Linking Self and Society:
Identity and the Immigrant Experience in Two Macro-Contexts

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to compare identity processes associated with the immigrant experience in two macro-contexts, the U.S and Sweden. Using a qualitative narrative approach, we explored how immigrant and non-immigrant youth negotiate their identities in the intersection between individual selves and society, by studying how they experience deviations from societal expectations and whether such deviations were associated with alternative group belonging. The sample consisted of 59 narratives written by 1st and 2nd generation immigrants and non-immigrants (age 16-25). Results indicated that the U.S. participants were more likely to define themselves using racial and multi-ethnic categories, whereas Swedish participants relied on national labels. Additionally, U.S. participants showed clear evidence of deviations from societal norms, but also found belonging in social groups from those deviations. Swedish participants showed some deviations, but little evidence of group belonging. The findings highlight the contextual nature of identity development within an immigrant context.

Keywords: immigrant experience, ethnic identity, narrative, macro-context

Due to global migration the experience of growing up as an immigrant will be shared by many young people worldwide. Never before has there been a greater need to understand how, when, and why individuals acculturate and how they negotiate their everyday experiences in culturally diverse contexts (Ward, Tseung-Wong, Szabo, Qumseya, & Bhowon, 2018). A question that arises is whether there is a shared immigrant experience regardless of context, or whether the meaning of such an identity differs due to factors associated with the context. In the present study, we employ a narrative approach to explore how young people negotiate and make meaning of their experiences in two macro-contexts, the U.S and Sweden. Studying the ways young people experience that their stories deviate from what is expected and perceived as normal, we sought to understand how people identify, the meaning they make of their identities, and how identities are negotiated in the particular macro-context. By including both immigrant and non-immigrant youth, we can separate the immigrant experience from general identity processes, and by comparing narratives in two macro-contexts we can understand how social and cultural expectations inform and constrain the identities that are perceived as possible (Way & Rogers, 2015), and the meanings of such identities at the individual level. Thus, a core foundation of our study is that the meaning of an identity can only be fully understood in the intersection between self and society (McLean & Syed, 2015).

Immigrant Identities at the Intersection of Self and Society

Acculturation is a broad psychological process of second culture acquisition in the domains of behaviors, values and identities (Schwartz, Unger, Zamboanga, & Szapocznik, 2010). A great deal of the research on acculturation in psychology has been rooted in Berry's (1980) acculturation strategies model, which examines individuals' relative orientation to the host culture and the culture of origin. Taking the two together creates a four-class typology that corresponds to momentary strategies individuals adopt: integrated/bicultural (oriented to

both heritage and host culture), assimilated (host culture but not heritage), separated/traditional (heritage but not host), and marginalized (oriented towards neither) (Berry, 2003; Phinney & Devich-Navarro, 1997). There has been substantial work examining the relative benefits of these different strategies, with meta-analytic studies suggesting that a bicultural/integrated strategy is the most adaptive psychologically (Nguyen & Benet-Martinez, 2013; Yoon et al., 2013).

Whereas these studies have been useful for generating broad knowledge of how people adjust to a new culture and their associated adjustment, the focus has often been on a broad “acculturation” concept. As noted, acculturation spans the domains of behaviors, values, and identities. Moreover, these domains are associated with at least two cultural orientations, host and heritage, with recent research demonstrating additional cultural orientations that youth negotiate within our globalized world (Ferguson & Adams, 2016; Ferguson, Costigan, Clarke, & Ge, 2016). To provide specificity, we focus specifically on the identity domain.

Identity is particularly important from a developmental perspective. Identity formation is a key developmental task, and though it is a process across the lifespan, it is the main task of adolescence and early adulthood (Erikson, 1968). Developing an identity includes creating a coherent sense of self across time, place, and situations, and to integrate all parts of the identity (Syed & McLean, 2016), including an ethnic identity. This is a task for everyone, but can be extra demanding and complex for youth with immigrant backgrounds as they are also going through the process of acculturation (Schwartz et al., 2010). Building on Erikson’s seminal theory, Phinney (1990) has defined ethnic identity as one’s sense of self as a member of an ethnic group and the feelings and that accompany such membership. The formation of ethnic identity is seen as people’s exploration of their own ethnicity, what meaning, expectations and knowledge ethnicity brings to their understanding of themselves. In other

words, ethnic identity develops through lived experiences in a societal context that can then be integrated into the self-concept (Phinney & Ong, 2007; Umaña-Taylor et al., 2014).

A contextualized understanding of how ethnic identities develop among immigrants requires taking a comparative approach. And, indeed, a great deal of research in this tradition has been cross-national. For example, the large-scale International Comparative Study of Ethnocultural Youth (Berry, Phinney, Sam & Vedder, 2006) compared acculturation strategies and adaptation across 13 countries and the Parenting Across Cultures Project examined processes associated with acculturation across 9 countries (Deater-Deckard et al., 2018). Despite the fact of these cross-national studies, there has been a dearth of *contextualized* cross-national studies of identity processes, studies that closely examine how identities develop within a particular cultural context.

To be sure, there have been numerous contextualized studies of the acculturation process, but they have tended to be context-specific. For example, Benish-Weisman (2009) conducted a qualitative narrative study of immigrants to Israel from the former Soviet Union, highlighting the dynamic relation between pre-immigration and post-immigration selves, and the importance of individuals developing a coherent narrative of their immigration experience. Other studies have taken a within-country, comparative, and contextualized approach. For example, Moffitt, Juang, and Syed (2018) compared how White and Turkish Germans conceptualized their national identities, highlighting how the national label “German” remains largely inaccessible to those from Turkish backgrounds, even when born in Germany. Whereas these studies have many strengths, there is an additional need for comparative cross-national studies that are also contextualized. Such studies have great utility as they can help to identify the aspects of acculturation that are common across contexts and those that are specific to a given context. Some relevant studies have attempted to draw links between societal and individual level factors, using “objective” markers of societal context

(see Syed, Juang, & Svensson, 2018). For example, Yağmur and van de Vijver (2012) examined acculturative processes of Turkish immigrants in four countries that differed in terms of attitudes and policies related to immigrants and/or diversity, testing for differences in individual-level attitudes across the four countries. This is an important and useful approach, but there is a need for understanding societal-individual link from a more dynamic perspective.

Stating the need for acculturation research to examine the link between individuals and societies is much easier than actually doing so. Understanding identities within a national context runs the risk of relying on simplistic and reductionist models of national context such as those that conceptualize national value systems or cultural selves in binary terms (e.g., Hofstede, 1980; Markus & Kitayama 1991; for critiques see Matsumoto, 1999 and Syed & Kathawalla, 2018). Recently McLean and Syed (2015) developed the Master Narrative Framework as a broad model for understanding identity development in a way that is contextualized by culture, politics, and history. The framework focuses on how individual identities are the joint product of *master narratives*, which are culturally shared stories that provide guidance on thoughts, behaviors, and identities, and *alternative narratives*, which are stories of resistance and deviation from what is expected or normative.

