Understanding Ethnic Identity in relation to National Identity

From the perspective of second generation young adults with foreign background

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ABSTRACT

Title: Understanding Ethnic Identities in relation to national identity- from the perspective of second-generation young adults with foreign background.

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The main purpose of this study was to explore how second-generation young adults with foreign background understand their ethnic identities and how they relate to their national identities. Semi-structured interviews with 7 second-generation young adults with foreign background were conducted. The basis for our analysis was social identity theory, identity theory and previous research. As the result shows, the participants in this study had developed an understanding of their ethnic identities in relation to their national identities based on influential factors. The influential factors that elicited these understandings of their ethnic identities in relation to their national identities were: influential people and cultural influences. On the basis of these influential factors, it had become easier for some participants to identify themselves more with their ethnic identities. However, for other participants, the understanding of their ethnic identities did not influence their feelings of belongingness to the host society, which means they have considered themselves to belong to both their ethnic and national identities. For those participants who could not identify themselves with both their ethnic identities and relate to their national identities chose to identify themselves with something else, which in this case religion.

Keywords: Identity, Ethnic Identity, National Identity, Social identity, influential factors
PREAMBLE

First and foremost we will like to take this opportunity to thank God almighty for good health.

We will like to express our gratitude to the participants that made this study possible and informative.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Introduction

The vast increase of individual’s mobility due to globalization has given rise to interconnectedness of multiple cultures. It is very evident in contemporary Sweden that ethnic diversity is at fast pace rising. According to the Swedish Central Bureau of Statistics (Statistiska Centralbyrån, 2013), every fifth child in Sweden is either born abroad or descended from immigrant parents. The adaptation of a new culture when settling to a new country is more or less inevitable and challenging. However people also tend to retain their culture of origin, which they tend to pass on to their offspring. According to Phinney et al., (2001, p; 495) “Adolescents from immigrant backgrounds face complex issues of adaptation involving both their culture of origin and the culture of the new country, as part of this experience, they develop an identity as a member of an ethnic group within the larger society, that is, an ethnic identity”.

For second-generation young adults with foreign background that have one or two ethnicities, these complex mixtures of ethnicity can be challenging when trying to make sense of their identities and their everyday reality. Ålund (1997) stated that there comes a time when second-generation young adults that grow up in a multi-ethnic or multicultural household will experience feelings of confusion, anxiety, and the search for belongingness becomes a factor.

The goal of this study is to achieve an in-depth understanding of the lived experience of second-generation young adults with foreign background on how they understand their ethnic identities and relate to their national identities.

1.2 Aim and research questions

1.2.1 Aim

The aim of this study is to explore how second-generation young adults with foreign background understand their ethnic identities and how their relate to the national identity

1.2.2 Research questions:

-How do second-generation young adults with foreign background describe and reflect on their ethnic identities in relation to their national identities?
-Which factors do these young adults describe as influential in the understanding of their ethnic identities in relation to their national identities?
-How does the understanding of ethnic identities in relation to national identities influence these second-generation young adults’ life style?

1.3 Explanation of concepts

There are few concepts in this study that we would like to explain in order to make it easier for the readers. **Identity** refers to our psychological sense of who we are as part of a social group and individuals. The formation of identity is simply no creation of ours; rather it is formed from external and internal factors, which entail that the choice of identity is more or less influenced by environmental forces that are out of our control (Ali & Sonn, 2010). **Ethnic identity** is a sense of experiencing belongingness and being a member in an ethnic group where common values, traditions and attitudes are shared within the group (Ali & Sonn, 2010). **National identity**: Focuses on an individual’s identity in relation to the larger society. As Phinney et al (2001, p. 497) assert that national identity”involves feeling of belonging to, and attitudes towards the larger society”. In this study the national identity will be the Swedish society.

**Second Generation Young Adults with foreign background** in this study refers to people that were born or raised in Sweden but descended from parents that have foreign backgrounds and as result they were brought up at homes in a culture that differs from the host society, while at the same time grew up in a dominant culture which is embedded in the national identity.

1.4 Relevance to social work

By gaining in-depth knowledge of how second-generation young adults with foreign background make sense of their ethnic identities in relation to their national identities, we hope this study will contribute to increase social workers’ understanding on how to support and help individuals that battles with questions like “who am I”? “Where do I belong”? etc. After exploration of previous research on this topic, we realize that there are insufficient qualitative and quantitative studies in this research area. As future social workers we believe that the more knowledge accumulated from research on this topic, the more opportunities are given to understand people of immigrant background and build a platform for rendering effective support when counselling and helping such individuals in times of crisis.
1.5 Essay Disposition
The first chapter presents our introduction of the topic been studied following the aim, research question, essay disposition and explanation of concepts. The second chapter introduces previous research to give a pre-understanding and explanation of empirical findings that had shed light on certain key notions that are utilized in our essay. The theoretical framework of this essay is presented in the third chapter, which gives a descriptive detailed explanation of the theory been used in the process to actualize our aim, which in this case is the identity and social identity theory with the parallel combination of hermeneutic approach. The forth chapter gives explanation about the methods been used in pursuit to achieve the best result as possible that would help us to realize our research aim. Results and analysis are presented in chapter five, which gives an account of the data elicited from interviews collected and analysis, which relates to social identity theory, identity theory and findings of earlier research on this essay’s topic. In chapter six, the result of the study is been discussed and evaluated with interpretations and suggestions for further research. The final chapter presents a list of references been used throughout the course of this essay.

2. Previous Research
Qualitative studies performed in Sweden addressing the factors that influence the understanding of ethnic and national identities in second-generation young adults with foreign background are rare. However, we have found three Swedish studies that touch on a similar topic. These studies are one bachelor thesis, one master thesis and two-doctorate theses. These studies somehow helped us acquire deeper understanding of this specific group and we also present one study conducted on similar issue from the USA.

1-Tillhörighet, utanförskap eller mitt emellan. Intervjuer med unga män och kvinnor om deras etniska identitet (To belong, to feel out of it or something in between. Interviews with young men and women about their ethnical identity). (Master thesis)

This study was a qualitative study that was conducted by Suzana Vuckic (2006). It is a study that sought to shed light on identity development on youths with foreign
backgrounds in Sweden with the main focus on the issues of belongingness, exclusion and the feelings of being in between. The aim of the study was to investigate how youth with foreign background make sense of their cultural belongingness and ethnic identities, and also how growing up with the prevalence of two cultures is been influenced in relation to families, friends and school. The study follows six youths with equal division in sex from different ethnic backgrounds, namely from Turkey, Kosovo and Bosnia.

The result indicates that friends and families play a huge role in the identity development and cultural belongingness. However, the role of school is not been considered to be a contributing factor in identity development and the feeling of cultural belongingness. The respondents pointed out that their feelings of belongingness is dependent on how people from both their home countries and Sweden approaches and categorizes them. The result in Vuckic study also shows that these youths in question had also developed a feeling of both exclusion and belongingness to both Sweden and their home countries.


The result elicited from this comparative qualitative bachelor thesis conducted by Babak Ahmadi (2013) shows that the level of educational achievements in second generation Iranians in both the United States and Sweden has strengthens the paradigm or hypothesis that the social fabric and characteristics of the society where the second generation Iranians live, impact their ethnic identity understanding significantly. The aim of this study was to examine the impact of the social characteristics of the host society on the second generation Iranian’s understanding of their national and ethnic identities in Sweden. In order to achieve this aim; the author conducted semi-structured interviews via emails with 15 young people of Iranian background, and also compared the data with literatures obtain from the U.S.A concerning a similar topic of second generation Iranian immigrant.

