather than degrading each other. “When we have different types of sports everyone dare to participate, because one gets more confident in our class. Everyone is supportive and stuff” (5.3). Another group stated the opposite causal relationship, that PE affected the class environment, not the other way around. That was due to the relationship with each other. “I think PE can, kind of, affect the class environment. For example; we are

divided into teams in certain activities, and we get to know each other better. I think it contributes to a better class environment” (7.2).

One of the groups’ interpreted PE as a counterbalance towards social body image. The girls experienced a focus on looking good and having the perfect body in today’s society, both from social media and other arenas. They felt that PE contributed to lower the pressure by its emphases on movement of joy.

I think PE helps to avert the pressure. It is your own effort that counts, not how good you look doing it. It kind of makes it a little harmless, and I think that is a good counterbalance to the ‘Pink blog trend. (5.4)

### *5.1.2 Factors contributing to negative attitudes and experiences*

Some respondents expressed negative thoughts about the subject. They particularly paid attention towards the PE teacher, and inequalities in level of skills within the classes that lead to content based on insufficient physical challenges.

When the researcher asked a question concerning the perception of PE from the entire class, several girls independent of classes and sports expressed significant differences within classes. They did not think that everyone in their classes experienced PE as a good subject. Others mentioned several students in their class disliking the subject, often those who were sedentary in their leisure. “It is usually those who don’t do physical activity in their spare time that don’t enjoy it (PE) that much” (6.1). Another quotation accentuating the statements is the following.

We find it fun to be physically active and try new sports. But I think many others don't share that thought. I think they don't find PE to be fun, and they could rather have skipped PE class, I think. At least that is my impression when I see how little interested they are in conducting activities. (4.1)

They perceived it as disappointing when such many students did not care to participate in the activities they did in PE. It made it harder for the students actually liking PE to perform well and to keep their good attitudes up. Girls from six of the eight different classes experienced inequalities in abilities, containing both attitudes and physical talents, within the classes, which affected the quality of the activities poorly. Some of the girls that were playing football in their leisure time experienced playing football in PE as not enjoyable.

We play football sometimes when we are outside and have got nothing else to do, but the quality of the sessions is very poor, because there are such few in our class playing football. So it is no fun to play football in PE. (2.2)

The same girl also said they did not learn anything in PE. When the researcher asked a question considering why, she got the following answer.

There is a huge difference in the ability levels in the class. Some students are way down in level, and the teacher thinks more about them, and place grater emphasize on them to improve, rather than all students experience achievement. (2.2)

Their highlighted justification was the different levels in class, and the PE-teachers way of solving the problem. In relation to their wellbeing in PE, quite a few girls (mostly those who were unhappy with their teacher) emphasized the teacher focusing primarily on the weaker students, rather than focusing the attention toward all. When the teacher lowered the

bar, adapting the poorer section of the class, several of the stronger girls loosed their motivation by not getting enough challenges. They found it unfair that they never got a sense of achievement, because the level of the sessions was too low for their abilities. Some suggested a division of the class, based on level of skills, so that all students can experience a content adapted towards them, others suggested that they could use a more optional content, where one could choose between different levels of physical difficulty, for example choose between running, jogging or walking. They missed challenges, which was evident in following quotation “ I kind of feel that everyone must be on the same level. No one is allowed to promote them selves. Everyone should be equal” (3.1). The girl who said this did an individual sport for fourteen to sixteen hours a week in her leisure, making her familiar with pushing her self trying to perform her best. When the researcher asked the teacher equalising the students an interesting conversation emerged. It turned out that there were more negative than positive reactions about equalizing all the students.

It is fine. It is okay that that everyone get equalised, and pushed and stuff. But even if we are slightly better then the others, we should still be challenged. (3.4)

Yeah. I think the teacher should raise the bar in general, for everyone. (3.2)

The bar is not that high... (3.3)

No. The teacher should raise the bar so that those who are weaker get better. (3.2)

Yeah. I know that there are many students out there that can do better, but they... (3.1)

They don't bother. (3.3)

No, they don't bother, because they don't find it necessary. Because the bar is so low. (3.1)

It is okay that the teacher prioritises those who don't bother to provide an effort. But the teacher also needs to prioritize us that actually want to do well and want to get a good grade. (3.3)

The girls in this conversation all did different sports, so there was no relationship between sports and their opinions. This conversation naturally leads us to the next theme, PE as insufficient physically challenging. Both directly and indirectly several girls from different classes expressed a desire that PE should be more physically challenging, here also independent of sport. They repeatedly talked about not being sweating at all during the sessions, and that they got disappointed when they expected to be exhausted, and not even got a little tired. “I don’t get tired after the PE classes, I wish they were conducted with higher intensity” (3.2). One explanatory factor they mentioned was the play-oriented activities dominating the subject.

...Now I never get tired during PE. It is like, we run for a few steps, and then we walk again.

That’s what we do, because we only have play-oriented activities. So, it is hard to become really tired when we just play around. (3.3)

They found it hard to perform well since the outcome pretty much was random. It was therefore difficult to stand out as a good student. They felt they could not show their skills, and found it a little discouraging. PE was experienced as relaxing and boring, while the elective course *Physical activity and health* was more challenging and fun. It was due to the great attitudes among both students and teachers, and the content, which was more physical challenging. “I am bored during PE classes, we just play around at a slow pace...In Physical activity and health on the other hand, we get physical challenges and have fun doing them” (3.1). When the researcher asked a follow-up question about the attitudes of the students in PE versus the elective course, they emphasized students’ bad attitudes in PE, and how contagious they were. Students that were less talented in PE often affected the activities in a bad direction, with their bad attitude toward the activities.

When it concerned assessment, there were very differing opinions from the girls. They emphasized the teacher, of course, to have a huge role when it came to assessment. Mainly because the teacher was the only person who decided which grades the students got by sticking within the framework of the curriculum. Some girls were unhappy about the assessment of the subject. They expressed irritation that PE is the only subject in the Norwegian school assessed by efforts rather than skills. They were also assessed by their ability to bring other students into the activity, and found it hard to include students that did not want to participate. Some mentioned an unfair evaluation of the students, because the PE teacher used personality and behaviour as a foundation for their grades. Some girls would prefer more tests to be evaluated by, instead of the play-oriented activities. “... I don’t get to show how good physically I am if we don’t have any tests” (3.1).

Others found it very pleasing that enthusiasm and effort was valued rather than skills. “I agree (it is good with play oriented activities), because not all are equally good in sports, so it is nice to be assessed by showing enthusiasm rather than skills” (5.4). They found it better to be assessed by their attitudes and efforts rather than their skills in the different sports. “I feel sorry for those who are not that good in PE, that pushes themselves and try their best without reaching a good skills” (5.2). Some emphasized negative opinions about being valued by tests which involved an extra pressure on performing well to be able to achieve good grades. One teacher did cut the test, in fear of putting the students in categories based on their performance on a test. Those students were grateful for the teacher’s choice. They felt that a greater amount of students had developed a positive perception of PE based on the fact that they were valued by their efforts and attitudes. The same girls also came up with the suggestion that if one wanted to be valued by their skills, one could take the elective course.

Several groups mentioned differences in assessment between teachers, and that it was unfair that some were valued by their efforts and attitudes, while others were valued by

their skills. It varied what the different teachers emphasized. “A stupid thing about the PE the way we get valuated, the assessment and the grades. It is a huge difference between the teachers, and the classes, and that is really unfair for someone” (6.2).

### *5.1.3 Structure of PE*

Most of the respondents expressed a desire for a higher frequency of PE, and emphasized the importance of utilizing the whole time allocated for PE. In 8th grade they had PE two times a week distributed on four hours. Several of the girls mentioned that such a number of sessions were preferable. Two groups were fine about the frequency. They mentioned that it could have been further hours, but it was okay as it was now. It varied how the girls felt about the length on the sessions. Quite a few thought they were way to short, because they lost so much time before and after the session changing and showering. “It is very short time when we have only two hours... Plus that we have to change and stuff, so we don’t get a lot of time actually having PE” (1.2). “I also think we have too short time, if we, in addition to changing and showering, have to put back equipment and switch between exercises” (1.3). Especially during summer and winter when they mainly had PE outside, they used quite a lot of time to get to the area where they should conduct the session. Those who thought the sessions were too short would rather prefer having three hours with PE instead of two. Others thought the duration of the sessions was appropriate.