A key feature of the Master Narrative Framework is that a useful way to understand contextualized identities is through *deviations* (McLean et al., 2017). As individuals express the ways they deviate from what is expected, how they are different and potentially marginalized from others, we learn about the complexities of what it means to fit in within a culture. Deviations thus illustrate how societal structures constrain the possibilities for identity development, through the social sanctions that come with them (McLean, Shucard, & Syed, 2016), and thereby emphasizing that the power and personal agency of constructing a personal narrative is not equally distributed (McLean & Syed, 2015). Additionally,

developing an identity includes understanding who one is in relation to the larger group (Erikson, 1968). If one's story deviates from the stories of the majority, then identity work involves needing to deal with explaining that deviation, and to find others who share that deviating story, like smaller groups or subgroups (McLean et al., 2017). In other words, examining deviations provides insights into how individuals find belonging when they do not fit in with the mainstream, and deviations can inform us of not only *how* they find belonging, but *where* they find belonging. This is a core question of the present study.

Contrasting Sweden and the U.S.

At the macro level, Sweden and the U.S. are similar in many ways. Both countries are industrialized, with a majority White population, and with main immigrant groups originating from developing regions. In both countries, there have been growing nationalist anti-immigrant sentiments in recent years, and the rhetorical climate has toughened. At the same time, Sweden and the U.S. makes an interesting theoretical contrast. There are major differences in the two countries' macro ideologies about immigration and race/ethnicity. Whereas as Sweden is a more multiculturally-oriented society, with official policies aimed at supporting integration and bicultural identities, the U.S. is a more assimilationist-oriented society, with policies aimed at converting newcomers to "become American" and shed ties with their culture of origin.

What is quite interesting is that these societal level characteristics do not map on to what has been observed in the two countries at the individual level. In Sweden immigrant youth struggle to identify themselves as bicultural (Gyberg et al., 2018; Svensson et al., 2018), whereas doing so is commonplace in the U.S (e.g., Kiang, Perreira, & Fuligni, 2011). Thus, there appears to be a mismatch in the two countries between societal level values and beliefs and individual identities. We provide more details about the two contexts below to substantiate this mismatch.

The Swedish Macro-Context of Immigration. Sweden is a country of immigration. In 2016, approximately 29% of the current residents had at least one parent born outside of Sweden (Statistics Sweden [SCB], 2016a) and, besides the Nordic countries, most immigrants originate mainly from Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia, Eritrea, and Syria (Statistics Sweden, 2016b). There are important contradictions when describing Sweden at the macro-level. While tolerance of immigrants is generally high (Demker, 2016), there has been a recent polarization in attitudes toward immigration and political movements. In the most recent election in 2018, a right-wing party with roots in Nazi ideologies, the Swedish Democrats, was the 3rd largest party with 17.5% of the votes. Similarly, there is an official aim of integration, and Sweden has been ranked as having the most integration-friendly policies out of 38 countries around the world (with an index of 78 out of a maximum of 100, MIPEx, 2015). At the same time, residential segregation along the lines of immigrants and non-immigrants is high (Pettersson, 2003), and official data on discrimination, employment, and educational levels suggests that integration is more a formal aim than a reality in Sweden today. Thus, there is simultaneous support for both pro- and anti-immigrant movements in Sweden today.

The concepts of race and ethnicity are not pronounced in Sweden. Partly due to historical reasons race has biological and essentialist meanings and is seldom discussed. As a result, there is a strong reluctance to acknowledge the role of phenotypic differences (Hübinette & Tigervall, 2009). Ethnicity is also not well-defined or commonly used, and only relatively recently have the concepts of racialization and ethnification been introduced to recognize the imbalance of power and structural discrimination because of phenotypic variability (Wikström, 2009). More often, there is an immigrant/non-immigrant dichotomy where the constructed category of “immigrants” is contrasted and negotiated against “Swedes” (Gyberg et al., 2018; Lundström, 2007).

There is also contradiction in the labels used at the macro-level and the way people in Sweden identify and define themselves. Youth in Sweden have been found to resist simplistic, either-or-views of ethnic belonging (Johansson & Olofsson, 2011) and to describe complex and multicultural identities (Ålund, 1997). However, these bi-cultural identities are often denied and questioned, supporting a dichotomous view of ethnic identities at the macro-level in the Swedish context (Svensson, Berne, & Syed, 2018). Also, discrimination and different forms of racism, often because of not “looking Swedish enough” or being non-White, have been found to restrict the self-defined ethnic identities and their meanings, of youth with immigrant background in Sweden (Gyberg et al., 2018).

The American Macro-Context of Immigration. The U.S. is often referred to as “a nation of immigrants” owing to its colonial history that led to hundreds of years of both voluntary and involuntary migration. In 2016, approximately 25% of the current residents had at least one parent born outside of the U.S., with immigrants primarily coming from Asia (30%), Mexico (27%), and other countries in Latin America (25%) (U.S. Census Bureau, 2016). Despite the history of migration, there have long been laws and policies used to restrict immigration from certain parts of the world. For example, the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882, the Immigration Act of 1924, and most recently, the Executive Order officially titled, Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States, more colloquially known as the “Muslim Travel Ban.” In the latest MIPEX (2015) ranking, the U.S. was rated as number 9 out of the 38 countries, with an index of 63. Moreover, the U.S. has no overarching policies aimed at facilitating integration of immigrants. Despite these policies (or lack thereof), attitudes towards immigrants in the U.S. remains positive (Pew Research Center, 2019). In contrast to Sweden, however, the U.S. is an assimilationist nation, wherein immigrants are expected to shed ties with their culture of origin and “become American.” This can be seen through the widespread promotion of English-only education and the popular

use of the “melting pot” metaphor to immigration, signaling that when one comes to the U.S. their past history becomes unimportant and they should blend in with the broader culture (Rumbaut, 2015).

Concepts of race and ethnicity are central to the past, present, and future of the U.S., and have long been closely related to immigration policies and procedures (see Hochschild, 2005, for an excellent review). Racism was baked into the founding of the country, with the U.S. Constitution defining African American slaves as constituting only three-fifths of a person for the purpose of governmental representation. Race has played a role throughout the history of the country, making it a salient and much-discussed aspect of everyday life, which is quite different from the context of Sweden. Indeed, the idea of racial classifications and associated meanings is something that children in the U.S. become aware of at a very early age, indicating that societally defined “groups” are widely recognizable (Brown & Bigler, 2005). The positive side of these salient groups is that they provide sites of belonging within a diverse society (Rivas-Drake et al., 2014). Individuals from marginalized racial/ethnic groups may be aware that they do not fit in with the mainstream, but there are ready-made alternative groups that they can identify with.