3- Inclusion and Exclusion of Young Adults Migrants in Europe: Barriers and Bridges
This is a book that was edited by (Fangen et al 2010) which is a collection of research projects that was funded by the EU research project institute that covers seven European countries including Sweden. A comparative research project that aimed at exploring the inclusion and exclusion of young adults migrants in these seven countries which are Estonia, France, Spain, Norway, UK, Italy and Sweden. However in this study the main focus will be on the contribution made by Nils Hammrén, with the Title “Being A Stranger in the People’s Home”. Nils Hammrén’s contribution was a qualitative study that was conducted in Sweden, specifically in Gothenburg. In the Swedish study it is found that young adults with an immigrant background find it difficult to culturally identify themselves with the host culture as they feel that they do not belong to the host country or feel that they are not welcomed by the host country. Therefore these young adolescences immigrants create their own culture, this makes them to feel that they belong somewhere, as most of them do not feel that they belong to neither the culture of their homeland nor the culture of the society they live in. The study also shows that citizenship is of no significant in this regard.

4-An exploration of factors influencing multiracial/ multiethnic identity development: A qualitative investigation

This is a qualitative study that was conducted by Patel (2012) with the aim to explore the lived experiences and to gain a deeper understanding of how people of multiracial/multiethnic background go about the process of racial-identification/ethnic identification; this was done for the purpose of enriching therapeutic interventions when counseling these types of individuals. The study followed eight individuals of multiracial/multiethnic background with semi-structured interviews method. Patel’s study yielded three themes that have huge impact on identity development on individuals with multiracial/multiethnic background. The three themes are: influential people and these people can be for an example: families, friends and social group. The second theme is: influential moments and the final theme is influential cultural experiences.

All these four studies have been helpful and important to the outcome of this study. This will be explained in the analysis of the result obtained.
3. Theoretical framework

In the quest to fulfil the aim of the study, the identity theory, social identity theory and previous research will be used as analytical tools to better understand these second-generation young adults with foreign background. We choose these theories with the hope that they will provide a platform for understanding the lived experience of young adults with foreign backgrounds in terms of how they make sense of their ethnic identities and how they relate to their national identities. Semi structured interview was used to collect data and hermeneutics circle and phenomenology were used to interpret the data.

3.1 Identity theory

According to Franzén (2001: 74) identity is a concept with ambiguities in definition within the scientific discipline and it is also a word that is used colloquially. From a social psychology perspective identity is constructed through interaction with people in the immediate surrounding. Which means, the self is considered to be a creation of interaction and that the knowing of self can only be established in interaction with other people (Franzén, 2001)? Furthermore identity theory focuses on in-group structures and the role an individual identifies him/herself with or plays in the group, also the meaning and expectations associated with that role and it’s performance (Stets & Burke, 2000).

3.1.2 Focus on role

According to (Hogg, et al., 1995: 257) “A role is a set of expectations prescribing behaviour that is considered appropriate by others”. Similarly role identity is self-definition, self-conception that individuals apply on themselves as a consequence of the role position they occupy as members of a particular social group.

The emphasis laid upon role in identity theory gives a platform to study and place second-generation young adults with foreign individuals in position to be a self, as role player in an identified ethnic group. This means that factors that influence individual’s choices to relate more or less to the group are examined (Stets & Burke, 2000). In this case, role meaning has implications for what individual do, which means that we will also examine the roles and behaviours a second-generation young individual with foreign background enact as a member in their ethnic group.
3.2 Social identity theory

Tajfel and Turner first developed social identity theory, which was an attempt to explain behaviour and cognition with the help of group processes (Trepte, 2006). According to (ibid) Social Identity Theory, we exhibit group behaviours, such as solidarity within the group and discriminate other groups which is consider to be the out-group as part of social identity theory processes, all in the quest to achieve positive self-esteem and Self-enhancement (Trepte, 2006).

In social identity theory, identity is formed in the same manner as explained above in identity theory. However the self-identification process of identity theory has been defined as self-categorization in social identity theory, which stresses that the individual belongs to a social category or group (Stets & Burke, 2000). Furthermore it concentrates on the consequences and causes of the identification with a social group, thus primarily draws on a wide range of implication of who you are! In this respect an individual with foreign background own association or identification with a particular existing ethnic group is scrutinized and examined. As a result we hope to elicit a sense of clarity as to what the participants in this study deem themselves to be, as part of / or member of their pre-existing ethnic groups and their meaning.

3.2.1 In-group and out group

According to Mcleod (2008) the in-group in social identity theory is the group one belongs to, the group we identify ourselves with. In this in-group we do anything to increase the groups self-image, and sometimes proclaim false statements such as for an example; “Sweden is the best country in the world”. In this in-group we also tend to discriminate and hold prejudices views about the out-group just to increase our self-image, for an example “the Americans are a bunch of losers” (Mcloed, 2008). Therefore we use words such as “us and them”, whereby the “us” refers to the in-group and “them” to the out-group. According to social identity theory the in-group will always seek for negative aspects of the out-group, thus to enhance their self-image. Mcloed (2008) sighting Tajfel (1979) continues to stress that in social identity theory prejudice views on other cultures, which is the out group might result to racism, and racism to the extreme might leads to genocide.

3.2.2 Situationally activation

In social identity theory, an individual activates an identity depending on which
situation the individual finds him or herself in (Stets & Burke, 2000). This means that we have learned to activate different identities depending on whom we interact with. In social identity theory “The individual perceives herself as like one set of persons and different from another set of persons in the situation” (Stets & Burke, 2000 p.225). In a larger context when it comes to social groups, the individual has learned how to activate different identities in different social groups, this all for the sake of depersonalization (Stets & Burke, 2000). When a social identity is activated people act and behave to enhance the self-image of the in-group and this will make it easier for other group members to accept the individual.

4. Methodology
4.1 Preliminary Understanding
Our preconception about this topic was very limited before the start of this study. The knowledge we had about this topic was basically our own experiences and the experiences of people around us such as friends and families. After two years of studying at the University of Gävle, it was time for us to go out and do our internship and both of us chose to do it abroad in different countries. However when we came back to Sweden we noticed that we had a similar experience due to our non-European appearance. During our internship, each time we met someone and they ask “where are you from?” we will reply “Sweden” and the reaction of that person made us think like ooh maybe I should have said my country of origin instead of the I country live in. While we were abroad we tried to make sense of these complex identities. This is basically what we knew about this topic and we became interested in conducting a study about it. Based on our preliminary literature search, we went from “identity crises” to studying “how second-generation young people with foreign background in Sweden understand and define their ethnic identities in relation to their national identities”. The preliminary literature gave us deeper pre-understanding of the area and it was this pre-understanding that made us proceed with this topic.

4.2 Research Design
It was estimated that the qualitative research method was the best approach to acquire answers for our research question. The justification for this can be found in Larsson’s description of the qualitative research method. In this description, the author explains
how the purpose of the method is to acquire knowledge of an individual's subjective experience based on his or her own words, expressions and meaningful descriptions (Larsson, 2005). This description means that, qualitative research method allows the participants to express themselves freely and precisely: it encourages an individual to describe his/her experience as precise as possible about how an individual feels based on their own words (Larsson, 2005). Qualitative research method gathers participant’s opinions, knowledge, feelings and experiences either in their everyday life or previous experiences (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009). In addition, qualitative research method is much more equipped than quantitative research method when it comes to studying lived experiences. “If you want to understand the way people think about their world and how those definitions are formed you need to get close to them, to hear them talk and observe them in their day to day lives” (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003, p. 31). This description about qualitative research method matched the thesis goal of being able to better explore how young adults with foreign background understand their ethnic identities and relate to their national identities.

4.3 Mode of procedure

4.3.1 Literature review

In order for us to acquire an in-depth understanding about this topic, we reviewed literature and accessed information from multiple sources. An extensive search for relevant literature was done with searches by digital databases available through the University of Gävle. Multiple bodies of literature, and including a selection of books, journals and articles have in many ways contributed to get an in-depth understanding of this topic on how second-generation young people with foreign background understand their ethnic identities and relate to their national identities in Sweden. Gävle University Library gave us the opportunity to search through several databases such as, ASSIA: Applied Social Sciences Index and Abstracts, Social Services Abstracts, DIVA, uppsatser.se, Sociological Abstracts, Libris, and Google Academics Data Base. In the beginning the search keywords were broad, general keywords such as "identity crisis within immigrant youth" gave about 17 hits. However we wanted more, so search words like "multicultural identity" "Acculturation" "Cultural identity" and "ethnic identity" was used, and this combination generated about 41871 hits. These hits provided us with an overall
understanding of our topic; however an examination of those hits made it possible for us to find more specific keywords that were more relevant to this study. These keywords were, "ethnic identity" "identity theory" "national identity" "understanding national and ethnic identity" "ethnic identity young adults", which gave us 377,501 hits. However we could not include all these in our research, we choose the ones that dealt with our research aim. During the search process, we learned a lot about our topic, and it also provided us with materials that helped us to proceed with our study. Through the search process, the results that we found suited the goal for our essay.