The possible activities one could do in PE were limited because of the regulated space accessible. One group stated that they during this school year never had a full court available in PE. On the other hand another group said they utilized several areas in PE, especially outside. The experience of the accessible space varied a lot from class to class, which may have a lot to do with the PE teacher.



#### *5.1.4 Content*

The main finding concerning PE content was about an extreme variation from class to class. The analysed data shaped three main groups of content (i) domination of play-oriented activities, (ii) domination of ballgames, and (iii) a varied content.

The content was by some groups described as varied among activities and arenas. They benefitted from activities both inside and outside both winter and summer, and often used the nature. Although some girls said they would prefer more PE outside in the winter, even those who did so called summer-sports “In the winter I think it would be fun if we could have more ice skating and skiing, and activities in the snow” (1.1). The girls who experienced content with variation had tried several new activities during the school year, and were very pleased with it. They gave the teacher credit for creating new fun activities differing from the traditional PE content, and thought it was good with play oriented content, so everyone could participate. Some emphasized how great it was that the teacher fulfilled their wishes with content. Although quite many found the content to be varied, there were several girls mentioning that the content only varied within certain themes, as ballgames or play oriented activities.

Some were unhappy about the teacher when it came to variation. One group experienced the teacher never listening to them when they came up with wishes off different kinds of content. They were asked what they would like to do, but their wishes never came true. Never being able to affect the content lead to a lack of motivation among students. ”It is important that the PE teacher is positive, and gets everybody to join the activity. And create new activities that everybody can do, or something entirely new that everyone is bad at” (5.3). There were quite many of the groups mentioning a fairly large focus on ballgames and strength training, and rather less on dancing, gymnastics and running. Some also said that ballgames often were the urgent solution when the main plan was shut down. Others said

play-oriented activities took a lot of the time in PE, with a small degree of variation. On questions from the researcher about if they were missing something in PE, the answered was characterised by a content less varied. “It is not about what we want to have, it is more about what we don’t want to have *again*” (2.3). It appeared that the teacher had the most important role when it came to selecting the content of PE. Several groups mentioned that they often had activities the teacher enjoyed him/herself. In other words, the PE teacher often chose the content of PE based on his/her own interest, which involved deselecting activities they did not have an interest of. “ Our teacher don’t like to dance, so dancing is often handed over to PE teacher students, and they are not that good at dancing. So we rarely have dance in PE” (6.2).

According to one of the groups, it was an uneven distribution of ‘boyish’ and ‘girlish’ activities. They witnesses an abundance of ‘boyish’ activities as for example football, and less of for example dancing, which appealed more towards girls. “Sometimes I wish it could have been more girly activities, so that the boys could try things that girls do” (7.3). “If it had been an equal distribution of activities, the boys would not have been so negative towards dancing, because they could try it more often” (7.1). The girls that said this did not play any ‘boyish’ sport them selves, but rather typical ‘girlish’ sports.

Some girls experienced different types of sessions where the students themselves could run the program they had prepared, with a chosen activity. This brought the students out of their comfort zone, challenging them to lead an activity. They experienced it as both fun and challenging, and extremely informative, and they got to show their talent for the rest of the class. Those girls who were rather unhappy with the content of PE enjoyed student controlled sessions because they had the opportunity to affect the content in some way or another.

Seven of eight groups claimed to have had a personal exercise period during this school year. How the structure of the period was conducted varied a lot among the different

classes. Several groups had it for five weeks. They emphasized the importance of not making the period too long so that students would quite after a while. One group had an exercise period over fourteen weeks, where they had regular PE sessions during school time, and personal exercise in their spare time. They experienced it as quite silly, because they did not have time to exercise except from their permanent sports. Another group was very positive to the period, because they got the opportunity to choose both activity and intensity themselves, which made them more satisfied then they were before. They express that the intensity of the exercises was higher during the period. “We don’t do many physically challenging activities in PE, so the only time I have gotten exhausted was when we had the personal exercise period, when we had strength training our selves” (3.4). Others found it motivating to get to exercise for their own goals during PE sessions. Concerning the period, some of the girls thought it was a good plan, as long as they did what they were suppose to do.

## **5.2 PE as a contributor to girls’ sporting lives and their PA in leisure time**

On the basis of the questionnaire upfront of the interviews together with the conversations during the interviews, table 1 has been compiled. The table shows the girls’ replies on the key themes distributed on the different sports including their mean and median age when they started sports.

**Table 1. Summary of the girls' experiences distributed on the different sports**

Categories	PE contribute to starting sports			PE contribute to continuing sports			PE contribute to PA			Contributing factors to sport			
	YES	NO	?	YES	NO	?	YES	NO	?	Famil y	Friends	PE	Others School, geograph y etc.)
Football	1 M: 2 m: 2	12 M: 6 m: 6,75	2 M: 6 m: 6	1 M: 6 m: 6	8 M: 6 m: 6,6	4 M: 6 m: 6	5 M: 6 m: 6	3 M: 7 m: 7	5 M: 6 m: 6,4	7 M: 6 m: 7	8 M: 6 m: 6,6	1 M: 2 m: 2	3 M: 6 m: 6
Handball		7 M: 6 m: 6,3		1 M: 6 m: 6	5 M: 6 m: 6,4	1 M: 6 m: 6	3 M: 6 m: 6	2 M: 6 m: 6	2 M: 7 m: 7	5 M: 6 m: 6	3 M: 6 m: 6,7		
Dancing		2 M: 6 m: 6	2 M: 5,5 m: 5,5		2 M: 5,5 m: 5,5	2 M: 6 m: 6	2 M: 6 m: 6	1 M: 6 m: 6	2 M: 5,5 m: 5,5	2 M: 5,5 m: 5,5	3 M: 6 m: 5,7		3 M: 6 m: 5,7
Swimming	1 M: 12 m: 12	3 M: 6 m: 5,7	1 M: 6 m: 6		3 M: 6 m: 5,7	2 M: 9 m: 9	2 M: 9 m: 9	1 M: 6 m: 6	2 M: 5,5 m: 5,5	3 M: 6 m: 5,7		1 M: 12 m: 12	
Horse riding		2 M: 4,5 m: 4,5			2 M: 4,5 m: 4,5			2 M: 4,5 m: 4,5		2 M: 4,5 m: 4,5			
Skiing		4 M: 6 m: 5,3			3 M: 6 m: 5	1 M: 6 m: 6	2 M: 6,5 m: 6,5	1 M: 2 m: 2	1 M: 6 m: 6	4 M: 6 m: 5,3			1 M: 7 m: 7
Gymnastics	2 M: 6,5 m: 6,5	1 M: 7 m: 7			1 M: 7 m: 7	2 M: 7 m: 7	1 M: 7 m: 7	1 M: 7 m: 7		2 M: 7 m: 7	1 M: 7 m: 7	1 M: 7 m: 7	
Athletics		1 M: 6 m: 6	1 M: 5 m: 5		2 M: 5,5 m: 5,5				2 M: 5,5 m: 5,5		2 M: 6 m: 6		
Bicycling		1 M: 6 m: 6		1 M: 6 m: 6			1 M: 6 m: 6			1 M: 6 m: 6			
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>7</b>

Table 1: The big numbers symbolises how many girls answering yes/no/?. There are higher total numbers than numbers of girls in the study, because some girls played more than one sport, and answered sometimes several times in several sports. The question marks symbolises the category for those who did not answer the questions, or were unsecure. Those numbers who are thickened shows the main distribution of the girls' answers to each question. The small numbers in each column are **M**: median age when starting sports, **m**: mean age when starting sports.

### 5.2.1 *The girls' sporting lives*

Five of the girls started playing sports before they started school, when they were from two to five years old. Most of the girls (twenty-two) started in first grade while they were about six years old, when it was created teams for their age group. This was often in collaboration with their schools, as when parents and teachers used the school as an arena for gathering children to different sports. Such sports were most typically handball and football. Quite a small amount of totally eight of thirty-five girls started playing sports after they had started school, when they were from seven to twelve years old.

One particular factor that stood out, as a major role when it came to affecting the girls to start sports was their *families*. It was repeatedly mentioned among the majority of the girls, that family members, independent of whom (parents, siblings, grandparents, cousins), inspired them to start sports. As can be seen in table 1, family, except from in athletics and dancing, largely affected all sports. Parents and siblings were the most common family members mentioned, and a common denominator for the parents who affected their children starting sports was their engagement towards sport. Several girls mentioned their parents as coaches or supporting staff within their sport, eager for their participation. Following quotations were good examples on how the family could have an influence on their sporting lives.