In sum, while similar in many ways, there are two major differences between the U.S. and Sweden with respect to the current research. As noted, there are differences in both societal policies towards immigrants and evidence of variations in how youth are able to develop group-based identities. Taking this latter observation further, evidence suggests that group definition is more vague in Sweden compared to the U.S., which may make deviations less clear and it may be more difficult to develop an alternative identity.

By applying a narrative framework on the immigrant experience, we can explore how youth with immigrant backgrounds experience deviations from the norm, or the expected story, and thereby understand what it means to be an immigrant within a particular context.

Studying two socio-cultural macro-contexts with different history, politics, and ideologies and comparing the stories written, we can explore how the macro-context is shaping the identities constructed and the identities shaping the meaning and understanding of the macro-context (Way & Rogers, 2015). Further, in order to separate the immigrant experience from general identity processes non-immigrant groups were included in both macro-contexts.

The Present Study

The purpose of this study was to compare identity processes associated with the immigrant experience in two macro-contexts, the U.S and Sweden. By doing so we seek to understand the relationship between individuals and their cultural contexts by studying the narratives of ethnicity formed in the intersection between self and society. By studying how people experience that their stories deviate from what is expected and perceived to be normal, we can understand the ways in which people identify, the meaning of their identities, how and where they find belonging, and how identities are negotiated in the particular macro-context. Viewing identities and the macro-context as tightly bound together, with the macro-context shaping the identities constructed and the identities shaping the meaning and understanding of the macro-context (McLean & Syed, 2015; Way & Rogers, 2015). Given the historical differences, current policies and political movements in the two macro-contexts studied, we expect to find that the stories and identities of young people differ between the two contexts, but also similarities due to the shared experience of being adolescents/emerging adults, and of having multiple identities and cultures.

The aim of the study was addressed through the following research questions:

1. How do Swedish and American youth with different immigrant statuses describe their self-defined ethnicities?

2. How do these youth make sense of, negotiate, and internalize the societal context in their personal stories of their ethnicity? In particular, in what ways do they feel they deviate from society, and in doing so do they find a sense of belonging?

Method

Participants & Procedure

Participants in this study consisted of 59 late adolescents and young adults; 30 from the U.S. and 29 from Sweden. The two samples were matched in terms of age, gender, immigrant status, and similar countries of origin. The participants' and their caregivers' countries of birth are presented separately for each sample in Table 1. Below we describe each sample, in turn.

U.S. sample. Data were drawn from the Ethnicity in Everyday Experiences Study, a multi-site project focused on ethnicity and identity among university students (for details see Syed et al., 2011 and Mitchell et al., 2018). Data were collected from two universities on the U.S. West Coast and one university in the U.S. Midwest. The current sample was selected from the 460 participants in the Midwest sample ($M_{age} = 20.33$, $SD = 3.59$). A subsample of 30 participants was drawn for the current analysis: 10 who were born outside of the U.S. and whose parents were born outside of the U.S. (first generation immigrants), 10 who were born in the U.S. but whose parents were born outside of the U.S. (second generation immigrants), and 10 who were born in the U.S. and whose parents were born in the U.S (non-immigrants). Although not the primary focus of the study, the non-immigrant group was included in order to examine whether observed phenomena were general identity processes or specific to immigrant populations. The non-immigrant group was restricted to participants self-identifying as White and/or European heritage in order to more closely match the nature of the Swedish data. Additionally, the two immigrant sub-samples were selected based on countries of origin that are also prevalent in Sweden (e.g., East African and Middle Eastern). Participants ranged in age between 16 and 25, with a mean age of 19.67 ($SD = 1.79$) in the

subsample. Each of the three groups was split evenly between men and women. Those born outside of the U.S. had been in the country between 5-21 years ($M = 13.10$, $SD = 4.80$).

Following ethics approval, data collection was conducted in a quiet laboratory setting on a university campus. Participants completed a survey hosted by Qualtrics consisting of numerous open-ended and rating-scale measures, mostly pertaining to ethnicity and identity (for details see Syed et al., 2011 and Mitchell et al., 2018). All surveys were completed in a quiet, private space, with a research assistant on hand to respond to any questions. Participants were recruited through the department's subject pool, and thus received course credit for participation.

Swedish sample. Data was drawn from a larger project designed to examine ethnicity and identity among adolescents and young adults in Sweden—the Gothenburg Research on Ethnicity-related Experiences and identity Narratives (GREEN) study (Gyberg et al., 2018). Data were collected at upper secondary education and universities in the West and South of Sweden. To get an ethnically diverse sample, schools and classes were selected based on official data of immigrant status of the students. The total sample consisted of 719 participants ($M_{age} = 20.46$, $SD = 5.29$).

The current sample was selected out of the 211 participants (29% of total sample) who were randomized to answer the ethnic narrative prompt analyzed in the present study. Nine were themselves born in another country (one was adopted and excluded from the current analyses), 10 were born in Sweden but with both parents born in another country, and 10 were born in Sweden, with both parents born in Sweden. This resulted in a sample of 29 participants, ranging in age between 16 and 25, with a mean age of 18.38 ($SD = 2.72$). Of them, 14 identified as female and 15 as male. Nineteen attended gymnasium (high school) and 10 attended the university. Those born in another country had lived in Sweden for between 5 and 14 years ($M = 9.43$, $SD = 3.31$).

Following ethics approval data collection was administered by trained research assistants who informed participants about the aim and ethics of the project, that participation was voluntary and anonymous, and that participation could be withdrawn at any time. Participants either filled out a paper-and-pen questionnaire during school hours or received a link to an online-questionnaire to conduct during their free time. The total questionnaire took about 40 min to complete.

Measures

Demographics. All participants were asked about their gender in an open-ended question, age, own country of birth, and country of birth of both caregivers. Those born in another country than Sweden/the U.S. were also asked about number of years in the country.

Self-defined Ethnicity. The participants defined their own ethnicities by answering an open-ended question. In the U.S. sample the question was, “What racial/ethnic group or groups do you identify with? (please list as many as you feel are important to who you are).” In the Swedish sample, due to the unfamiliarity with the concept of ethnic identities, a sample definition was given both orally and written in the questionnaires, saying; “Everyone has an ethnic belonging. A person can have more than one ethnic identity. Examples of ethnic identities are Sami, Bosnian and Swedish. Every person decides his or her ethnic belonging” (Diskrimineringsgrunderna, 2012), followed by the requested to list the ethnic identity/identities that the participants identity with.

Ethnic Narrative Prompt. The narrative part of the study was an adapted version of a prompt used in previous studies to explore the ethnicity-related narratives (Syed & Azmitia, 2008, 2010). The participants were asked to recall and write about a time in their lives, positive or negative, when they became aware of their ethnicity and to describe the event in detail, as well as how they felt, how they reacted, how they resolved, handled or made sense

of the event, and whether the event affected how they think about, or their view of ethnic identities in general or their own ethnic belonging specifically.