4.3.2 Choice of interview methods:

After choosing to conduct a qualitative study through interviews, it was also vital to choose a suitable interview approach to collect data. The chosen one was the one Kvale and Brinkman (2009) define as semi structured interviews. "Semi-structured interviewing is a scheduled activity. A semi-structured interview is open ended, but follows a general script and covers a list of topics" (Bernard, 2006: 210). In addition, the author continues to state that in some research, there are times where one won’t get more than one chance to interview someone, and that semi-structured interview is the best approach then. Due to time constraints, we knew that it would be difficult to get more than one interview from each participant. In addition, we also wanted the participants to feel free to respond to our questions and also perhaps lead us to new paths, which could be useful in the study. As argued by Bernard (2006: 212)…"It demonstrates that you are fully in control of what you want from an interview but leaves both you and your respondent free to follow new leads". This kind of interview leads to better conversation dialogue. To use this interview strategy, we prepared interview questions that were considered relevant to our main study question. These questions were asked, reformulated and some were not asked during the interview depending on the participant’s answers and directions. Some of the questions had already been answered in other questions. Follow up questions and new questions also came up during the interview, and we used the ones that were relevant to our study.

4.3.3 Selection of participants

The participants were obtained through snowball sampling. This type of sampling is when the researcher identifies one or more individuals from the population of interest,
after these individuals have been interviewed, these individuals are used as informants to identify other members of the population, who are themselves used as informants and so on (Robson, 2002). After having a discussion with our lecturer at the University, she proposed snowball sampling; she briefed us about this simple method. From there, one key informant was identified and contacted from the University of Gävle, to help us locate potential participants. This key informant was selected and contacted through phone call and email. The individual led us to two more participants that also were contacted through mail, phone calls and text messages. This process of snowball sampling went on until we were satisfied with the amount of participants. Time, date and location were confirmed through these calls.

The inclusion criteria were that the participant should be an individual with a foreign background, this included age, nationality, ethnical background, cultural background and how long they have lived in Sweden or if they were born and raised in Sweden. The age was from 18 to 30 years old. The reason for the age criteria was because we were in search of young adults with experiences that suited the study. These individuals should have at least been living in Sweden for ten years and had grown in a household that consisted of parents with foreign background. If they met the criteria and were selected to participate in the study, the consent forms and interview questions were sent to participant’s beforehand prior to the actual interview date.

### 4.3.5 Interview process

Four of the interviews were conducted at the University of Gävle while the other three in other places due to the participants’ request, such as their home, place of employment and school.

We started with the information letter (Appendix 1) and then consent form and demographic form. We then asked if they had any questions or something that needed to be clarified before the interview commenced. The interviews all together provided us 152 pages of transcripts, and each interview took about 45-60 minutes.

### 4.3.5 Data analysis

The transcripts were analysed by using the hermeneutic circle. “Hermeneutic focuses
on interpreting something of interest, traditionally a text or work of art, but in the larger context of qualitative inquiry, it has also come to include interpreting interviews and observed action” (Patton et al, 2004, p.497). In qualitative research, analytic procedures fall into seven phases and these are: (a) organizing the data; (b) immersion in the data; (c) generating categories and themes; (d) coding the data; (e) offering interpretations through analytic memos; (f) searching for alternative understandings; and (g) writing the report or other format for presenting the study (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). We accomplished the first step by repeatedly listening to the interviews on our audio recorder and pausing it for reflections during the transcription process. In the transcription process, preliminary themes began to develop but however being mindful of what we read earlier in Patton (2002, p.436) stated, "Rushing to premature conclusions should be avoided". With that in mind we avoided to draw conclusions until all the gathered data were transcribed. After transcribing the data, we read through each transcript more than two times just to immerse in the data. After we had a thorough understanding of the collected data we decided to identify themes, coding the data and interpreting the data. Hermeneutic circle was used as a tool to interpret the transcribed data. During the analyses and interpretation process, we went back and forth reading the material over and over again and also double-checked with each other to make sure that we were on the right track.

4.4 Essay credibility

4.4.1 Validity

“Validity refers to whether or not something actually measure what it claims to measure”(Robson, 2007 p.72). This is a way of trying to establish whether if our results meet the entire scientific research method requirements. In order to increase the validity of the results obtained, we took few steps to ensure high validity. First step was to ensure that our interview questions were crafted in a manner that will elicit answers to the study’s question and aim. However these questions where inspired by previous research and from what we have learned about this study. During the interviews open questions were asked, as a way to grasp a clear picture of what we intended to investigate. According to Kvale and Brinkman (2009 p.246) “Validity is often defined by asking the question: are you measuring what you think you are
measuring?” With this in mind, follow up questions were asked as well, which sought justifications on statements been made by the participants. After the data were collected and transcribed, they were sent back to the various participants to re-affirm their statements, this because we had limited time to do a follow up interview. Interestingly, the participants provided us with additional statements that they had forgotten to mention during the interviews, which automatically enriched our data even more. Constant critical reflection was paramount in this study, as we constantly questioned the results and the topic been studied, this enable us to strengthen the validity of the study. Even though we have taken several steps to obtain high validity, validity is often low in a qualitative study (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009).

4.4.2 Reliability

“Data collection is reliable, if you get essentially the same data when a measurement is repeated under the same conditions (Robson, 2007 p.71). In order for us to achieve high reliability in this study we followed the scientific process of conducting a study. After writing the interview questions, they were sent in advance to the participants so that they could be well prepared. After conducting the interviews, these were transcribed separately in order to achieve high understanding, which will resort to high reliability. In order to achieve a higher reliability, the transcripts were double checked several times. These transcripts were sent back to the participants to re-affirm the data we had collected, all of the participants provided us with more information that they had missed during the interviews. Based on the assertion of Kvale and Brinkman (2009 P. 245) reliability “concerns weather the interview subjects will change their answers during an interview and weather they will give different replies to different interviewers”. For the sake of clarity, all of the participants agreed with the information contained in the transcripts we had sent to them, but chose to add more vital information on this note. To strengthen the reliability of this study, both researchers have been collecting, coding and analysing the data in order to avoid biases. However the fact that some of the interviews were conducted in Swedish, which were translated to English might affect the reliability somewhat. In addition, the possibility to reach reliability in a qualitative study is limited; due to the fact that interpretation is important and different researches can have different understanding of the interviews they have conduct and interpret them in different ways (Robson, 2007).
4.4.3 Generalizability

In qualitative research the capability to generalize is very limited, and sometimes impossible due to the amount of people that are interviewed (Larsson, 2005). In this study seven individuals were interviewed which makes it impossible to generalize, this results to a wider context. However, Kvale and Brinkman (2009) assert that the naturalistic generalization might be possible in this type of study. This type of generalization rests on the participants’ personal experiences, “it derives from tacit knowledge of how things are and leads to expectations rather than formal predictions; it may become verbalized thus passing from tacit knowing to explicit propositional knowledge” (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009, p.262). Base on the participant’s experience on this subject matter, acknowledgeable knowledge were obtained, which exhibits such explicitly.

4.5 Ethical considerations

In order to avoid ethical dilemmas we had to make sure not to breach the participants’ integrity. This standpoint was taken to make sure that the participants felt comfortable during interviews and to also mitigate the risk of eliciting harmful situations during interviews.