Both of my parents were coaches both at the handball team and at the football team, so they affected me naturally. (5.2).

I started playing handball because of my two older brothers who played them selves. I always joined them at the court when they were playing, all the time, and I found it really fun. I used to play my self when they had a break, so when they finally started a team for my age group, I joined immediately. (1.2)

My mum has always been a good skier, competing at a high level. So when I was little they always brought me to the ski tracks, facilitating that I could start skiing when I got old enough. (3.1).

As table 1 shows, in addition to family members, *friends* had a great impact on their sporting lives. Friends affected differently, usually by dragging them into sports. Here are two examples: “I had many friends who played football, and they wanted me to join the team, so that is why I started” (2. 1). “I started gymnastics after my friend asked me if I could join here, because she did not want to start all by her self” (3.2). Others emphasized that it became a ‘trend’ playing sports in first grade. When the majority of their friends in first grade started playing sports, the other girls were tempted to try it as well. It was sometimes seen a combination of both friends and family affecting the girls to start playing sports.

Some other factors were also mentioned, as written in table 1, as geography. One girl said that football was about the only option for her if she wanted to start doing something in her leisure time. This was due to the limited assortment of recreational activities where she lived at the countryside. When they then started a football team for girls, she joined once away. One girl started a new sport when she moved to the city because they had bigger potentials within that particular sport.

### 5.2.2 PE's contribution towards starting sports

The majority of the girls had never thought of PE as a potential contributor for starting or continuing sports. All their answers emerged after a while of thinking. According to table 1, most of the girls answered *no*, while six girls did not share their opinion. Those who started sports before school were obviously in the no-group, as they never had experienced PE before they started sports. Those who started sports during their first years of school emphasized PE at elementary school as childish, play oriented and little aimed against sports in general. They

were mainly playing around and fooling, and saw no impact of PE affecting them to start playing sports. Some girls even revealed a surprising statement that they did not have real PE until seventh grade (12 years), not until then they got a real PE teacher doing PE activities. They saw absolutely no effect from PE at elementary school making them do sports.

Even if most of the girls immediately said no, four of them changed their answers after a while. As one can read from table 1, there were only four girls in total who experienced PE as possible contributor for them starting sports. Those four were distributed on different sports, such as football, swimming and gymnastics, and the result showed no significant findings based on their attended sports. Their statements about the questions were following. “It (PE) might have affected me to start playing football. Because the other girls were playing it, and when we had it in PE, I wanted to try it as well” (3.1), said a girl who no longer plays football, but does cross country skiing 14-16 hours a week. She might believe PE to be an arena contributing for her starting football, but her friends were emphasized as the main role. “You know, in elementary school we did some gymnastics and stuff. And I did start gymnastics when I was young. I don’t know if PE was the reason, but it could be” (4.2).

I don’t really think PE had anything to do with me starting sports... but every second week in fifth and seventh grade we got to go swimming. And that was before I started swimming, so it kind of could have inspired me to start swimming... (4.3)

I don’t think so (PE to affect her starting sports)...or, yes, or perhaps. Because when we had PE in elementary school, I remember we could just run around using our energy. So perhaps I started gymnastics because I enjoyed PE. But I don’t know. (7.1)

As one can see from their quotations, none of these girls expressed PE as the main contributor for them starting sports, but they saw it as a factor with possible influence. All of them expressed other factors that had affected them to start sports earlier in the interviews, and none of them mentioned PE before they got the direct question. Nor was there seen any context between the reasons why they said PE affected them.

Even if most of the girls said PE did not impact them to start sports, some of them came up with suggestions on how PE could be a contributor. They could for example see PE in secondary school as an arena to present different sports, so that it could arouse the interest of students starting a new sport. “In PE you get to try many different activities, and if you find an activity you experience as fun, you might want to start doing it in your leisure time” (6.2). One of the groups, which talked very positive about their class environment, had thoughts about PE as an arena for inspiration towards sports, especially for those who did not play their own. “If there is someone in our class not playing sports, he or she could get inspired by the variety in our class concerning different sports, to start him or herself” (5.4).

### *5.2.3 PE's contribution toward continuing with sports*

Even if most of the girls answered no to the question about PE affecting them to start sports, a few (three) girls, all three played different sports, mentioned PE as a possible contributor to continuing sports.

I think maybe PE could have an impact later on, when it comes to continuing doing sports...It has made me seen that it is fun being with friends and performing PA, so it kind of made me hold it up, in a way, maybe. (1.2)

As mentioned earlier, the majority of the girls had never thought of PE as a potential contributor for starting or continuing with sports. Their answers were characterized by



assumptions together with thoughts, as for example “I have never thought about PE being a factor making me continue playing football, but it could be that it might have had an impact” (1.1), said a girl who now plays football and dance for four times a week. Others mentioned the school as a whole, not just PE, as a possible impact. One girl said that they often played football during the recesses, which could have had an impact on developing skills, making them even better at playing. But she did not think that was a determining factor for making her continuing football.

I remember when we got a little older; we started playing football all the time, in every single recess during school. But I cannot imagine that to determine whether or not I should play football. But it may, since I got to play football there, I got to develop more skills, and than I found it more fun. (1.3)

Most of the girls immediately answered that PE had no impact on making them continue with sports. They emphasized the social part of being with friends doing fun activities with each other as the most important argument for continuing their participation. They liked to play sports, independent of PE in school, and saw PE and sports as two separate themes that did not have any relationship with each other. Concerning this question, a few girls were unsecure about their answers, and some did not answer at all, as we can see from table 1. Some girls mentioned PE as a contributor for making them continue with PA though, as we will look closer into in the next section.

#### *5.2.4 PE's contribution towards PA in leisure time*

The two main reasons for PA in leisure time outside from sports were the girls' own desire to stay in good shape, emphasizing the growing social pressure to look good, and to get a better foundation in their sports. No one mentioned PE as a contributor for doing PA in leisure until the researcher asked about it. When the theme already was brought up, they

shared their views. As with sports, a number of girls had never thought of PE as contributing for PA before. Typical answers at the beginning of the conversations about PA were the following, said by a girl played football and skiing.

I have always been jogging and doing strength training in the morning, but I do not know if is affected by the PE. I think perhaps it is more of goals that I have set to my self, and nothing PE has contributed to... I enjoy exercising, and I will do it in my spare time, independent of PE.

(8.2)

As for this category the girls' perceptions were the most spread, as seen in table 1. With a minimal leading most girls independent of sport thought PE could contribute to their PA in leisure. Several groups' thought PE could contribute to PA in the same way it could contribute to start sports; by introducing students to new activities they found enjoying. Some were likely to do activities in their leisure if they found it fun in PE. "If we have something fun I PE, you might end up doing it in your leisure as well, especially if you can get your friends to join" (4.3). When the researcher asked if they had a specific example of it happening, they mentioned that they had started playing volleyball outside of school after they were introduced to it in PE. PE could provide new ideas to how you could exercise and what you could do. One girl mentioned the teacher as a contributing factor; by encouraging the students to be physically active and teaching them some exercises for getting in better shape.

It is mostly my teacher who affects me to get physically active. He/she tells the class to get better endurance, and teach us the best way of doing it and so on.... I think it is great that the teacher cares about the students, wanting them to stay healthy. (6. 2)

Several girls had practiced knowledge from PE in their leisure. They had learned different methods of strength training and endurance in PE, and adopted those into their own exercises. They had also tried new activities as orientation, and some of them had tried similar activities later on in their leisure time. Some emphasized the theoretical part of PE as encouraging for PA.

Vi learn about the body, and that you need to be physically active to maintain a healthy body, and live as long as possible. And that becomes a motivation for exercising, not the main motivation of course, but it is like that, that if you have good physics, you get a better quality of life. So I believe PE can encourage to PA on a general basis, so that is important. (5.4)

If girls perceived PE to be a knowledgeable subject, and the contribution for PA, depended very much on the *PE teacher*. Those who were not satisfied with their teacher or PE in general (much because of the PE teacher) did not believe PE to affect their PA in leisure at all. They said they rather got information and inspiration for PA at home. They also experienced PE as little informative, unlike those who were happy about the subject. Apparently they wanted to express their discontent with their teacher, which made most of their statements negatively grounded.