Plan of Analyses & Coding Procedure

The self-defined ethnic identity open-ended question was summarized separately for each sample, and then compared in order to explore differences and commonalities. The Swedish narratives were translated into English, and cleaned up in terms of language for sake of clarity. Both authors coded all narratives according to the coding system below. The codes were compared and discussed. Interrater reliabilities for all categories were within acceptable range (Intraclass correlations = .90, .79, .76, and .85).

Coding System. We used an adapted version of the coding system by McLean and colleagues (2017) and coded each narrative for the presence and elaboration of a deviation. A deviation was coded for when the narrator expressed a sense of feeling different from what is expected, normal, or valued. We used a code of 1 to 4, based on the level of elaboration (i.e., degree of presence), as well as the level of agency expressed in the narrative. Agency then refers to the power of constructing an alternative narrative (McLean et al., 2017). A rating of 1 indicated that a deviation was not present at all, a rating of 2 was coded when there was very minimal/suggestive evidence of an underdeveloped deviation, the code 3 indicated a clearly present deviation that was only somewhat developed or, if developed, lacking in agency. Finally, a rating of 4 indicated a clear and coherent and deviation that was both elaborated and with a clear expression of agency (McLean et al., 2017). Sample cases of the codes are presented in Table 2.

We also coded all narratives for the degree of perceived connectedness to a larger group or other individuals who share a similar deviation. Alternative narratives might be shared with a minority group or subgroups of the majority groups (McLean et al., 2017), and can thus reflect both the immigrant and the non-immigrant sample. Perceived connectedness

was coded to using a scale of 1 to 3 where 1 indicated no connection, 2 indicated a brief or vague reference, minimal connection, or very few people mentioned, and 3 indicated a clear connection to a larger group(s).

Qualitative Analyses. All narratives were summarized for the link between society and self. These summaries and the codings guided the qualitative analyses. First, each sample was analyzed separately for the societal-individual link, and patterns between the three immigrant status groups were compared. The two samples were then compared, and differences and similarities were identified. Sample narratives were selected to illustrate the results.

Results and Discussion

The first research question concerned the adolescents' self-defined ethnic identities. By studying the way people label and identify themselves, we sought to understand differences in the societal views of ethnic identities and ethnic belonging. All self-defined ethnic identities are presented in the far right column of Table 1, separately for the Swedish and American sample, and divided by the three immigrant status groups.

Comparing the self-defined ethnicities between the U.S. and the Swedish sample some salient differences can be seen. Five differences are particularly notable. First, many participants in the U.S sample provided multiple labels to identify themselves, which both included people with multiple ethnic heritages (e.g., Italian, Irish, Croatian) and those who provided responses at different levels of hierarchy (e.g., ethnic specific "Hmong" and pan-ethnic "Asian American"). Second, in the U.S sample there is prevalent use of "hyphenated identities" wherein an ethnic or national origin is used to modify the national identity of "American" (e.g. Egyptian-American, African-American), while in the Swedish sample the word "and" is more often used to combine an ethnic identity and "Swedish". Third, despite the use of hyphenated-American labels, there is a general lack of using a standalone American label; only one participant used "American" on its own. This is in stark contrast with the

Swedish sample where participants, especially non-immigrants, used the national label “Swedish.” Fourth, the self-defined identities written by the Swedish participants are more factual compared to the U.S sample, and concerned things like place of birth, place of settlement, and formal and official criteria (being a citizen, “on paper”). Finally, and perhaps most notably, is the widespread use of racial labels in the U.S. sample (e.g., African American, Middle-Eastern), which are completely absent in the Swedish sample.

The Societal- Individual Link in the Narratives

The second research question concerned the link between the society and the personal identity. Viewing narratives as constructed within and intervened with the society, we coded the written narratives for the presence of experiencing a deviation, and the presence of a group with which the deviation was shared. Frequencies of the coding procedure are presented in Table 3, for the Swedish and U.S sample respectively, and are described and compared below.

U.S. Sample. All but one participant wrote a narrative that included some degree of deviation, with just about half of the participants (14/30) clearly articulated a deviation from others (i.e., a 3 or 4 on the scale). Although these came from all three groups, they were most heavily weighted towards the immigrant groups: six were first generation, five second generation, and three non-immigrant. In terms of presence of a shared group, all but two of the 14 identified a group, with eight clearly indicating a group and five vaguely implying a group. The remaining 15 who described a mild deviation (i.e., coded as 2) were also less likely to link their deviation to a shared group: three of these clearly indicated a group, five vaguely indicated a group, and eight did not indicate a group.

Based on these codes we looked closer at the narratives at the extreme end: the two narratives that included an elaborated deviation, with agency, and a clear reference to a group. The first was written by a first generation immigrant, with a self-defined ethnicity of “White

Caucasian, Bulgars, Slavic”. The narrative describes an event happening right after moving to the US:

It was in the first week of my school-life in the USA. Everyone was talking and laughing while I could barely understand them and they were all giving me weird looks. Once I started making friends, I realized that people here are different than in Bulgaria. I had expected it because I am new to a new country and new culture. I went with the flow and things got good soon enough. I started talking to people, introducing myself. Some people were interested in the foreign kid, others tried to show their American pride and how they are better than everyone else. My accent was hard to overcome but some people were really friendly and life went on. At first I was discouraged and scared. But then when things got better, I became more confident....ever since then, I have compared the viewpoints and lifestyles of Americans and Bulgarians and I must say that I am happy to be from Bulgaria and relish any opportunity I have to go back there.

The narrator expresses a clear sense of not fitting in with the norm and needing to negotiate that experience, but also feeling able to do so which leads to a successful resolution of the tension. Moreover, not only does he feel like he has groups with which he can identify (American and Bulgarian), but he has clarity of the meaning of these groups and imbues his ethnic identity with positive affect.

A similar sentiment was communicated in the second narrative, which included an elaborated deviation with agency and a clear reference to a group, written by a 2nd generation woman who self-identified as Caucasian and Middle Eastern:

We were talking about what our summer plans were and I said I was going to visit the motherland. They were shocked that I was going to go at a time of such political volatility and they continued to ask me about the situation there. "Do you feel safe when you walk alone? Do the males always "cat-call" you? Is everyone there dressed in all black?" (They were referring to the Islamic hijab). I had to go on to explain every little aspect of the culture. I was shocked that they knew so little about the Middle East and what they did know was incredibly biased and untrue. I tried to enlighten them and show them pictures and help them grasp what it is like to live there. [I felt] A little disheartened that so few people know anything about the beauty of the region where the civilization flourished.

In both of these narratives there is a demonstration of a lack of knowledge and/or acceptance by the receiving culture, which relies on ignorance and stereotypes, although in

these cases not apparently ill-intentioned. This general attitude of individuals in the receiving culture leads to clear feelings of deviation among those from immigrant families; that being non-American is not normal, even for those from the 2nd generation who were born in the U.S. At the same time, however, they are able to find not only a sense of belonging with a group, but associate that belonging with a sense of pride. This observation dovetails with the work in the U.S. on ethnic/racial identity, which has been consistently linked to positive psychological adjustment among ethnic minorities (see meta-analysis by Rivas-Drake et al., 2014).