First we sent an email to participants informing them about the aim of this study and the requirements for participation. This information letter also included a brief introduction about us. In this mail, a consent form was attached as well, together with the interview questions. Kvale and Brinkman (2009:84) assert that it is important to consider ethical standpoints when conducting a qualitative research. During the interview, we went through the information letter, consent forms and demographic forms again for the sake of clarity. We also asked the participants to feel free to interrupt in the middle of the interview if any doubt arises. This all was done to make the participants feel comfortable and gain their trust.

4.5.1 Right to information

Prior to any interview process, the participants were informed forehand about the overall intent of this study via email and telephone contact. We made it very clear to the participants that being part of the study was voluntary and that they could at any
time cancel their participation without any consequences (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009). As a reminder, the information about the study and its intent that we issued out to the participants via email and phone calls was repeated to participant on the decided date before the initiation of the interview.

4.5.2 Confidentiality

According to Kvale and Brinkman (2009) confidentiality in a scientific study means that all data collected during an interview that identify the participants are highly confidential and should not be disclosed. Given the stance of confidentiality in a scientific study, we were compelled to take certain steps to make sure that confidentiality is not breached. The first step was to inform the participants that all data collected will be treated cautiously with confidentiality, which means that the data will not be made available to anyone except to the research team. Secondly we made it clear to the participants that the results may be published in professional journals or presented at scientific conferences, however all eventual presentations will be of general findings and will never breach individual confidentiality (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009).

4.5.3 Consequences

According to Kvale and Brinkman (2009), when conducting a scientific study one must examine or reflect on the consequences of the eventual harm that the participant might endure and also the scientific contribution elicited from their participation. As we realised the sensitive nature of this study, a reflective stance was taking by us to make sure that we do not overstep boundaries that might cause emotional damages in regards to our participants. At the end of each interview the participants were offered chances to contact us at any time if they had any reflections or wishes to discuss anything regarding their participation.

5. Results and analysis

We would like to mention that we have chosen to position results and analysis in one section. In this chapter we present our results from the data collected in the interviews. For ensuring the anonymity of the participants we chose to rename them with different alias instead of their actual names.
The data collected yielded two themes that influence the understanding of their ethnic identities in relation to their national identities, namely Ethnic/National identities & Influential Factors. Some of the themes also yielded some patterns. By exploring these above-mentioned themes, will ultimately bring us closer to understand how they make sense of their ethnic identities and how they relate to their national identities.

5.1 Presentation of participants
All of the participants in this study live in a small town in Sweden. All of the participants in this study are above the age of 18. Some of them were born in Sweden while some of them came to Sweden at a very young age.

Amelia is 21 years old and she is born and raised in Sweden. Amelia’s mother is from Hungary and the father is from Lebanon. She graduated from high school 2013 and speaks Swedish, English and Arabic. The interview with Amelia was conducted in Swedish.

Fatima is 22 years of age and has been living in Sweden since childhood. Fatima’s mother is from Ethiopia and father from Eritrea. Fatima graduated from high school 2012. She speaks Swedish, English, Tigrinya and Amharic. The interview with her was conducted in Swedish.

Cindy is 24 years old and originated from Somalia; she has been living in Sweden since childhood. Cindy is now studying at university level; she is fluent in English, Swedish Somali language and Arabic. The interview with Cindy was conducted in both Swedish and English but mostly in English. Cindy’s parents descended from Somalia.

Erica is 20 years old and she was born in Burundi and raised in Sweden. Erica’s mother is from Burundi and father is from Germany. She speaks English, Swedish and Kirundi and graduated from high school 2014. The interview with Erica was conducted in Swedish.

Daniel is 22 years old and originated from Poland. His mother is from Poland and father from England but he has not had any contact with his dad. Daniel graduated
from high school 2012 and he speaks Swedish, Polish and English. The interview with Daniel was conducted in Swedish.

Gibrill is 20 years of age and descendant of an Eritrean mother and was both raised in Yemen and Sweden. Gibrill speaks Swedish, Tigrinya, Arabic and some English. Gibrill just graduated from high school and the interview with him was conducted in Swedish.

Baba is 19 years old and he is born and raised in Sweden by a Hungarian mother and a Lebanese Father. Baba is still in high school and he is fluent in Swedish, English and Arabic. The interview with Baba was conducted in English.

5.2 Theme 1: Ethnic/ National identity
The answers received from the participants in this study have helped to generate this theme. This theme has generated three different patterns namely: strong sense of ethnic identity, integrated sense of ethnic and national identity and formation of new identity. This theme helped us to gain deeper understanding on how the participants’ experiences have enabled them to relate to their ethnic identities and national identities. “The interrelationship of ethnic and national identity and their role in the psychological well-being of immigrants can best be understood as an interaction between the attitudes and characteristics of immigrants and the responses of the receiving society” Phinney et al. (2001, p: 43).

5.2.1 Strong sense of ethnic identity
This pattern represents those participants that maintain a strong sense of their ethnic identities but have few ties to the national identities. These participants have chosen to identify themselves with either their mothers or fathers ethnic identity instead of the national identity. They are interested in events that occur in their ethnic countries and they also eat food and listen to music from their ethnic countries daily. They interact with people from both their ethnic identities and national identities on a daily basis. They also pointed out that if they were to be successful they would like to give back to their ethnic countries as they feel that their hearts beats for their ethnic countries. Some of the participants speak both their mother and fathers tongue.
fluently while some only speak one of their ethnic tongue. This has also helped these participants to developed strong ties to one of their ethnic identity. When the question of ethnic belongingness was asked Gibrill answered:

“I see myself as Eritrean, even though I was born in Yemen and raised in Sweden, and I understand both the Swedish and Yemenis language and culture very well, but I still have my Eritrean culture at home which follows me everywhere I go, So even if I was born in Sweden I would have still felt like Eritrean because I was born in an Eritrean family and that’s the culture that I have”

From the statement giving by Gibrill one can say that he is aware of his multi-ethnic situation and seems to understand it very well, however he has developed strong ties to only one of his ethnic identities. His Yemenis and national identity is something he cannot identify himself with because of he does not have that culture at home.
Fatima also shared the same reasoning:

“It’s really difficult for me, because apart from Sweden and Ethiopia I also have Eritrea to think of, even though I cannot recall any memories from Eritrea, and it is also difficult to not think that I belong to Sweden, because I live here, grew up here, I work here, went to school here, and also have friends and family here, but my heart beats for Ethiopia, my heart belongs to Ethiopia”

Emotionally Fatima feel like her heart belongs to only Ethiopia even though at times she finds it difficult to really define her ethnic belongingness. When it comes to her national identity, she seems to be aware of it because she was raised in Sweden and the people she considered to be family are all in Sweden with her. Her Eritrean part is just something she mentions to people every now and then.

Given the above statements, there is an indication that these participants have developed strong ties to one of their ethnic identities, but they still have few ties to their national identities. Fatima and Gibrill exhibit in their assertion that they have a full understanding of their national identities. However they feel that they cannot entirely identify themselves with it, even though they know the language, culture and Swedish mentality very well. Research has found that “a strong ethnic identity is typically related to high self-esteem, but only when accompanied by a positive mainstream orientation” (Taylor, 2006, p.103). These participants’ answers to certain questions gave the impression that the host society has received them in positive
manner. But however there is also an indication that they do not seem to see themselves as Swedes.

5.2.2 Integrated sense of ethnic identity and national identity

This pattern represents those participants that seem to have been integrated very well in the Swedish society but also have strong ties to their ethnic identities. These participants have somehow developed strong ties to both their ethnic identities and the national identities. These participants mentioned that they have strong ties towards one of their ethnic identities but they cannot say that their heart fully belongs there; they feel like they also have Sweden to think of. They feel like they share solidarity to both the host society and the ethnic society. These participants have a various mixed of friends, food and music. This group of participants say that they celebrate both Swedish holidays and their ethnic holidays. This group of participants have a very positive mind-set towards their ethnic identities and the national identity. When the same question of ethnic belongingness was asked to Baba he shared a different reasoning:

“Well being that I was born and raised here in Sweden by parents from different ethnic backgrounds, which I identify my self with very much, I still have to say that I am a huge part of the Swedish society because I feel like, I know the norms and the values and also I can blend in very well, as you can see I have a very European looks and sometimes people mistakes me for being Swede because of my appearance, so in short I do identify myself with both”.