The main arena within PE that contributed to the most PA in leisure time was the *personal exercise period*. PE could contribute to PA in leisure especially during this period, for those girls who wanted to perform well in PE. “When you have a program where you will be evaluated, in addition to wanting to perform good, you actually have to go outside and exercise those days you have set up exercise, in order to finish your plan” (1.3). “You do not want to abuse the trust from the teacher” (1.1). It seemed important for them to maintain a good relationship with their teacher, not disappointing him/her. Even those who did not enjoy PE that much said that they had a higher level of PA during the period, especially when they

had tests after the period. They all wanted to perform well and get a good grade, so the grades worked as a motivational force for them to be more physically active in their leisure time both during the personal exercise period, but also in general during the whole year, to perform better in PE.

Several girls believed the personal exercise period to be a good start for performing PA in leisure because some weeks of exercising would make it easier to continue afterwards. There were various opinions regarding if they were more physically active in their leisure time or not during the personal exercise period. They believed the period to have a better effect on PA for those who did not do sports in their leisure time. Several groups of girls mentioned others from their classes not being particularly sporty actually working out on their spare time during the whole period, because they ‘had’ to. “I have a couple of friends that did not use to work out in their spare time, and they became very disciplined and started running a lot, and having proper workouts... Their grades were their motivation” (5.4).

The elective course *physical activity and health* was talked positive about when it got to PA in leisure time. The subject was perceived as so enjoyable and inspiring that they several times had tried similar activities in their leisure. Especially the group that was unhappy with the PE teacher.

#### *5.2.5 Relationship between sports and PE*

“Participation in sports provides a greater foundation for doing well in PE. Entailing being more physically prepared” (5.2), said a girl who played handball five times a week. The girls pointed out a relationship between PE and sports, from sports towards PE, implying that doing sports makes experiences with PE better. “Those who do sports is usually those who enjoy PE” (6.2). In the same way as not doing sports made one more likely to not enjoy PE. “It is usually those who do not do sport in their spare time that don’t think it (PE) is that fun” (6.1).

## **Chapter 6: Discussion**

In the discussion part, the findings of the study will be discussed with previous literature in the field, as well as the key concepts, habitus and socialization. The discussion will mainly be divided in two pieces, one concerning experiences, perceptions and attitudes toward PE, and one concerning PE's possible contribution towards sports participation and PA.

### **6.1 Experiences, perceptions and attitudes toward PE**

The importance of the PE teacher was essential during the interviews, by girls highlighting how teachers brought different content, organization and attitudes, affecting every aspect of PE. In general they emphasized their experience, enjoyment and attitudes toward PE to be deeply affected by the teacher. If girls were satisfied with PE depended on if they were satisfied with their teacher. The PE teacher will be mentioned repeatedly during the discussion, as it is an important factor contributing to the girls' experiences and perceptions of PE.

Positive enjoyment and positive attitudes toward PE is essential for the impact of positive experiences of movement activities and further PA involvement (Green, 2014; Dismore & Bailey, 2011; Hashim et al. 2008), and to reach the aim of the PE curriculum, to inspire to a physical active life style and lifelong joy of movement (Department of Education, 2015). In this study, the majority of the girls enjoyed PE independent of which sports they did, which corresponds to previous research indicating that Norwegian adolescents in general report positive attitudes toward PE (Säfvenbom et al. 2015; Kjønnsen et al. 2009; Andrews & Johansen, 2005; Imsen, 1997). As Säfvenbom et al. (2015) found, those who are not involved in extracurricular movement activities have less positive assessment of PE, just as it emerged in this study, as those who did not like the subject were those who were the most sedentary in leisure.

The social aspect of PE was highlighted as important for the girls' positive attitudes, which is consistent with results from Mitchell et al. (2015). In previous research concerning girls and their attitudes toward PE, the discussion of separating the genders is often highlighted as a possibility (Oliver et al. 2009), as Mitchell et al. (2015) found girls experiencing gender separate classes developing better attitudes toward PE, among different reasons, because they experienced a safe environment. But as The Norwegian Educational Act (2014b) §8-2 says, students should not be divided by their genders. In this study, none of the girls talked about genders, but it emerged that a good class environment was ideal for enjoyment in PE. As Fiset (2011) and Olafson (2002) found, peer relations was a contributing factor towards girls' bad experiences of PE. Based on these facts, instead of working with a separation of genders in PE, it could be more suitable to work with enhancing the class environment, as it apparently has significant meaning for students experiences of PE, making them feel safe, and trust their peers.

All groups highlighted PE as a recreation from ordinary school days with a large proportion of sedentary behaviour as a contributing factor for their positive attitudes toward the subject. Their answers correspond to previous research (Ballin & Johnson cited in Kjønneksen et al. 2009; Kjønneksen et al. 2009) emphasizing the recreational part of PE as one of the reasons for the subject to be well received among adolescents. PE as recreation can be seen as a contributing factor for increasing motivation (Kjønneksen et al. 2009), as we saw in this study when groups who were dissatisfied with PE experienced recreation as a positive side by the subject to get a 'break' from their school day.

Previous research indicates PE and gender as a problematic area, stating girls' dissatisfaction in the subject (Säfvenbom et al. 2015; Andrews & Johansen, 2005; Kjønneksen et al. 2009). In the comprehensive study of Säfvenbom et al. (2015) more than 50 % of girls in high school disliked or wanted to change PE (Säfvenbom et al. 2015). There are several

studies examining which factors that causes these negative attitudes and experiences of PE, and concerning girls, multiple factors concern the focus on the body, and the masculinity in the subject (Fisette, 2011; Olafson, 2002; Andrews & Johansen, 2005). In this study, there were indeed some negative attitudes and experiences with PE, but causal issues concerned PE teachers, inequalities in skills within classes, and the content of PE. It did not emerge any negative attitudes or experiences concerning *gender* in the subject, which is quite unusual while discussing PE with a total of 35 adolescent girls. As different studies (Andrews & Johansen, 2005; Fisette, 2011; Olafson, 2002) found, PE is an arena with large focus on body and appearance, affecting girls' participation and effort in PE, resulting in negative attitudes. With discomfort about sharing showers and not feeling self-conscious, girls avoided sweating and showering (Mitchell et al. 2015; Andrews & Johansen, 2005). Relative to the body pressure, opposite opinions than from previous research emerged in this study. None of the girls mentioned issues with wardrobes or body pressure in a PE setting. One girl even felt PE worked as a counterbalance toward social body image, contributing to lower the pressure of looking good by its emphasis on movement of joy. She emphasized the effort in the subject as important, rather than how you were looking while performing activities. They though had a teacher with a particular focus on enjoying PA rather than performing at a high level and a particularly good class environment.

Concerning gender, there was though one group of girls that expressed some scepticism toward a masculine content with masculine activities, such as the findings from Andrews and Johansen (2005), emerging content based on boys' terms with ballgames as the main activity. According to the girls in this study, there was an uneven distribution of 'boyish' and 'girlish' activities, with an abundance of football, corresponding to the previous literature saying boys' interest often are better addressed than girls, by a higher proportion masculine activities rather than feminine, such as dancing and aerobics (Andrews & Johansen, 2005).

The idea of the principle of equilibrium is basing the content both on girls' and boys' terms equally, by including feminine elements as much as masculine (Krokan, 2000). Although they seem alike, there is a significant difference between the statements from Andrews and Johansen's (2005) study and this study. In their study, the girls disliked the content based on boys' terms because they felt run over by physically superior boys, which lead to their resignation (Andrews & Johansen, 2005). In this study, the girls reacted negatively on the masculine content because they missed variation of content and wanted to show their skills in other activities. Those who expressed this statement did respectively cheerleading and dancing in their leisure, typically 'girlish' activities. But they did not quit the activity like the girls in the other study.

It is concluded that PE facilitates those who already are involved in organized youth sport (Säfvenbom, 2015), and in this study one of the criterion for the informants was that to participate in sports. One can assume that the situation about gender never came up during the interviews because all the informants were within the physically stronger group in class, those who PE facilitates the most. They were familiar with the logic and value system within sports (Säfvenbom, 2015), which made them familiar with PE in the same way. Changing clothes and showering in front of others, were negative experiences for other teenage girls (Andrews & Johansen, 2005; Fisette, 2011; Mitchell et al. 2015), but they were all ideas they these girls were familiar with, which underpin their confidence in the PE environment, and hereafter their enjoyment.

As written earlier, there were some negative attitudes and experiences with PE from some informants in this study, although they all enjoyed being physically active. The negativity was not due to gender, but other contributing factors like PE teachers, PE content and inequalities in level of skills among students in their classes, which corresponds well to other research showing factors impacting attitudes and experiences negatively to be PE



content, PE teachers, body focus and masculinity of the subject (Olafson, 2002; Fiset, 2011; Andrews & Johansen, 2005).