The previous two cases were those on the extreme side, those with elaborated deviations, evidence of agency, and clear expressions of a group with which they belong. Additionally, the first case was of an immigrant from (Eastern) Europe, which is a less stigmatized immigrant group in the U.S. However, other participants had clearly elaborated deviations and group-belonging, but did not evidence a strong sense of agency. A 2nd generation Latino/Mexican male discussed feeling connected to his group through engaging in collective action against anti-immigration policies; a 2nd generation Hmong female described an experience of discrimination from a friend's mom that brought into greater relief that being Asian was an important part of who she was; a 1st generation Black/African female who felt discriminated against by her African American peers, helping her understand that she identified more strongly as "African" rather than "African American." What is common among all these cases, and prevalent in the U.S. data, is that when deviations occurred there was often a shared experience with a broader group that helped individuals find belonging even when not fitting in.

Swedish Sample. In contrast to the U.S. data, almost half of the narratives (10/29) did not include any degree of deviation at all (code 1), and an additional 9 participants described a vague deviation (i.e. coded as 2). In total 9 participants articulated a deviation, and of them 3 expressed a clear deviation (code 4) of which one was 1st generation immigrants and two were

2nd generation. The perceived group connectedness was also low. In total 19 participants described no group connection at all, 8 participants vaguely expressed sharing their deviation with a group, and only two clearly indicated a group connectedness. Both of them were 2nd generation immigrants.

Looking more closely at narratives based on the codes, we can see that the three narratives including a clear deviation show some similarities. The first includes a clearly articulated deviation with agency, and is written by a first generation immigrant, 17-year-old male, identifying as “Swedish and Lebanese”:

I have always known my ethnic affiliation, I have not been Swedish in many people's eyes since I am not born here, but it does not change the picture I have of myself. But it wasn't until I was 9 when I was called “immigrant” for the first time and it was about then everything fell into place as well, then I started thinking about it more. Felt different and excluded, because I wasn't like everyone else.

The narrative illustrates the experience of not being seen as Swedish because of country of birth, being excluded and deviating by not being like the others. It is also supportive of the more factual, formal criteria on which identification is negotiate, which was visible in the self-defined ethnic identity data. Despite the clear deviation, there is only a vague group connection, being ascribed group membership to “immigrants” but not describing any feelings of connectedness to that group, or any other group.

The immigrant category is present also in the other two narratives where a clear deviation was articulated, both written by 2nd generation immigrants. Both narratives share the same group, the constructed “immigrants”, but in two very different ways. The first narrative, written by a 17 year old male, 2nd generation immigrant, self-identifying as “Swedish”;

Split from my old friends who were criminals. I didn't feel that I fit into that group because they did things that I didn't really like to do. In addition, I have brought with me a lot of prejudices about how people with immigrant backgrounds behave when they are not born in Sweden and that makes me become a bit racist towards my own ethnic group. [I] started to hang out with people with the same attitude as me (like to party and do not use slang)

In this narrative, the young man is negotiating his personal identity against the societal image of the “criminal immigrant man”, which he does not identify with. There is a reference to a group of some sort (“people with the same attitude as me”) but that group is not defined in any socially meaningful way, in terms of shared experience. The second narrative, on the other hand, written by a 16 years old, 2nd generation immigrant female, self-identifying as “being from the Serbian Republic of Bosnia” expresses the “immigrant” as her in-group with which she feels connected. She talks about her group as “Blatte girls”, where Blatte is derogatory slang for “immigrants” that has been “claimed” and turned into a positive in-group identity (Jonsson, 2013):

I might have felt that I had a different ethnic background and felt a little different when I started high school. Before I had only been with "immigrants" because I live in an area where the majority are immigrants and during the whole compulsory school there had been two Swedes in my class but only one at a time. I never felt that it was anything different with my ethnic background because most people had differences so you saw it as normal. And my best friend and many other friends had the same ethnic background (maybe not the same religion but ethnic background). I think that also contributed to the fact that I did not feel different before. But when I came to high school and started in my new class, it felt weird. There were now more Swedes than immigrants in my class and it all gave a completely different feeling. I felt that I have another way of speaking Swedish and how different it sounded from the Swedes. I was a little surprised that I sounded different because I was born in Sweden and have spoken Swedish all my life but I have also spoken Serbian all my life. And another thing I noticed was that the Swedish girls became one group and we “blatte-girls” became one group. It felt weird because before in my old school everyone hung out with everyone. The whole high school hung out and you never felt that you were alone. But in high school groups formed directly. I didn't like it at all and wanted to change but didn't succeed. Now it feels like we can all talk to each other but I still have those I am with. I am with my best friend and a girl who has the same ethnic background and I am with a girl who is Syrian. I noticed that I went back to what I felt safe with and I felt that we had more in common and could understand each other better than if I were with the Swedish girls all the time.

Together, the two narratives show how the meaning of being an immigrant is negotiated against a societal-level stereotypes of the category “immigrant”, contrasted against the “Swedish girls”. At the same time, they show the different meanings of an identity even within the same macro-contexts.

The two narrative above also points to the importance of a perceived shared group to deviate together with – the first describing a low degree of interconnectedness to others, while the second describes a clear, strong in-group connection - the “Blatte-girls”. Overall, the perceived group connectedness and sharing the deviation with others was low in the Swedish sample. Only one other narrative in the Swedish sample included a clear, shared group connection; it is lower on deviation, but with a clear group connection to relatives in Iran.

When I met my relatives in Iran. Then I realized how important our culture is and that I should be proud of who I am. I was 13 years old and it was then I started to see from other perspectives and started to open my eyes and see how the world is. I felt a certain pride.

Feelings of connectedness with a shared in-group is important for how the deviation is experienced and handled. The following narrative illustrates how difficult this can be in the Swedish society, fitting in into the dichotomy of being “Swedish/Svenne” or being “Blatte”. It is written by an 18-year-old female, identifying as “Somali”, and she expresses a clearly elaborated deviation in her story. There is, however, a lack of agency, as she does not have feelings of power, and there is no clear perceived group with which she shares the deviation;

Second semester in the 7th grade when I was called the n-word, and was called “Svenne” by my friends with the same ethnic background. Because I improved my Swedish I was not Somali in their eyes anymore. But I was not good enough for the Swedes either who called me the n-word. 13 years old and confused. I did not react in any way. I was angry inside, especially at myself for allowing anyone to repress me. I was always the happiest in the class, slowly I was not happy anymore. [I felt] Tired. I was 13 years old and confused, I am 18 years old and equally confused.