Baba seems to have adopted both his mother and father ethnic identities and also the host society’s identity. He gives an indication of being well integrated in his ethnic and national identity as he feels he knows the norms of the national identity very well. His statement also indicates that due to his European looks it is easy for him to blend in to the society. Baba seems to have a very positive view of his ethnic situation.

Daniel is also on a similar line as Baba:

“To be honest I feel accepted in Poland and I feel accepted in Sweden, which also make me feel like half of me belongs to Poland and the other half to Sweden, and it has done me good so far, because I have been given the opportunity to experience both world”
Daniel also gives the same impression as Baba with his statements. Daniel mentions several times that he is lucky to have this mix. He believes that with his foreign background he can blend in everywhere around the world. Interestingly Daniel did not mention his English side. He barely has any understanding of it and he did not showed a sign of being interested in it or connected to it. When ask how do you feel about your English side he answered?

“To be honest that side of me, am not connected to it and I don’t know anything about it, so I cannot say so much about it”

Giving the above statements there is an indication that Daniel and Baba seem to have gained competence to interact and function successfully in both their national and ethnic identities. They seem to have a strong sense of belongingness to both their ethnic and national identities. Daniel gave the impression that his ethnicity consists of both the national identity and one of his ethnic identities which is Polish but not his English side.

5.2.3 Formation of new identity

This pattern represents those participants that have developed weak ties to both their ethnic identities and national identities and chooses to identify themselves with something else. These participants asserted that they do not really care about their ethnic identity or their national identity. This group of participants gave the impression of ethnicity is politically way that tries to differentiate people and devalue people. When question of ethnic belongingness was asked to these participants their answers differ from Baba’s, and Daniel’s. Even though these participants have lived in Sweden since childhood and know their ethnic and national culture, language and norms. There is an impression that they have not fully assumed the roles posed by their various identities. The answers received from these participants indicate that they have understand the fact that are more than one ethnicity but however they are not in favour of being identify by ethnicity. When the question of ethnic identity and national was asked Erica y answered:

“Hmm, it’s really difficult, if one has more than one ethnicity and in my case it becomes more complex, I cannot really say that I belong to this or that ethnic group, because sometimes I feel like a Swede and behave like a Swede more than I think, I have always had this problem to fit in, because of my skin
colour as mentioned earlier, so that’s why I have chosen to be identify with something that don’t judge me for what I am, or who I am and where am from and that’s is Christianity.”

Erica seems finds it really difficult to fit in her national identity or ethnic identity, because of her skin colour. Therefore she has not really developed any strong ties to either her national identity or one of her ethnic identities even though she gave the impression of sometimes being more Swedish than she thinks.

Cindy also shared a similar reasoning:

“I was born in Somalia and raised in Sweden, so to me that feels like am in between, I mean Sweden is like a home to me now and Somalia is my heritage, because I can’t really identify myself 100% in neither of them, I chose to be identified by my religion which is Islam, Islam comes first then my ethnicity.

Amelia is also on the same line as Erica and Cindy:

“As I said earlier, my Lebanese side was something that I learned at home, while the Swedish side was something that I lived through and learned from school, social activities and work, so I cant really say that I belong to neither of them hundred percent, as I believe that my identity doesn’t reside in my ethnicity or culture rather in my faith, the Christian faith”

For this group of participants religion seems to have becomes something they feel like they belong to. Erica, Cindy and Amelia feel that their identity does not really reside in their ethnicity rather in their faith. From their sayings one can say that they do understand their ethnic background and it has breaded confusion for them every now and then. That’s why they have chosen to place their ethnicity in their religious faith. They want people to firstly identify them by their religion and then as member of the world before their ethnicity comes. These participants know the importance of belongingness. Therefore they seek that belonging to something else. According to social identity theory, the search of belonging to a certain group never ends, as identifying with a group is of primary (Stets & Burk 2010). This means that an individual will always seek to find groups that share certain beliefs and values, if this cannot be found forming new groups becomes a factor (Stets & Burk, 2010). This gives us an explanation of why Erica, Cindy and Amelia have decided to be identified themselves with their faith.
We can highlight that the participants above struggle with identity understanding due to the fact that they were brought up at home in a culture that totally differ from that of the dominant culture, which in this case is the Swedish culture. However they also feel that some part of their identities consists of fragments of the dominant culture, which automatically create complex sphere. As asserted by (Berry, 2005) such complexities is inevitable in young adults with foreign background as they grew up where one or two ethnic minority cultures was imposed upon them from their country of origin by the parents and the one outside that is impose on them by school, peers and activities. Previous studies have also shown that, young adults with immigrant background who find difficulties to identify themselves with any group tend to form their own identities in something else, for example music, sports and dance or literature classes (Fangen et al, 2010). The development of weak ties to both the mainstream or dominant culture and ethnic culture elicit a feeling of being at the margin and feelings of being outsiders in both cultures. Because of such complexity and confusion, forming of a new identity becomes a factor, that’s why some of these participants chose to identify themselves with something else, which in this case is religion. This is evident in the statements given by Erica, Cindy and Amelia. Interestingly none of the participants in this study mentioned that they could identify or relate to the national identity.

5.3 Theme 2: Influential Factors
The influential factors theme yielded two patterns, which are influential people and cultural influences, and these patterns also yielded sub patterns, namely relationship with parents/peer groups, respect, collectiveness and dating/family.

5.3.1 Influential People
With this pattern the participants highlighted the significance of being surrounded with people that influence the formation of identities in young individuals with foreign background. Relationships with parents and peers groups appear to be the reoccurring sub patterns in this study in terms of influential people.

A qualitative study that were conducted by (Gibbs, 1998; Root, 1992) has showed that having a connection or affiliation with people who assist young adults with foreign
5.3.2 Relationship with parents/peer groups:

Relationship with parents appears as a recurring pattern. As it seems these relationships influence the understanding of the identities of these young adults with foreign backgrounds. This pattern represents those participants that have highlighted the importance of having parents as influential factors through the process of identity formation understanding. When the question of influential people was asked Amelia stated:

“I grew up with the idea that one inherits their fathers nationality, which means I grew up as Lebanese, so when someone asks me where I am from, I always say Lebanon which is something that I have practiced, partly because in my upbringing Arabic culture has always been the dominant culture”

As the above citation shows, Amelia’s Arabic culture is something she has learnt and came to accept as part of her identity. Her Arabic culture has been the dominated one in her upbringing, which made her Hungarian side to fade away. She has inherited her Arabic side from her father, which gives an impression of patriarchal upbringing. Amelia’s father who seems to be a traditional man seems to also have transferred many traditions to Amelia. Amelia in her citation did not give any indication of her parents trying to influence her to adapt to her national identity. Interesting she did not show impression of her neither being positive or negative towards her upbringing.

Gibrill also stated the importance of parents in understanding of his ethnic identity in relation to his national identity but in a different way:

“Today I had a chat with my mom, I said to her that I am 20 years old now and if you want me to continue living with you, I will do so, but I will also have to contribute in paying the rent and other bills, she just looked at me and laughed and said, Just because you are a Swedish citizen it does not mean that you should start behaving like one, in our culture our children always stay with us and we take care of them no matter what age they are, words like that give me courage and make me relate to her culture more”

This participant seems to have positive attitudes towards his upbringing. From the statement above one can see that this participant is also embracing and idealizing his
ethnic background base on the influence of his mother. However, there is also an indication that Gibrill’s mother somehow seems to have certain reservation about the national identity, which might restrict Gibrill ability to fully embrace or develop understanding about the Swedish national identity. Gibrill seems to come from a group oriented family, which according to Sjögren (2003b) and Ringkvist (2001) may affect his identity development, thinking and the relationship to other people. Furthermore the two researchers also pointed out that in group-oriented societies; the individual is seen primarily as a social creature that is a fused part of a larger unit, namely the family or the community. Family and the community give the individual life-long security and belonging, but also places demands on the individual's devotion to the family. In an individual-oriented society such as Sweden, the individual may be a member of an association or a collective, yet regarded as an independent and responsible person within the association or collective. The individual does not expect to be cared for by other family members as it is in group-oriented societies. The individual relies primarily on the society as a security system.