As Kjønnsli et al. (2009) suggest, the variety of the Norwegian curriculum can explain the positive attitudes toward PE in Norway. Attitudes and experiences are affected by how PE is practiced, especially by the variety of content. The study of Rikard and Banville (2006) of high school students revealed that development of positive attitudes toward PE requires a varied content, active participation and a sense of fun. This corresponds to the responses from the girls, emphasizing that new exciting activities brought enjoyment and excitement towards PE, making them pleased with a varied content. During their personal exercise period several of the girls experienced enhanced motivation towards PE because they got to choose new activities, bringing a varied content. Those who expressed content less varied were unhappy about the teachers' choice, and brought it up as a negative aspect of PE. This matches the findings from Andrews and Johansen (2005) and Carlson (1995), saying that content less varied can contribute to the development of negative attitudes towards, and experiences of PE. By presenting the same activities over and over again the risk for students to get bored is big (Andrews & Johansen, 2005; Carlson, 1995). In general, the girls expressed that the PE content was dominated by play-oriented activities, and ball games, such as previous research (Moen et al. 2015; Smith et al. 2007; Moen, 2011). They highlighted the PE teacher to often choose content the teacher him or herself was interested in (Moen, 2011).

The girls experienced a large variation of levels of skills within their classes, and found it hard to perform well and have positive attitudes when other peers had bad attitudes and poor physical skills, affecting the quality of the activities poorly. But their main problem concerning different levels in class was the PE teachers' way of handling the issue. It is well known, also by PE teachers, that PE in Norway seems to be dominated by sport (Moen et al. 2015), and that the subject benefits those who participate in sport in their spare

(Säfvenbom, et al. 2015). But in this study the girls expressed teachers to have a tendency to correct a lot of focus towards the weaker students in fear of focusing primary on the strongest group. Play-oriented activities without need for physical skills led to stronger girls finding it hard to perform since the outcome was random. They expressed struggles with showing their skills, because they all the time got ‘set back’ of the teacher. Instead of adapting the education toward everyone as The Norwegian Education Act §1-3 (2014a) says, the content became more suitable for the weaker students, and less physically challenging for the stronger students. As the teacher lowered the bar, the level of the sessions became too low for their abilities. The results from Säfvenbom et al. (2015) saying the subject facilitates the sporty students more become reverse when the teacher focuses mainly on the weaker students. In a public health perspective it would of course be more important to focus on the weak, as those who already do sports in their spare time are more likely to continuing a physically active lifestyle in later life (Troost et al. cited in Kjønniksen et al. 2009). But in this case, it is the ‘sporty’ girls experiences of PE that is in focus. It is conceivable that with the aim of the PE curriculum in mind, saying PE should contribute to give students experiences of joy, mastering and motivation by attending different activities (Department of Education, 2015), as well as knowing that ‘sporty’ students are facilitated, some PE teachers tend to focus too much on adapting the education toward the weak, forgetting about the stronger students, and that they need challenges too. This shows the importance of the teacher in PE, whose choices can affect all aspects around the subject.

In this study it seems like some PE teachers forgot about giving physical challenges toward the physically skilled students, which Kjønniksen et al. (2009) and Carlson (1995) highlights the importance of. When the teacher lowered the bar, adapting the education toward the weaker students, the stronger girls lost their motivation by not getting enough challenges, which corresponds to previous research (Carlson, 1995). As Carlson (1995) stated,

students that perceive insufficient physical challenges are likely to become bored in PE sessions. Since this study contains girls doing sport on a regular basis, used to being challenged, it is understandable that a big share of the girls expressed insufficient physical challenges in PE. They perceived PE to be a physical subject, where they prepared to be physical exhausted, and got disappointed and bored when they experienced lack of challenges. As Kjønneksen et al. (2009) suggests, making changes in the Norwegian curriculum adapting it more against adolescents' need for quality in PE may contribute in the promotion of lifelong PA and secure a healthy lifestyle.

Some girls stated that new activities offered challenges, and a sense of achievement mastering challenges one did not think one could cope with. Even those who often did sports (5 times a week) got challenged during PE sessions. They emphasized being challenged in PE as a contributor to their positive attitudes, which is consistent with Standage and Gillison's (2007) statement, that providing appropriate challenges with some level of choice enhances girl's motivation and learning, as well as mastering physical skills may contribute to student's motivation by giving them a sense of achievement (Kjønneksen et al. 2009). Some girls said they experienced it as both challenging and fun when the students had the PE sessions themselves, meaning student-controlled classes can contribute to challenges, as well as their personal exercise period because they could choose both activity and intensity level themselves.

Based on the girls experiences of how some of their teachers interpreted the PE curriculum in this study, it is understandable that the girls who were involved in sport favourite the elective course *physical activity and health* above PE, as it appeals more toward their wishes and expectations, and brings challenges that motivates them (Standage & Gillison, 2007; Kjønneksen et al. 2009).

As research suggest, PE teachers are positioned so they can easily influence girls' experiences in PE by offering them the opportunity to choose, both activities, how to perform them and with whom (Smith et al. 2009). The personal exercise period was positively received among girls in this study because they got the opportunity to choose both activity and intensity themselves, which satisfied them. Previous research state that those who experiences lack of choices in PE feel no control or autonomy over their practices, which leads to negative experiences (Mitchell et al. 2015). In this study, some girls experienced teachers who never listened to the students' wishes, resulting in lack of motivation toward PE in general, because they never got to do what they wanted. All the girls' responses concerning student influence correspond with previous research (Mitchell et al. 2015; Enright & O'Sullivan, 2010).

Research also locate a positive outcome from teachers consulting with girls about which activities they would prefer to have in PE, resulting in more confident and comfortable girls, feeling seen and responsible for their choices (Mitchell et al. 2015; Enright & O'Sullivan, 2010). Involving them, responding to their needs and giving them the opportunity to impact their own curriculum is central for participation in PE. The girls' sayings corresponds to previous research; by girls emphasizing how great it was that the teacher listened to them, fulfilling their wishes of content. Girls who were unhappy about PE content in general were very pleased to be able to impact the content when they had student-controlled sessions. This means that student-controlled sessions can impact students' experiences of PE positive; by letting them influence the content.

The PE teacher is highlighted as an essential part of PE, being an important role model for students. Positive teachers with good attitudes and engagement in the subject are significant contributors to students' attitudes toward PE (Inchley et al. 2008). PE teachers' attitudes and level of knowledge was viewed as essential for making a good PE environment

in this study, corresponding to previous research. The girls experienced bad attitudes from the teachers to have a contagion effect on the students. It was not just attitudes, but the whole radiance from the teacher, including clothes, engagement, participation and effort. This reflects the fact that teachers who try to create a good environment for students have got a huge effect on their attitudes towards the subject (Mitchell et al. 2015; Standage & Gillison, 2007). Based on these findings it is imaginable that stricter guidelines toward how one should act as a teacher, both during PETE and as a fully qualified teacher, could be an important tool for developing positive attitudes toward PE among students.

There were differing opinions of the way the girls were assessed, with a huge emphasis on the PE teacher importance. As seen in previous literature (Andrews & Johansen, 2005), it was also located negative attitudes toward assessment in PE. The main problem concerning assessment in this study was injustice between the different classes, on the basis of the teachers. It varied if they were assessed by skills, effort, enthusiasm, and attitudes, and by tests or simply participation and engagement. Neither the PE curriculum nor the Educational Act gives any recommendations of using tests for assessment for students, as none of the aims of competence is formulated in a way that tests should be necessary (Department of Education, 2012), which gives teachers freedom to do what they would prefer. The Norwegian PE curriculum only contains aims of competence to be achieved during three years of secondary school (Department of Education, n.d.), so it is up to each teacher to interpret the aims of competence, and conduct an educational program to reach the aims of competence in the best possible way, by evaluating the students by their effort and competence. According to the girls' responses, it could be interesting if the curriculum was more strict, and contained actual rules of how the students should be evaluated in each grade, rather than guidelines. With for example a percentage of how much the different factors, effort, skills and attitudes, should be evaluated. At least the teachers should follow the same

approach of assessment within the same schools, meaning every school should develop a method for assessment, and not least follow it. This would possibly have a positive affect towards how students perceive themselves to be evaluated in PE. As we know, students are friends with peers in other classes, and talk to them about which grades they get. Differences in assessment would therefore be very noticeable for most students.