Comparison of the Society-Individual Link across Contexts. Comparing narratives across the samples, we found some differences and similarities in how the societal - individual link was expressed. First, in some of the U.S narratives there was a clear reference to a national event, the attacks of 9/11, and the experiences of being Muslim in the aftermaths of that happening. One 1st generation immigrant girl described being 12, and denying being Muslim:

After the 9/11 attacks. My friends kept talking about it and one of them asked me if me and my family were Muslim. It was never mentioned between us before. Our friendship consisted of talking about stuff like boys and what teachers we hated. I felt like I was being attacked. I told everyone I wasn't Muslim and that there are a lot of Christian Egyptians. In fact there are, I just didn't happen to be one. I lied. But I was a child, or that's how I justify it. Peer acceptance was too major. I didn't want to get bullied. I was scared.

None of the Swedish narratives included this kind of society-individual link, where events shared by everyone at the macro-level made a difference for the self, and changed the meaning of an identity. Others in the U.S. sample referenced shared cultural celebrations or engaging in group-specific collective action. Altogether, the comparisons suggest that there are many more public, shared events in the U.S.--both positive and negative--that provide opportunities for identity work.

A second difference between the narratives in the two samples concerned the importance placed on heritage and ancestry. In the U.S sample, especially amongst the non-immigrants, the narratives concerned the importance of feeling connected to their roots and knowing about the shared history, and many expressed pride in their heritage, taking their friends to events, and sharing their traditions and food. In the Swedish sample, the relationship to the Swedish heritage was more complicated, and the sense of pride more complex and less obvious. The only two narratives written by non-immigrants that expressed any degree of deviation both concerned the struggle to explore their ethnic roots and feeling pride in being Swedish in connection to nationalistic and racist political parties and ideologies.

When I was around 17, the Swedish Democrats were talked about in my surroundings. I sat in the living room with my family, the news was on where the SD were talked about. My parents started discussing how good this party was and how they represent US SWEDES, which I totally bought. It was my parents, they know best, they had good arguments, and above all, I am Swedish. I bought into their arguments and was completely convinced that this was the party for me, just because I was Swedish. They represent Sweden and they fight for Sweden. A bit later, I realized that they are fighting for something completely different, something that TODAY totally goes against my values. Angry. I feel manipulated and/or tricked. By my parents, by the Swedish Democrats, by the

media and the school. Everyone said different things which made it difficult to form one's own opinion and above all because my parents have a great influence on my views.

The same difficulties are illustrated in another narrative, where the narrator described negotiating belonging and the meaning of being Swedish, spending time with a close friend who expressed nationalist thoughts and culture, and adopted some of the cultural attributes, for example, music and symbols.

My lifelong interest in Old Norse mythology made me feel upset and angry because racists and Nazis claimed these with their ideology that I did not identify with I took the debate and wanted to show people that our history is more complex and showed even more interest for my own and OTHER CULTURES.

In a polarized society, like Sweden, learning about the history and Nordic mythologies, the meaning of being Swedish seems difficult and complex, when the symbols and the debate has been being taken over by Nazi and racist movements.

In the U.S sample on the other hand, none of the non-immigrants in the U.S sample self-identified as being American, and their narratives showed expressions of pride and status in connected to their European heritage. As in this example narrative where a non-immigrant woman, self -identifying as “Italian, Irish, Croatia”:

We were sitting in front of the TV, talking about various subjects. We got to the subject of our heritage and cultural/racial backgrounds. Most of my friends appear white, but they described their German or Norwegian roots and how much they believed themselves to be. They asked me what I was, and I responded Italian, Croatian and Irish...they gave me a look like I just became the most exotic friend they have ever known.

Fourth, the difference concerning the role of race that we found in the self-defined ethnic identities between the two samples was even more pronounced in the narratives. While the U.S participants negotiated their identities in terms of race, no labels of race were ever described in the Swedish narratives. However, not looking Swedish enough was the most common deviation across all groups in the Swedish sample, and phenotypical characteristics, like skin color was mentioned in the sense that having a darker skin called for more

explanations and justifications for the self-identified identity of being Swedish. These societal-level categories are visible in the narratives as the stereotypes against which the personal identities are negotiated. In the U.S narratives that means negotiating the meaning of being and “acting Black” while in Sweden the negation is against “acting immigrant.” For immigrant men in Sweden that means being delinquent, and talking with slang, as illustrated by the narrative above. The corresponding narrative in the U.S sample was written by a 1st generation immigrant, born in Nigeria with both parents born in Nigeria, identifying as “Black of African”;

I was hanging out with some of my teammates (of different ethnicities) when we started talking about music. I happen to listen to music that is not usually heard on the radio, and is sometimes thought of as "white people music." People were talking about some of their favorite artists (such as Chris Brown, Rihanna, Beyonce, and Lil'Wayne). I don't listen to these artists so I told my friends that I really don't like their music I started to tell them about some of the music that I listen to, and of course they had never heard of it. It was at that time that one of my black teammates mentioned that I listen to white people music, and that I was basically an "oreo" (black on the outside, white on the inside).

This illustrates how young people both resist and accommodate to images projected onto them by others in their distal and proximal contexts in the construction of their own identities (Svensson, Berne, & Syed, 2017; Way & Rogers, 2015). The continuation of the “Oreo narrative” clearly illustrates how the young man incorporates, and changes his identity based on the societal level images of being Black with which he is confronted in his interaction with his friends:

I felt a little left out since most of the people who had these thoughts about me were people that would be considered members of my race. So knowing that they felt this way, made me feel like I didn't really belong with them. But a while before that, I had already been thinking of myself as an African and not really an "African American" It changed how I view my race. I think that black people are as quick to judge each other as much as white people are quick to judge black people. Everyone basically has the same stereotypes of what a black person should be and do, and if you don't fit into these boundaries then you are automatically judged as being different.

General Discussion

The purpose of this study was to compare identity processes associated with the immigrant experience in two macro-contexts, the U.S and Sweden. By studying how people experience that their stories deviate from what is expected and normal, we sought to understand the ways in which people identify, the meaning they make of their identities, how and where they find belonging, and how identities are negotiated in the particular macro-context. By also studying non-immigrants in both contexts, we sought to separate the immigrant experience from general identity development. Results showed clear racial and multi-ethnic categories in how U.S participants self-identified, and clear evidence of deviations from societal norms, but also belonging in social groups from those deviations. Swedish participants, on the other hand relied more on national identities, and showed less deviations, combined with little evidence of group belonging. In both contexts, societal macro-level factors are clearly visible in the way young people define, and negotiate their personal identities, illustrating the link between society and self.

We first explored differences in the way that youth self-identify between the two macro-contexts. Self-definitions are informative of which identifications are perceived as possible and accepted and for whom, and thus tell us something about their meaning in the particular macro-context. Results indicated that the U.S. participants were more likely to define themselves using racial and multi-ethnic categories, whereas Swedish participants relied on national labels. This is not surprising, given the different role of race in the two context. Whereas race is basically non-existent in the Swedish macro-context discourse, it is salient and present in the daily lives of people in the U.S, which then influence how people identify at the individual level. In addition, national and ethnic labels are often used interchangeably in the Swedish context (Wikström, 2009) which is reflected in the results.