Fatima also points out the importance of parents in understanding her identity. She stated:

“My experience in Sweden has actually been positive, thanks to my mother. Due to the fact that I still have my Ethiopian traditions and beliefs, which means I was brought up with the Ethiopian culture even though we live in Sweden.

Similarly to Gibrill, Fatima also embraces her ethnic identity and feels happy about it. Fatima’s statement also gives the indication that she has developed an understanding of one of her ethnic identities and have close ties to it, based on the influence of her mother. According Hultgren and Wallentin (1996) parents with foreign background often try to tie their children to their ethnic groups for protecting the family reputation in a group-oriented society. It is the parents and the family that gets the blame if the children’s reputations tend to become bad. This might be the reason why the participants have retained their ethnic culture even though they have grown up in Sweden. Furthermore Herliz (2000) continues to stress that reward for the individual’s good deed goes to the family, but the family is also expected to take the consequences of a failure. Not to bring shame and dishonour on their families become
a major goal for these young adults with foreign background. Interestingly both Fatima and Gibrill did not mention their father’s ethnicity having an influence on them in their upbringing. On the demographic form we could see that both Fatima and Gibrill Fathers have been absent in their upbringing. This gives us an understanding why they only mentioned their mothers as being influential factors instead of their fathers which differs from Amelia.

As it is been highlighted in the above statements, parents are considered to play very significant roles in the understanding process of these young adults with foreign background various identities.

Even though all of them grew up in Sweden and interact with Swedes in schools, work, and other social activities, they have still managed to retain and understand their ethnic identities due to the influence of their parents. Being raised in such home seems to give these young adults a sense of belongingness and understanding of their ethnic identities. However these young adults also seem to have been somehow deprived with the opportunity to fully reach their potential in regards to the understanding of their national identities and also relating to the national identities. For example, the stated solidarity that Fatima and Gibrill portrayed in their statement towards their ethnic identities on the basis of the impact of their parents, gives an indication that they have not being given the opportunity to fully integrate and participate in social activities in the host society they live in. Previous research that was conducted by Patel (2012) shows that young adults with foreign ethnic background that do not have this support around them tend to feel like outsiders in their own ethnic groups, and due to their physical appearance they might find it difficult to fit in or relate to their national identity. However, with parents, their self-identification, and categorization will either improve or deteriorate based on how they were brought up. Parents are very important in a child’s life. Positive relationship between a child and his/her parents helps the child to develop and establish a secure sense of self (Taylor et al, 2006). According to identity theory most knowledge about the self are obtained through socialization (Taylor et al, 2006). The first people that a child socializes with are the parents, who introduced their children to many activities such as participating in ethnical, cultural and religious events, which later become very significant aspects of the self-understanding (Taylor et al, 2006). This group of
participants have grown up with one parent’s ethnic culture being dominated at home mostly the father’s, i.e. if he is around. Interestingly none of these participants mentioned that both of their parents have tried to impose their ethnic identities on them equally, one of their ethnic identities always seems to fade away on their upbringing.

It is very important to have an understanding of one’s ethnic identity, however if the cultural norms of such ethnic identity are being imposed on the young adults exclusively, there is a risk that the young adults might not really integrate or develop an adequate sense of belongingness to the national identity, which might also cause them to face difficulties in their social life.

Another pattern that emerged in our findings is the influence of peer groups. This pattern represents those participants that have been influence by the interaction with peer groups. For example when we asked Baba to describe his circle of friends that he answered:

"I have both Swedish and immigrant friends, but the majority of my friends are of an immigrant background, so sometimes it feels like I have to always try to adjust, it is a theater kind of thing going on you know depending on who I hang with”

One can be lead to assume that Baba has developed feelings of being a role player when he interacts with his Swedish friends, and immigrant friends which means he immediately have to assume a role and live up to that role’s expectations when he meets with his friends from the various ethnicities. According Ringquist (2001) Baba’s situation is not unusual among immigrants’ youths. Many young adults with foreign background tend to find themselves somewhere between two worlds, two normative systems and the need to commute between these identities (Ringquist, 2001). Baba is in a position where he is fluctuating between two worlds and two identities, one when he is with his immigrants’ friends and the one when he is with his Swedish friends. According to identity and social identity theory: identities are situationally activated. In Social identity theory the process of depersonalization occurs when an identity is activated (Stets and Burke, 2000). This means that Baba had to adjust himself to the various groups, in order for him to not feel
depersonalized. The other type of situationally activated can be found in the identity theory, which means that “when an identity is activated, the process of self-verification occurs” (Stets & Burke, 1998 p. 14). This type of situationally activation of identity can also been seen in the statements of Baba.

The same question was asked to Daniel, and his answer was:

“I have very few Swedish friends, most of my friends are from an immigrants background, I feel more at home, welcome and relaxed when I am with my immigrant friends, I think it is because, even though we are from different places and different cultures we kind of like have the same story”

By being around people that portrays a sense of similarities in attitudes and background seems to have made it easier for Daniel to understand and identify himself with such groups even though they are of different ethnic backgrounds. Because he feels like they share the same stories and certain cultural values with most young adults with foreign background. As social identity advocates similarities in cultures, history and values make it easier for an individual to identify him or herself with that group (Stets & Burk, 2010). This gives us an understanding why Daniel is more connected to his ethnic identity than his national identity.

Gibrill share a different reasoning:

“It's very mixed, I actually have friends from all over the world I guess! But, majority of my friends are of course of an immigrants background, but I see them all as my friends’ regardless ethnicity or race”

Majority of Gibrill’s friends are of an immigrant background, but however he puts emphasis on the fact that he does not see or choose his friends by race or ethnicity. Vuckic (2006) stated that most young adults with foreign background that were either born or raised in Sweden often do not see race or ethnicity as an important factor for them in choosing friends. They prefer to be treated or seen as individuals and treat their friends as individual not as for an example, Arabs, Africans or Swedes etc.

As it is obvious from the statements above the majority of the friends of these participants have an immigrant background. However they have also developed a
sense of understanding the distinctions between the groups of friends they interact with.

### 5.4 Theme 3: Influences on lifestyle

This pattern was obtained from the assertions of the participants in this study, which highlighted the impact of culture in their identity understanding and how cultural experiences have shaped the views on ethnic identity in relation to the national identity. The answers obtained highlighted sub patterns that show how the participants navigate their behaviours and thoughts based on their ethnic characteristics. As part of the characteristics of the formation of culture, some of the participant stresses the importance of respect, collectiveness, choice of partner and family as they deemed them to be a very crucial component.

When asked do you see any difference between you and the ethnic swedes Erica answered:

> “I don’t really think there are so much differences between me and the ethnic Swedes, as I feel like I have adjust very well in the society and sometimes people mistake me for being half Swedish because of my skin colour, I mean am half German and half Burundian and was raised in Sweden, the only differences I see is when I meet elder people from an immigrant background, I tend to somehow show more respect to them”

Furthermore a follow up question of how one show respect in Erica ethnic culture was asked she answered:

> “For example in my Burundian culture, we don’t look at elders in their eyes, and that’s a way of showing respect and I still do that when I meet and greet an elder from an immigrant background”

Gibrill also shares a similar reasoning when the same question was asked:

> “Yes I do! In my culture if there is an old person or an elder, we definitely have to show them respect, for example in Sweden young people don’t even give up their sits in buses for elder people, for me that was a chock and continues to bother me even though I have lived here for so long”

Gibrill’s and Erica’s statements indicate that their views on respect based on their ethnic culture carry meanings that differ from the national identities.
When it comes to respect there is an indication that these participants somehow have developed less affinity towards their national identities. These participants also stressed that; the way the act of respect is considered to be in the national identity is not something that they can identify themselves with. But however the term respect has a contextual ambiguity, which means what might be considered to be a respectful act in one context might be consider as disrespectful in another. This can be seen in Erica’s statement, where she have learnt or been raised to show respect to elders by not having eye contact when been spoken to, while in a Swedish context not having eye contact with someone when having conversation might be seen as being disrespectful. There is also an indication from Erica’s statement that she has internalised the distinction between the term respects from the perspective of her ethnic cultural upbringing and the host country. Baba’s way of showing respect by giving his seat for elder on bus might be seen as ageism in a Swedish context, which means one indicates that the person is too old.