### *6.1.1 Public health perspective*

The fact that the majority of the girls was satisfied with PE, independent of which sports they did, corresponds to previous research (Säfvenbom et al. 2015; Kjønniksen et al. 2009; Andrews & Johansen, 2005; Imsen, 1997) and is important in a public health perspective, as girls attitudes toward PE is a strong predictor of PA participation in later life (Kjønniksen et al. 2009). Positive attitudes and enjoyment in PE is essential for the impact of positive experiences of movement activities and further PA involvement (Green, 2014; Dismore & Bailey, 2011; Hashim et al. 2008) and to reach the aim of the PE curriculum, to inspire to a physical active life style and lifelong joy of movement (Department of Education, 2015). This shows the vital importance of knowing what students experience and what effects their experiences and attitudes, so that one later can step in and do actions where it is needed.

As for the structure of PE most of the girls expressed a desire for a higher frequency of the subject, meaning they would prefer to have PE more than once a week. The mean ideal number of sessions was two times a week. Some also expressed a short duration on the sessions. The girls enjoy the subject, and liked to be physically active. In a public health perspective, it is good to see that students want more PE in school. As the national recommendations of PA states, children and youth should be physically active for 60 minutes a day (Health directorate, 2014). Giving PE larger space in school would be positively for the improvement of the Norwegian public health, not only because of increased PA level, but also

because of the other advantages of PE in a health perspective (Arnold, 1979, Säfvenbom, 2010; Ommundsen, 2005).

## **6.2 PE's contribution toward sports and physical activity**

There exist no evidence that regular PE alone has any significant impact on facilitating young peoples' involvement in sport (Green, 2014). It emerged a definite no from the girls' reactions about PE's impact on their sports participation. The fact that most of the girls started playing sports either before school or during their first year at school makes it hard to believe that PE had any effect on them starting sports. Rather was there any compliance from those who started sports after school concerning what contributed to their sports participation. They emphasized PE in elementary school as childish, play oriented, and not aimed toward sports. In other words, they did not think that PE could have had any impact because of the absent of context between PE and sports. As Green (2008) states, the main argument for PE as a contribution to sport participation is the fact that it hits a large range of children between 6 and 16. This in addition to the fact that PE in Norway seems to be dominated by sports (Moen et al. 2015) is apparently not a sufficient basis for sport participation on its own, judged by the girls' experiences. The girls' answers are inconsistent with the fact that PE is believed to be well placed to promote public health by encouraging sports participation among young (Green, 2008), and the moderate relationship between ones attitudes toward PE and sport participation in adolescence, meaning their positive developed attitudes toward PE could contribute to them starting sports (Kjønniksen et al. 2009). Considering that this study examines all sporty girls in 10<sup>th</sup> grade at one school, there are no other girls except from these that do sports, making these numbers trustworthy in this case study. It could of course, be some girls that started sports because of PE that resigned before the researcher managed to interview them. This can only be known if the researcher interviewed all girls. One has to remember that these finding only concerns girls. For boys the situation could be different.

There were though some (4) girls, who after saying PE had no impact on sports that after a while of thinking said the subject *could* contribute to their sport participation. But their assumptions were rated as weak by the researcher, due to several reasons. (i) None saw PE as the main contributor, but as a factor with *possible influence* on their sporting lives. (ii) They only came up with these reactions after the researcher asked them directly if PE could impact their sporting lives, making it believable that their answers could emerge by the researcher asking leading questions. (iii) They all blamed other factors impacting their decision to start sports earlier, like friends and family. Their explanations for PE's possible impact were all different. It emerged that PE was mentioned as an arena where sports and PA became apparent, when peers got to show their sporting skills in front of others, resulting in some girls wanting to start sports. In this case, friends might be the main contributor, making PE only an arena where sports and PA became visible. Another reason was based on clear assumptions that PE *could have impacted* because they did such sports in PE, that some girls later started. No further explanations were mentioned, hence a clear assumption. In this case there was also mentioned other contributing factors for her their sporting lives.

What the girls actually emphasized as the main contributing factor toward their sport participation was their *families*, mostly parents and siblings, due to their engagement and participation in sports. Beyond parents, *friends* were a common factor impacting their decisions to start sports. These findings do not come as a shock, as a result of the key concepts introduced earlier, habitus and socialization. As Bourdieu (1995) states, the choices individuals make are always affected by the possessed habitus, and as we know, habitus is a product of primary and secondary socialization (Wilken, 2008; Green, 2010) where the major contributors are family and friends (Thurston, 2014; Roberts, 2009). Primary socialization involving family, like parents and siblings might be of greatest significance toward habitus (Wilken, 2008; Thurston, 2014; Roberts, 2009; Green, 2010), meaning families are expected



to have the largest impact on affecting children's' choices. As can be seen in the findings of this study, family stood out as the main contributor towards sports participation, where parents and siblings were the most influential. But, as Bourdieu tells it, habitus is 'slow but changeable', referring to the importance of secondary socialization as well (Wilken, 2008), in this study meaning friends and their impact on individuals' habitus, thus their choices.

Green (2010) explains it very simple and understandable; young peoples 'sporting habitus tend to originate from their socialization, and are expressed when youth make sporting and leisure lifestyle choices. This means that by affecting a child's habitus, one could possibly contribute to their later participation in sport. Family and friends especially tend to be important in the developing of a sporting habitus (Green, 2010). Wilken (2008) explains that individuals first acquire knowledge and make it meaningful, and thereafter convert this knowledge into practical acting. In this scenario, family and friends possess the knowledge concerning sports, before the individual converts this knowledge into practical acting by deciding to participate in sports. In other words, their family and friends gives meaning to sport, so the individual decides to start sports.

Only 3 of 35 girls responded that PE could appear as a possible contributor for staying in sports, with emphasize on the social part of PE. The majority of the girls did not see PE as a contributor for their sports participation, either for starting or for continuing. They emphasized the social part of sports as the main argument for continuing. Some even said that they saw PE and sports as two separate themes with no relationship with each other at all. In addition to the social aspect of being involved with sports, one should have habitus in mind while discussing a choice of continuing an action. When a sporting habitus is developed during primary and secondary socialization, our everyday choices, as in this study becomes going to sports practice, get autonomous, as our choices become unconsidered and outside

conscious control (Williams, 1995). It is conceivable that the girls continue their sports participation by autonomous choices, in addition to their enjoyment of the social aspect of sports.

Some mentioned the school as a wholeness and not PE in particular to impact their sports participation, by playing football in recesses, allowing them to develop skills, making them even better at their sports. But they did not see the school as the main arena for impacting them on continuing with sports. This corresponds to previous research (Sallis et al. 2012; Green, 2008; Hills et al. 2014) underlining school as a social arena for encouraging health related physical activity among young.

As can be seen in the findings of this study, it emerged varied responses to PE's impact on PA in leisure. The girls' explanatory factors for PA in leisure were their own desire to stay in shape, and to get a better foundation in their sports. Both reasons indicate a strong connection between their habitus' and their desire to attend PA in leisure. They had developed sporting habitus' from primary and secondary socialization during childhood (Green, 2010; Wilken, 2008), which affected their choices of being physically active in leisure because they saw it as meaningful (Wilken, 2008), emphasized by their enjoyment of exercise in the findings.

The idea of PE's contribution toward PA by introducing new activities was mentioned. Secondary socialization can be related to this scenario, as school and friends are relevant secondary socialization arenas (Green, 2010; Thurston, 2014; Roberts, 2009). Getting introduced to new joyful activities could possibly influence habitus, and contribute to further development of sporting habitus, which may affect their PA. This is seen by girls engaging in new activities outside of school that they have been introduced to in PE, as well as they adopt activities and exercises from PE and use them regularly outside of school and retain them. Learning physical skills in early life, both in sport and in PE may affect the probability for

people engaging in PA in adulthood positively, by retaining these skills (Kjønniksen et al. 2009).

The main area where PE was emphasized as a contributor toward PA was during the personal exercise period. A mixture of both sporty students and those who usually did not engage in PA wanted to perform well in PE, and experienced increased levels of PA in leisure during the period. When they had some weeks of exercising regularly, it became easier to maintain it, as it became a habit or a routine. One could believe that a good and detailed follow up both during and after such a period could affect students' habitus' which again could affect their views on PA. Their grades also worked as a motivational force toward their PA in leisure. This highlights school and PE as an arena for providing appropriate settings for health promotion *indirectly* (Troost, 2006) by promoting physical activity and movement of joy for the students, as secondary socialization (Green, 2010; Thurston, 2014; Roberts, 2009), making PE a tool for health promotion, which is widely assumed among several, and is part of the aim of the Norwegian PE curriculum (Sallis et al. 2012; Trudeau & Shepard, 2005; McKenzie, 2003; Green, 2010; Ommundsen, 2003; Department of Education, 2015; Kjønniksen et al. 2009; Harris; 2010).