Another difference in the self-definitions is that the U.S participants used hyphenated identities, whereas the Swedish participants more often combined their dual identities with “and”. This suggests more blended and integrated identities in the U.S sample, where the hyphenated identities can be seen as more than the combination of two ethnic identities. Like in the words of one of the U.S. participants explaining his/her self-defined ethnic identity: “I identify with Egyptian-Americans, but not so much with Egyptians in Egypt”. The difference can be interpreted as support for blended bicultural (hybrid) identities in the U.S sample, and alternating identities in the Swedish sample, where the participants “switch” between identities depending on the context (Birman, 1994; Phinney & Devich-Navarro, 1997; Ward, Tseng-Wong, Szabo, Oumseya, & Bhowon, 2018). As multiple identities have been found to be denied and questioned in Sweden (Svensson et al., 2018) it might be that in some contexts, like in polarized societies, it would be more adaptive to successfully alternate between identities, or play up or down the importance of one ethnic identity due to the situation.

The concept of “cultural variability” might further add to our understanding of the results, suggesting that individuals calibrate and determine how much a cultural identity will influence them in the daily actions and interactions, and this importance can vary from day to day, from situations to situation, and from context to context (Ferguson, Nguyen, & Iturbide, 2017). Thus, extant finding suggesting that integrated and bicultural identities are most adaptive (Berry et al., 2006) needs to be contextualized, and the adaptiveness of different ways to handle multiple ethnic and cultural identities in different macro-contexts should be further explored. Indeed, recent work on expanded acculturation models, such as Ferguson’s tridimensional acculturation model (e.g., Ferguson, Bornstein, & Pottinger, 2012) better accounts for the complexity of migration and identity in the contemporary globalized world. Such an approach may be a stronger starting point for future work on acculturation than the traditional bidimensional acculturation model.

The results addressing the deviations from the expected and valued story indicate that U.S. participants showed clear evidence of deviations from societal norms, but also found belonging in social groups from those deviations. The Swedish participants, on the other hand, showed some deviations, but little evidence of group belonging. These results suggests that the Swedish macro-contexts offers fewer, and less clear ready-made alternative groups that they can identify with, making it more difficult and complex to develop an alternative identity, and find belonging within a diverse society (Rivas-Drake et al., 2014). Also, the U.S context seems to offer more public, shared events that provide opportunities for identity work and feelings of pride in the heritage, for all regardless of immigrant status, than the Swedish context. Put in the acculturation framework, those whose personal narratives are deviating from cultural expectations are more likely to be marginalized and oppressed (Fivush, 2010), if the alternative narrative is not shared with others.

Limitations

Some limitations with the current study should be mentioned. First, in narrative research the wording of the prompts will affect what the participants write and how they write their stories (Adler et al., 2017), and thereby the results. In the current study, a definition of ethnic identities had to be included, due to the unfamiliarity of the concept in the Swedish context. The definition equalized ethnic identity with ethnic belonging, but the two concepts are not synonymous. Given that we coded for group connectedness, the emphasizing on “belonging” in the prompt might have affected the participants to focus more on belonging to a group that they otherwise would have. The already very weak group connectedness in the Swedish narratives would then have been even weaker, if we had used another definition. Additionally, the phrasing of the U.S prompt led some to interpret the question as asking about ethnic-based organizations or clubs on campus, which can be seen in some of the responses. All together, these results indicate that when attempting to provide an inclusive method for collecting data on self-defined ethnicity we run the risk of capturing more than we intended.

Second, as mentioned above, we coded for the degree of connectedness to group with which the deviation was shared, for both immigrants and non-immigrants. Alternative narratives are by definition not shared with the majority, but the experience of deviating might be very different depending on whether the person deviating belongs to the majority or minority, and whether the deviation is shared with small or larger subgroups or minority groups. Some support for these differences can be found in the qualitative analyses, but a systematic analysis is beyond the scope of this study. Differences in the experience of deviating should be further explored, especially in connected to well-being, and acculturation.

Third, the first generation participants—those who were born elsewhere and migrated to the U.S./Sweden—varied quite a bit with respect to their age of arrival in the new country, and this could have impacted the findings. Indeed, immigration researchers have drawn attention to the importance of the “1.5 generation,” corresponding to immigrants who arrive in their new country as children (Rumbaut, 2012). However, there is no agreed upon definition of the 1.5 generation. Nevertheless, this issue is related to a broader point that there is a great deal of variation in the immigrant experience based on time of arrival, location of arrival, and historical context in the receiving country. As future work builds upon the present study it would be beneficial to consider these variations.

Application & Implications

Identity formation is a key developmental task of adolescence and emerging adulthood and includes creating a coherent sense of self across time, place, and situations, and to integrate all parts of the identity (Syed & McLean, 2016). To do so requires complex thinking about the self across time, place, and situations, and the skill to construct a personal narrative is not fully developed until emerging adulthood (Habermas & Reese, 2015). The current results then reflect the developmental process of constructing a personal ethnic identity in the intersection between society and self, in an age group where the society is first becoming

visible and important for who one is. As these personal life stories provides meaning and purpose for one's future life (McAdams, 1993) it would be useful to create opportunities for young people to explore the meaning of the identities, regardless of being in line with or countering the expected. This might be especially important in macro- contexts that offers few and vague alternatives, like Sweden, and in time of polarized political climates, like both contemporary Sweden and U.S.

The results have policy implications, as they show a mismatch between macro-level policies and experiences at the individual level, in both macro-contexts. This suggests that top-down-approaches, like policies, might not be enough to change the daily lives of peoples. Additionally, these mismatches might further complicate the formation of alternative narratives. For example, the master narratives of Sweden being "the most integration friendly country in the world" might indirectly disregard personal stories that counters that story, making it more difficult to deviate. For integration to be a valid strategy people need to have the power to define their ethnic identities and the meaning of them at the individual level (Svensson et al., 2017).

Conclusion

In conclusion, the results show support for the expected mismatch between societal level values and beliefs and individual identities in both countries. While Sweden is a more multicultural society with an official aim of integration, we found less support for such at the individual level. The U.S., on the other hand, is more of an assimilationist society but our results show that individuals are able to define themselves as multiples, and with more integrated, bi-cultural immigrant identities. This mismatch between societies and selves is intriguing and in need of more in-depth examination in future research.

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Table 1. Participants' place of birth, parents place of birth and self-defined ethnic identity, for the Swedish and U.S. (n = 59).