5.4.1 Collectiveness versus individualism

Collectiveness versus individualism is another pattern that came up, Fatima for example stated:

“I have grown up to know that here in Sweden; it is a very individualistic society in comparison to where I come from, there! Is togetherness that counts, one cannot just go and do whatever without thinking about how it’s going to affect others in the family”

A similar pattern was found in Daniel’s statement:

“To be honest, my upbringing was more about looking out for each other even if we are family, relatives or not, it is more about togetherness, I was raised by a single mother, and she taught me to always look out for others”

When it comes to collectiveness there is sense of overall understanding that the host society is very individualistic. In reference to the statements asserted by the participants, in terms of collectiveness, there is an indication that the individualistic characteristic of the host society is something that they cannot entirely relate to.
5.4.2 Choice of partner/child rearing

When it comes to the topic of choices of partner and raising children the views from participants are diverse. How does your ethnicity influence your choice of partner and child upbringing?

For example: Amelia answered to the question of choice of partner:

“Well! For me I don’t think ethnicity is not a determinant factor, it could be a Swede or immigrant, what matters is that we share the same values and have the same views of raising children and also have the same views on life, I think it will mostly have to be someone that shares the same belief as me, because I am a Christian”

The same participant answered the question concerning children upbringing:

“I think the values I will impose on my children leans more towards the Swedish values but to certain extent, even though I don’t have total resentment for the values that I was brought up in, I believe the Swedish values are more tolerant and open when compared to the Arabic values that I grew up in.”

Amelia’s statement gives an impression that she believes ethnicity is not a factor in term of choosing a partner. However she has developed an idea of having a partner, who shares her religious values. In terms of child upbringing, there’s an indication that she has developed affinity towards her national identity’s ways of raising children.

Erica answered to the same question concerning choice of partner:

“To be honest I thought I was going to end up with a Swedish guy, but as I grew older my thoughts changed because I got to know myself better and what I wanted in relationships and that is love, so it did not matter anymore if its Swedish or an immigrant, but however I have this feeling that relationships with Swedes are rarely serious”

This participant also answered the question concerning child upbringing

“I will probably blend the positive sides of both values, which are the Swedish and the Burundian values, because I believe both sides have a lot to learn from each other, and for example I will take the
discipline and respect part from the Burundian culture and from the Swedish value I will take the tolerant and openness part."

Erica’s also gives a similar reasoning as Amelia but in a different ways, she mentioned that ethnicity is not a factor in choosing a partner. However she seems to have reservations about dating an ethnic Swede. This gives an impression that Erica has not dated an ethnic Swede before, but she had probably heard rumours about relationships with ethnic Swede being rarely serious. In terms of raising children; Erica has developed affinity towards both her ethnic identity and the national identity, as she believes that the combination of both worlds is important.

Baba also added, concerning the question of choice of partner

“To be honest! Ethnicity doesn’t matter to me really when it comes to dating, however now that I can consider my self being adult, I have started to think that I will like to have a partner who’s values and culture are more similar to mine”

Baba continued to answer the question of children upbringing.

“Well as I said earlier I was raised in a culture that places emphasis on honour and respect and discipline, which differs from the Swedish way of raising children, I mean I wouldn’t want my children to lack any of these, I think my values and beliefs are more towards the Lebanese spectrum and I would like my children to have that as well”

Given the statement asserted by Baba, there is an impression that he idealises to have a partner that mirror his values and culture. In addition, he also wishes his offspring’s to be raised as his values and culture prescribes which leans more to his Lebanese heritage.

Culture as an influential element in the understanding of identities has given a contrasting image in this study. On the basis of the statements asserted by the participants in terms of cultural influences, there’s an impression that these participants has closer tie to their ethnic identities than the national identities. However there’s is also an indication that despite having closer ties to their ethnic identities, there are some aspects of the host society they have understood and
idealised, for instance the openness and tolerance of the host society is something they wish to pass on to their offspring. Previous research that was conducted by (Berry, 2005) has shown that even though some individuals with foreign background tend to retain their ethnic identities, they still have a strong sense of understanding their national identities. Furthermore some individuals see themselves as having “the best of both worlds” and instead of being stuck in confusion they see it as an advantage, which they will later pass on to the next generation. However some assert that ethnicity in the choice of partner does not really matter; interestingly they also admit that they will prefer partners that share the same values and moral judgment which apparently they cannot identify in the host society.

On this note, according to social identity theory, these participants consider themselves to be members in a social group, which is the in-group, which in this case are their ethnic identities. This means that their behaviours are determined and dependent on what they have learned to be feelings, action and thought of others in their ethnic groups composition. The out-group, on this note is considered to be the Swedish society, which gives an indication that these second-generation young adults with foreign background have somehow developed prejudice against and stereotyped.

6. Discussion

The aim of this study was to investigate how second-generation young adults with foreign background can understand their ethnic identities in relation to their national identities. Semi-structured interviews with seven young adults provided us with material that helped us to achieve our aim. The analysis of the data collected was based on the social identity theory, identity theory and previous research. In this study three themes were found: Ethnic identity/National identity and Influential factors and influences on lifestyle, these themes yielded patterns.

In order for us to be able to conduct this study, extensive reading of previous research on this topic was done. We faced difficulties in finding previous research on this specific topic especially currents/recent ones in a Swedish context. But however, the ones we found, we could see similarities and differences in comparison to our result, which will be discussed on this section.
6.1 Result discussion

In regards to the main questions posed by this study, there is an overall understanding that the results yielded, are ambiguous. There is a clear indication that understanding of ethnic identities can have an impact on how second-generation young adults with foreign background relate to others in the societies they live in. Understanding ethnic and national identities can be complex, given the realities of globalisation. We can now say that we live in a globalised world that consists of many different races, religions, ethnicities and cultures. We also live in societies where everything is being categorized or put in boxes, which means we give meaning and reasons to things we can identify. Cultural influences and influential people have been the factors that have contributed greatly in the process of understanding ethnic identity in relation to the host society in this study. Patel (2012) and Phinney (2001) also highlighted the importance of these above-mentioned influential factors in their research on this similar topic. On the basis of influential factors, some participants in the present study have somehow developed an understanding of their ethnic identities and they have also developed a sense of belongingness to certain aspects of the host society, which is similar to Patel (2012) and Phinney (2001) research on this topic. However, even though they have developed understanding of their national identities and ethnic identities and the differences in-between, there’s also an issue of relating to these various identities entirely. For example for those participants that have developed strong sense of identification with their ethnic identity as opposed to the host society, they have also developed affinity toward that ethnic group. As a result relating to the host society and being identify as such seemed unlikely, partly because of their upbringing and how certain characteristics of their ethnicity were imposed upon them by their parents and also how the host society constantly keeps reminding them of their physical differences by asking questions such as: where are you from?, how long have you been living in Sweden?, where are your parents from? etc. Even though they have developed a strong sense of identification and understanding towards their ethnicity, there’s a risk that these individuals might have not been given the chance to fully integrate to the host society which might have giving rise to a number of issues such as the creation of in and out groups, deficiencies in social interaction skills and self-esteem. Interestingly this affinity they that have developed toward their ethnic group has nothing to do with them being discriminated against by the host society.
Some participants have developed an integrated sense of identification with both their ethnic identity and the host society, which means they feel belongingness to the host society and their ethnic identities and they can interact successfully in both. However they feel like they always have to adjust in order for them to fit in these various groups, which might be problematic, as they always have to find different ways to be part of the various groups. The result shows that these participants have also embraced the fact of having multiple sets of cultures influencing them. A similar result can be found in Vuckic (2006) research on this similar topic, which shows that individuals with foreign background tend to often feel belongingness to both their ethnic group and the host society. The author continues to stress that these individuals mostly feel proud of having these sense of belongingness to both groups, which tend to elicit a feeling of having the best of both worlds.