According to Green (2010) and Hills et al. (2014), PE teachers are expected to adopt the role as 'significant others' in a socialization context, meaning they should take responsibility for fulfilling the aim of the PE curriculum, to inspire students to a physically active lifestyle and joy of movement (Department of Education, 2015). Sensational, it was only one group with one girl in the lead who emphasized their teacher as a contributing factor by encouraging them to get involved in PA in leisure. This suggests that PE teachers do not take their positions as role models and inspirational sources seriously enough, forgetting the large impact they have on their students. As revealed earlier in the discussion chapter concerning girls 'experiences of PE, the teachers' attitudes and engagements have great

affects on students' attitudes and experiences toward PA, emphasizing the importance of a good PE teacher. The findings also showed that those girls who were not satisfied with their teachers did not believe PE to affect their PA in leisure. They highlighted their homes as the main source of PA information, suggesting that PE do not have any relationship with their sporting or activity lives, as there are their families that have affected their sporting habitus', and also their interests in sports and PA.

The findings revealed a connection between sports participation and PE, as participation in sports provides a better foundation for doing well in PE, by being physically prepared. In other words, doing sports brings better experiences in PE. And of course the other way around, not doing sports brings a worse starting point in PE. As we know, it is harder to affect habitus by secondary socialization as school and friends, than by primary socialization like family (Green, 2010; Wilken, 2008; Roberts, 2009). It can thus be assumed that the reason why the girls perceive PE positively can be due to their primary socialization and developing a sporting habitus, in other words their participation in sport. They enjoy PA, and are familiar with the framework concerning it, thus they automatically develop better attitudes and motivation toward PE, as Säfvenbom et al. (2015) found. The findings correspond to previous literature.

### *6.2.1 Public health perspective*

As we see, the findings of what impacts children to start sport correspond closely with the way Green (2010) puts it, that the significance of early life socialization can be claimed to lie in the impact of individuals' habitus. In a public health perspective, this emphasizes, as WHO (2003) states, the importance of childhood as the foundation for establishing good health and healthy habits in adulthood, as their predispositions towards PA tend to be deeply rooted during childhood and youth. Young peoples early attachments towards sports appear to have a deep impact on their sports involvement in later life. Socialization into sports at a

young age can be very significant for lifelong participation in sports (Green, 2010), showing the importance of sports participation among children and youth for their later PA lives.

Roberts and Brodie (1992) demonstrate that sports provide health benefits for people, and PE is assumed to promote sports participation (Green, 2008; Roberts & Brodie, 1992), or as Kjønniksen et al. (2009) found, a moderate relationship between attitudes toward PE and sports participation. The contribution of PE toward sports participation has been widely assumed but it is not determined any PE-effect as Green (2014) calls it on sports participation. The findings in this study reveals that there is no contribution from PE toward sport participation, at least not as students perceive themselves. This can weaken PE's role as health promoting arena, but at the same time, there exist many other health effects of PE than toward sports (Arnold, 1979, Säfvenbom, 2010; Ommundsen, 2005), so the subject still stands strong as a public health contributor.

### **6.3 Limitations**

As an inexperienced researcher, there were several mistakes made during the interviews, or if not mistakes, things that could have been done differently. What could possibly have affected the findings of this study the most was the leading questions the researcher felt obligated to ask, because of the missing answers regarding the research question. It might be believable that those who said PE could have affected their sports participation only said it because of leading questions, like "Do you think PE could have affected you to start sports?".

As known, the study focuses on the girls' perceptions and experiences of PE and the possible contribution toward sport and PA, thus one do not get to know what actually affects the different factors other than their own opinions. But then again, as the research questions say, the girls' perceptions and experiences were what the researcher was looking for.

By applying focus groups, the researcher may not get expressions from all respondents, as those typically shied and withdrawn could be lost in the crowd among the other girls. Another weakness of the study is the translation from Norwegian to English, especially concerning quotations. The very essence of the respondents' statements could be tucked away during the translation, which may have caused weaker findings. The researcher has been careful with the translation, with this limitation in mind while translating, but one can never be sure that the wholeness becomes the same in both languages.

#### **6.4 Further Research**

As this study only examines girls' experiences and perceptions of PE, and the possible impact on sports participation and PA, it would be interesting to see if boys' perceptions and experiences were the same. This is a case study done in one single school in Norway, so it could be an idea to conduct the same type of study in other schools in Norway, to see if there are any similarities or rather differences. The PE-teacher stood out as a critical factor within all aspects of PE, and further research on how students perceive their teacher, and how they would like their teachers to appear to inspire to physical activity would be an interesting topic.

As this study reveals what affects girls' attitudes and experiences of PE, it could be a nice overview for teachers to look at, in order to make them more conscious of how it actually is, as well as the findings could be used in PETE in the same way, to put forward what one as a PE teacher actually should be aware of.

## Chapter 7: Conclusion

Girls' attitudes toward PE are a strong predictor for PA involvement in later life, emphasizing, the importance of conducting qualitative studies of girls' attitudes and experiences of PE and what affects them. The study gives an insight into 'sporty' girls' experiences and attitudes toward PE, as well as the findings show very well what impacts them. Their expressions varied extremely between different classes, concerning different aspects of PE, but the findings are consistent with previous research indicating that Norwegian adolescents report positive attitudes toward PE in general. Even though not everyone was satisfied with the subject, they still got reasons to report positive attitudes.

It emerged several contributing factors toward the girls' attitudes and experiences of PE, with a large emphasis on the PE teacher, which stood out as the key factor in this study, with the power to influence any aspect of the subject. In short, a good teacher brings satisfied students. But what is a good teacher? As can be seen in the findings, several different aspects make a good teacher, but the main factors for making girls satisfied with PE were: good attitudes and engagement toward the subject, eagerness to build a good class environment, adapting the teaching toward everyone so all students are physically challenged, making the PE content varied, giving the students the chance to impact the teaching, and communicating with other teachers to implement equal assessment for all. All factors above were key principles for the girls' attitudes and experiences of PE, as they emerged during the conversations concerning experiences of PE. There were no significant findings concerning which sports they did, and their expressions within different themes.

As many PE teachers nowadays focus much of their attention toward the weaker students because of the aim of PE, and the on going debate of the PE legitimization, the physically stronger group of students felt set back, with an absence of physical challenges, which very much impacted their attitudes. An elective course focusing on physical activity

appears as an important and suitable arena for the physically stronger group of students to maintain their good attitudes toward PE and PA in general, which is an important public health aspect.

Researchers emphasize PE as an important subject in school, among other reasons, on the basis of its' valuable impact toward sport participation. This case study reveals an absent causal relationship between PE and sports participation, both for starting and continuing sports. The girls mainly started sports before or early in school, where they emphasized PE as a recreational subject rather than facilitating sports. Primary and secondary socialization through friends and family, and their impact on a sporting habitus was emphasized as crucial factor for the girls sports participation, highlighting the importance of early life in a public health context. The role of PE as a public health promoting arena can be perceived as weakened, but at the same time there are several other aspects of PE that strengthen its role in a public health context, as for example that the study shows a relationship between PE and PA in leisure. There were though varied opinions on the relationship, but the personal exercise period showed quite a strong connection. The PE teachers did not fulfil their presumed roles as "significant others" in a socialization process, as habitus and other socialization arenas contributed to the girls PA in leisure. One can conclude that PE in this school contributes to PA in leisure to a certain extent, for some students, but it is not sufficient.

It emerged in fact a strong relationship between involvement in sports and attitudes and experiences in PE, as organized youth sport gives a better foundation to perform well in PE, as well as those involved in sport are familiar with the framework surrounding both sport and PE, as PE appears to be *sportified*. Of course, confounding factors could have impacted.

Surrounding children with movement, either by sports or general PA, has got an important impact on their physically active lives in adulthood, emphasizing the importance of early life socialization.