Own country of birth	Country of birth of parent 1	Country of birth of parent 2	Self-defined ethnic identity
The U.S Sample			
Kosovo	Kosovo	Montenegro	I identify with all sorts of groups. Personally I am 100% albanian which is a Caucasian race and for the majority I do associate my self with Caucasians but I do go out of that norm a lot as well. I have friends from all different ethnic groups.
Thailand	Laos	Laos	Asian Americans Hmong
Bulgaria	Bulgaria	Bulgaria	White Caucasian, Bulgars, Slavic
Nigeria	Nigeria	Nigeria	Black of African
Mexico	Mexico	Mexico	Mexican
Saudi Arabia	Egypt	Egypt	I identify with Egyptian-Americans, but not so much with Egyptians in Egypt. I also identify a lot with Arab-Americans. I get along with many different races. I had a lot of African-American and Hispanic friends when I lived outside of Minnesota. In Minnesota, I have a lot of Native American friends mostly.
Ethiopia	ethiopia	ethiopia	black student union, oromia student union
vietnam	vietnam	vietnam	Chinese, Vietnamese, American.
Morocco	Morocco	Morocco	Moroccan
Liberia	Liberia	Liberia	Black, African American, African
US	Ethiopia	Eritrea	God's child, Ethiopian, Eritrean, African, African-American, Human-race
US	laos	Laos	i identify myself as Hmong
US	Nigeria	Nigeria	Black African American Nigerian American
US	Iran	Iran	Iranian, Middle Eastern
US	Mexico	Mexico	Latino/Mexican
US	Egypt	Egypt	I am Middle Eastern
US	Syria	Syria	Caucasian and Middle Eastern
US	South Korea	South Korea	Asian American
US	Eritrea	Eritrea	I identify myself with everyone
US	China	China	Asian-American Student Union Chinese American Student Assoc.
US	US	US	White/Caucasian
US	US	US	I am from a mostly Irish and German family. I am a Caucasian.
US	US	US	Italian, Irish, Croatian
US	US	US	I identify with Norwegian/Swedish ethnic groups.
US	US	US	white/Caucasian
US	US	US	German, French, Finnish
US	US	US	I am Caucasian with Swedish, Norwegian, German, and Irish heritage.
US	US	US	Germans
US	US	US	Norwegian Irish Caucasian
US	US	US	White

The Swedish Sample			
Thailand	Thailand		Thai/Swedish
Lebanon	Palestine	Lebanon	Lebanese and Swedish I would see myself as because I have lived more than half of my life in Sweden and in Lebanon the other part of my life
			Because I live in Sweden and am a Swedish citizen I guess I "belong" to the Swedish people
Palestine	Palestine	Egypt	Arab and Swedish
Lebanon	Lebanon		Mainly Italian belonging
Italy	Italy	Italy	Colombian
Colombia	Colombia	Colombia	Serbian
Serbia	Bosnia	Bosnia	bosnian and Swedish
Bosnia	bosnia	bosnia	Arab
Iraq	Iraq		
Sweden	Kosovo	Kosovo	I feel Kosovo-Albanian, that defines me really, but I of course love Sweden
Sweden	iraq	iraq	Swedish
Sweden	Iran	Iran	Swedish and Iranian
Sweden	Bolivia	Bolivia	Bolivian in appearance but really Swedish on the inside and on paper
Sweden	Iran	Iran	Persian and Swedish
Sweden	Former Yugoslavia	Former Yugoslavia	I say I am from the Serbian republic in Bosnia
Sweden	syria	syria	Syrian, Armenian, Swedish
Sweden	somalia	somalia	somali
Sweden	Romania	Morocco	Swedish (often get the question of where I am from though)
Sweden	Kurdistan	Kurdistan	I identify with my ethnic Kurdish background
Sweden	Sweden	Sweden	Swedish
Sweden	Sweden	Sweden	Swedish
Sweden	Sweden	Sweden	Swedish
Sweden	Sweden	Sweden	Swedish, European
Sweden	Sweden	Sweden	Swedish.
Sweden	Sweden	Sweden	Primarily Swedish.
Sweden	Sweden	Sweden	Swedish
Sweden	Sweden	Sweden	I identify as Swedish and both me and my parents are born in Sweden. However, I do not look "typically Swedish" and often get the question which country I come from. I have a Lithuanian surname that comes from my grandfather's father who from the beginning was from France and mum's family is Walloons since way back. This is something I may need to tell when someone asks me about my last name or why I am a little darker in both skin and hair color.
Sweden	Sweden	Sweden	Swedish
Sweden	Sweden	Sweden	I consider myself to be "very" Swedish. But for me it is important to point out that I also have Finnish heritage, even though this does not affect me in my everyday life. My grandmother was Finnish and for me it is important to bring with me and have an understanding of where I come from.

Note. The self-defined ethnic identity labels were given as the answers to the following prompt; "What racial/ethnic group or groups do you identify with? (please list as many as you feel are important to who you are)" for the U.S sample, and "Everyone has an ethnic belonging. A person can have more than one ethnic identity. Examples of ethnic identities are Sami, Bosnian and Swedish. Every person decides his or her ethnic belonging. Please state the ethnic identities that you identify with" for the Swedish sample.

Table 2. Sample cases of coding categories

Degree of Deviation
<p>No deviation</p> <p><i>"Since I was born. There is no story, always known."</i> (Deviation = 1, group connectedness = 1)</p>
<p>Small deviation</p> <p><i>"Was in Africa and climbed Kilimanjaro. My Swedish friend and I stood out in terms of appearance and the locals thought we were siblings, even though we are not very similar if you disregard pigmentation"</i> (Deviation = 2, group connectedness = 2)</p>
<p>Medium deviation</p> <p><i>"I guess it was when we moved to Sweden, when I was eight years old. I became aware of being different from other children; looking different, I have brown hair and brown eyes and I am darker while everyone else had light skin, blond and with blue eyes. I don't think I reacted in any special way, because I assumed everyone was worth equally much and should be treated in the same way, regardless of not looking the same."</i> (Deviation = 3, group connectedness = 1)</p>
<p>Large deviation</p> <p><i>"We were talking about what our summer plans were and I said I was going to visit the motherland. My close highschool girlfriends were shocked that I was going to go at a time of such political volatility and they continued to ask me about the situation there. "Do you feel safe when you walk alone? Do the males always "cat-call" you? Is everyone there dressed in all black?" (They were referring to the Islamic hijab). I had to go on to explain every little aspect of the culture. I was shocked that they knew so little about the Middle East and what they did know was incredibly biased and untrue. I tried to enlighten them and show them pictures and help them grasp what it is like to live there. I felt a little disheartened that so few people know anything about the beauty of the region where the civilization flourished."</i> (Deviation = 4, group connectedness = 2)</p>

Table 3. Frequencies of codes of degree of deviation and degree of group connectedness, for the Swedish and the U.S sample respectively (n = 59).

Deviation	The Swedish Sample			The U.S Sample		
	1 st gen.im	2 nd gen.im	Non-im	1 st gen.im	2 nd gen.im	Non-im
1	5	2	4	-	-	1
2	1	3	4	4	5	6
3	2	3	2	5	4	3
4	1	2	-	1	1	-
Group connection						
1	8	5	6	3	4	3
2	1	3	4	5	1	3
3	-	2	-	2	4	4