Finally, there were some participants in this study who could not entirely identify themselves and relate to their various identities. However there is an indication that they are aware of the importance of belongingness or being identified with a group, that is why the creation of new identities occurs. Similarly to our study previous research that was conducted by Fangen et al. (2010) has also shown that second-generation young adults tend to create new identities when they cannot identify themselves with either their ethnic identities or the host society.

Our study also shows that some of the participants have been hindered by influential factors such as parents to not fully integrate to the host society, which differs from the previous researches that were included in this study. In addition, some of the participants who cannot identify themselves with either their ethnic identity and relate to the host society have chosen to be identify with something else, which in this case is religion and this also differs from the previous researches mentioned in this study.

6.2 Alternative interpretation of the result

The results of this study could have been interpreted in another way due to our background. Both researchers came to Sweden at an early age and grew up with two cultures prevailing. We came from a foreign country and were raised in Sweden by parents with strong ties to their ethnic beliefs. This could have affected the result,
because personal thoughts and beliefs about certain elements about the Swedish society could have led to biases. For an example, the result could have been that it is the Swedish society’s fault that these young adults with foreign background are not fully integrated to the Swedish society. In addition the result could have also been that holding strong ties to one’s ethnic identity is a positive thing when moving to another country. But, however, we tried to be critical at all of the statements giving by the participants and our biases even though sometimes it was difficult.

6.3 Discussion of methods

In this section we will highlight some of the advantages and disadvantages of conducting this qualitative study. Due to the fact that the aim of this study was to explore how young adults with foreign background understand their ethnic identities in relation to the national identities, the choice of semi-structured interview method seemed suitable. Previous research and literature books on research methods inspired this choice. Initially our intention was to conduct follow up interviews for the sake of reliability and validity. However due to time limitations of both participants and researchers we could only conduct one interview, which might have affected the result. If a follow up interview had been conducted the result in this study could have been different. Another challenge was that some participants could not speak proper English; therefore we had to conduct some of the interviews in Swedish. This entails that we had to translate our interview question to Swedish and later on had to retranslate all the data collected to English, which as result some expressions could have lost their meanings in the interpretation process. Given the fact that we are inexperienced researchers, the selection and inclusion of relevant data in the result and analyses was challenging as well. However, the research guidelines gave us the guide on how to proceed with work on what to include or exclude and also we constantly reminded ourselves about the aim of the study, which helped the inclusion and exclusion process.

Choosing a theory from the beginning was difficult, however social representation theory was the ideal theory that we considered using in this study. But as time went by, after gaining more knowledge on this topic, we realized that social representation theory was not appropriate. However we find out that identity theory and social identity theory were more suiting, so we decided to use both of them and previous
researches as analytical tools for this study. In some parts of our analysis we could not find grounds to use the theories as analytical tool, so previous researches had to be used instead.

6.4 Suggestions for further research

We hope that the findings of this study have laid foundation for further research on this topic, especially in a Swedish context. Some questions emerged during the process of this study that we think are interesting to conduct further research on. For example, how the ethnic Swedes understand their ethnic identities, as it is very evident that in modern times Sweden ethnic diversity is at fast pace rising. Also it is interesting to find out how the ethnic Swedes experience interactions with people from a foreign background and what impacts do these interactions have on their identity understanding and development.
Reference List


http://www.jstor.org/stable/2787127


Appendix 1
Letter of Information

“Understanding Ethnic Identity in relation to National Identity”
“Perspective from second-generation young adults with foreign background”

Hello,

We are two students that are currently studying international social work at the University of Gävle. As part of our education, we are conducting a research under the supervision of professor Fereshteh Ahmadi, in the Department of social work and psychology at the University of Gävle, Sweden.

The purpose of this research is to study how second-generation young adults with foreign background in Gävle, Sweden understands their ethnic identities in relation to national identities. The study will require about 45 minutes of your time to conduct an interview.

Your participation in this study is voluntary, which means that you are not obligated to answer any question that you doubt or that makes you feel uncomfortable, although it be would be appreciated if you would answer all material as openly as possible and you may also withdraw at any time with no effect.

Your response to this interview will be confidential. Only we and other researchers will have access to the material gathered. The material may also be published in professional journals or presented at scientific conferences, however all eventual presentations will be of general findings and will never breach individual confidentiality. A copy of the finding in this study will be at your disposal if such interest arises.

If there are any questions or concerns about the study participation please contact booky10@hotmail.com or koroma_63@hotmail.com
Appendix 2
Consent Form

Name of participant: ________________________________________

-I have read the Letter of Information and I have been provided with satisfactory answers to my questions.

-I understand that I will be a participant in the research study called “Understanding Ethnic Identity in relation to National Identity”. I understand that this means that I will be asked to answers some questions relating to the study.

-I understand that my participation in this study is voluntary and I may withdraw at any time.

I understand that the researchers of this study will make every effort to maintain confidentiality of gathered data at all time.

-I am aware that if I have any questions, concerns, or complaints, I may contact Umaru Kamara, booky10@hotmail.com or Charles Koroma at koroma_63@hotmail.com or project supervisor, Dr. Fereshteh Ahmadi, at fereshteh.ahmadi@hig.se

I have read the above statements and freely consent to participate in this research:

Date ________________

Signature interviewee _________________________

Clarification of signature ______________________________

Signature responsible interviewer ____________________________

Clarification of signature ______________________________
Appendix 3

**Demographic Form**

Instructions: Please answer to each item by filling the appropriate blank space. If you have any questions, please ask the researchers.

Name ________________

Female _______ Male _______

Age ________

Place of birth __________________

If not in Sweden, how long have you lived in Sweden _________

Nationality ____________________

Ethnicity ______________________

Siblings: yes ____ No ___

What language or languages do you speak? ______________________

**Parents:**

Ethnicity: Mother ___________ Father ___________

Language: Mother ___________ Father ___________

How long have they lived in Sweden: Mother _______ Father ______

Thank you for your participation
Appendix 4

Thesis interview questions:

1. Where do your parents come from?
2. Do you speak their language? If yes how well do you speak? Understand? Write?
3. Do you have relatives in Sweden? If yes do you interact with them?
   - How often?
4. How does your ethnicity influence your life style?
   - Food
   - Choice of partner
   - Choice of music
5. If Sweden were to enter into competitions with any of your ethnic background country, which of the country would you support?
6. How does your circle of friends look like? Please explain
   - Majority of friends?
   - Swedish?
   - Immigrants?
   - Mix?
   - Other? Could you explain why?
7. How do you define your ethnic identity? Swedish or other?
8. What have other people around you and society categorized you as?
9. With what ethnic group do you share attitudes and beliefs?
10. How does your experience in Sweden impact the way you feel about yourself?
11. How do you want people to identify you? As Swedish or?
12. Have you faced any obstacle that has hindered your ability to interact with other people of different ethnic background? If yes, how did you overcome these obstacles?
13. Have you ever been discriminated because of your ethnic background? If yes please explain
14. Do you see any differences between you and the ethnic Swedes? If yes, in which way?
15. What are the advantages and disadvantages of having two or more set of cultures prevailing?
16. When traveling abroad, which nationality do you represent? Please explain why?
17. Where do you consider home? And why?

Thank you for your participation
Appendix 5

Copy of the study: Interest form

Should you be interested, you are entitled to a copy of the findings. I would like to receive a copy of the summary of the main findings?

◊ Yes ◊ No

If yes
Name:
Address:
E-mail:
Researcher’s declaration:
We have provided all of the related information to the research participant to the best of our knowledge.
Name:
Signature:
Date:

Again, thank you. Your interest in participating in this research study is deeply appreciated.