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## Appendix 1a: NSD document

Norsk samfunnsvitenskapelig datatjeneste AS  
NORWEGIAN SOCIAL SCIENCE DATA SERVICES



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Kenneth Stanley Green  
Avdeling for folkehelsefag Høgskolen i Hedmark  
Postboks 400  
2418 ELVERUM

Vår dato: 02.12.2015

Vår ref: 45398 / 3 / MSI

Deres dato:

Deres ref:

### TILBAKEMELDING PÅ MELDING OM BEHANDLING AV PERSONOPPLYSNINGER

Vi viser til melding om behandling av personopplysninger, mottatt 28.10.2015. Meldingen gjelder prosjektet:

45398	<i>Kroppsøvingsfagets rolle for å fremme idrettsdeltakelse i Norge. Elevers perspektiver</i>
Behandlingsansvarlig	<i>Høgskolen i Hedmark, ved institusjonens øverste leder</i>
Daglig ansvarlig	<i>Kenneth Stanley Green</i>
Student	<i>Julie Slapø Moe</i>

Personvernombudet har vurdert prosjektet og finner at behandlingen av personopplysninger er meldepliktig i henhold til personopplysningsloven § 31. Behandlingen tilfredsstillende kravene i personopplysningsloven.

Personvernombudets vurdering forutsetter at prosjektet gjennomføres i tråd med opplysningene gitt i meldeskjemaet, korrespondanse med ombudet, ombudets kommentarer samt personopplysningsloven og helseregisterloven med forskrifter. Behandlingen av personopplysninger kan settes i gang.

Det gjøres oppmerksom på at det skal gis ny melding dersom behandlingen endres i forhold til de opplysninger som ligger til grunn for personvernombudets vurdering. Endringsmeldinger gis via et eget skjema, <http://www.nsd.uib.no/personvern/meldeplikt/skjema.html>. Det skal også gis melding etter tre år dersom prosjektet fortsatt pågår. Meldinger skal skje skriftlig til ombudet.

Personvernombudet har lagt ut opplysninger om prosjektet i en offentlig database, <http://pvo.nsd.no/prosjekt>.

Personvernombudet vil ved prosjektets avslutning, 25.06.2016, rette en henvendelse angående status for behandlingen av personopplysninger.

Vennlig hilsen

Katrine Utaaker Segadal

Marte Byrkjeland

Kontaktperson: Marte Byrkjeland tlf: 55 58 36 01

*Dokumentet er elektronisk produsert og godkjent ved NSDs rutiner for elektronisk godkjenning.*

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## Personvernombudet for forskning



### Prosjektvurdering - Kommentar

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Prosjektnr: 45398

Rekrutteringen skjer via skolen. Personvernombudet anbefaler at skolen formidler informasjon om studien på vegne av studenten, og minner om at forespørsel må rettes på en slik måte at frivilligheten ved deltagelse ivaretas.

Utvalget informeres skriftlig og muntlig om prosjektet og samtykker til deltakelse. Informasjonsskrivet er godt utformet.

Personvernombudet legger til grunn at student og veileder etterfølger Høgskolen i Hedmark sine interne rutiner for datasikkerhet. Dersom personopplysninger skal lagres på mobile enheter, bør opplysningene krypteres tilstrekkelig. Tilsvarende gjelder dersom det er nødvendig å sende personidentifiserende data over epost til veileder, jf. punkt 10 i meldeskjemaet. Data som sendes over internett bør anonymiseres, alternativt aidentifiseres.

Forventet prosjektslutt er 25.06.2016. Ifølge prosjektmeldingen skal innsamlede opplysninger da anonymiseres. Anonymisering innebærer å bearbeide datamaterialet slik at ingen enkeltpersoner kan gjenkjennes. Det gjøres ved å:

- slette direkte personopplysninger (som navn/koblingsnøkkel)
- slette/omskrive indirekte personopplysninger (identifiserende sammenstilling av bakgrunnsopplysninger som f.eks. bosted/arbeidssted, alder og kjønn)
- slette digitale lydopptak.

## Appendix 2: Consent form

# Forespørsel om deltakelse i forskningsprosjektet

## *Kroppsøvningsfagets rolle for å fremme idrettsdeltakelse Elevers perspektiver.*

### Bakgrunn og formål

Formålet med denne masterstudien er å utforske 'sporty' jenters opplevelse av kroppsøvningsfaget, og om de oppfatter at faget har påvirkning på idrettsdeltakelse på fritiden. Problemstillingen er som følgende: Hvordan opplever 'sporty' jenter kroppsøvningsfaget, og oppfatter de kroppsøving som en påvirkningsfaktor for deres idrettslige fritid? Mastergraden gjennomføres ved Høgskolen i Hedmark, avdeling Elverum.

Du blir forespurt om å delta på dette prosjektet, fordi du befinner deg i en aldersgruppe som er interessant i forhold til tema for prosjektoppgaven. Hoved forsker har kontakten din skole, og fått tillatelse fra skolens ledelse om å ta kontakt med deg.

Hva innebærer deltakelse i studien?

Datainnsamlingen blir foretatt ved dybdeintervju med fokusgrupper på rundt fem elever. Det vil i starten bli utdelt et kort spørreskjema med en estimert tidsbruk på om lag fem minutter. Deretter vil intervjuet starte. Estimert tidsbruk på intervjuet er om lag én time. Spørsmålene vil i hovedsak omhandle elevens oppfattelse og erfaring med kroppsøvningsfaget, og eventuelt idrettsdeltakelse på fritiden. I intervjuene vil det bli benyttet lydopptaker, slik at samtalen senere kan transkriberes.

### **Hva skjer med informasjonen om deg?**

Alle personopplysninger vil bli behandlet konfidensielt. Det er kun hoved forsker og hennes veileder som vil ha tilgang på informasjonen som vil bli innsamlet. Opplysningene vil bli lagret på en bærbar enhet som beskyttes med brukernavn og passord.

Deltakere vil ikke kunne gjenkjennes i publikasjonen, da personopplysningene anonymiseres.

Prosjektet skal etter planen avsluttes i Juni 2016. På dette tidspunkt vil alle personopplysninger og opptak bli slettet.

### **Frivillig deltakelse**

Det er frivillig å delta i studien, og du kan når som helst trekke ditt samtykke uten å oppgi noen grunn. Dersom du trekker deg, vil alle opplysninger om deg bli anonymisert.

Dersom du ønsker å delta eller har spørsmål til studien, ta kontakt med prosjektleder Julie Slapø Moe på 928 47 540, eller veileder Kenneth Green på (0) 7841250219.

Studien er meldt til Personvernombudet for forskning, Norsk samfunnsvitenskapelig datatjeneste AS.

# Samtykke til deltakelse i studien

**For elever over fylte 15 år:**

Jeg har mottatt informasjon om studien, og er villig til å delta

-----  
(Signert av prosjektdeltaker, dato)

## **Appendix 3: Interview guide**

### Interview guide

#### EXPERIENCES OF PE

How do you feel about PE?

Your experiences of PE

Good and bad experiences? Why?

What do you do in PE?

Why do you think you like/do not like PE?

#### SPORTS

How old were you when you started sports?

What made you start sports? Any factors with more influence than others?

Do you believe that PE could have any impact on you starting sports?

→ Either for choosing sport, starting or continuing?

#### PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Do you engage in PA in leisure?

Do you think that PE could impact you to perform PA in leisure?

Does the subject make you more aware of being in physical activity?

What about the personal exercise period?



## Appendix 4: Questionnaire

### Questionnaire: Sports participation

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you do organized sport?      YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

Have you been involved in organized sports lately      YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

Which sports do you do?

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How often do you do these sports?

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With whom do you do sports?

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## Appendix 5: Coding

Data extract	Summarized data extract	Code	Theme
4: Our class has got a great environment, so I think people feel they are a part of something when we have different activities. People make an effort. If we play football, everyone joins in and cheers and tries, even though it is not always fun to work out, you get something out of it, everyone does it seems.	Good class environment. Peers backing you up, cheering and making PE fun	Good class environment contribute to safety	Class environment
2: A lot varied 4: Yeah, a lot varied. And I think that is really good, that we do not always focus on the same sports. We have had both skating, volleyball and skiing, not just football.	Varied content. Good that the teacher focuses on more than one sport	Varied content	IPE content
2: Ehm... No, when I was in first grade both my mother and my father were coaches in handball and football, in addition to my mum working at a gym, so, she has always been glad in working out, and I suppose I have got affected by her. And it is fun to work out, so I tried many different sports, and I thought it was fun to do all of it.	Chose handball because of family. Parents were coaches.	Family contributed to sport	Contribution to sports