Ethnic identity in relation to country of birth among adolescents and emerging adults in Sweden

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This study explored ethnic identity in relation to country of birth among young people in Sweden and their possible influence on identity development and psychological well-being. Participants ($N = 624$) were students, ages 15-19. The results indicated that ethnic identity and country of birth relate in such that participants with ethnic majority identity tended to have a Swedish background; participants with mixed ethnic identity tended to have a varied background (e.g. combined parental background or Swedish participant, non-Swedish parental background); and participants with ethnic minority identity tended to have a non-Swedish background. However, there were individual deviations from this pattern. The results also suggested variations in identity distress and life satisfaction, with regards to ethnic identity and country of birth.

From 2000 to 2017 the Swedish population has grown from 8.9 million people to above 10 million (Statiska centralbyrån [SCB], 2018). The large growth is thought to be due to an increase in refugees arriving to Sweden, mainly from countries such as Iraq, Afghanistan and Somalia to mention a few, as well as; labor migration within Europe; foreign students; and an increase in the number of people returning to Sweden after living and working abroad (SCB, 2018). With the Swedish society becoming more diversified the need to investigate questions related to ethnicity and its influence regarding health within the diversified population is growing (Wikström, 2009). For young people one of the most pressing developmental tasks is that of identity development (McLean & Syed, 2015) and thus it is an important issue to investigate for young people in Sweden in relation to ethnicity and psychological well-being.

Developing an ethnic identity and a sense of belonging to one's ethnic group (Worrell, 2015) can in several ways influence other issues related to identity development (Azmitia, 2015). Therefore, and as the population in Western countries, such as Sweden become more diversified both ethnically and culturally, it is becoming imperative to include various ethnic groups in identity research (Schwartz, Zamboanga, Wang, & Olthuis, 2009). In relation to this a key area to further investigate is how the ethnic identity is perceived and defined by the individual in relation to his/her country of birth. Particularly since these are two different classifications, of groups in society, that are often used in research (Schwartz, Syed, Yip, Knight, Umaña-Taylor, Rivas-Drake, & Lee, 2014). The meaning and influence of these classifications (e.g. ethnic identity and country of birth) can vary across different cultural contexts and countries. Thus, experiences regarding the ethnic identity that is part of a social identity (McLean & Syed, 2015) might be experienced differently in the Swedish context than for example the context of the United States (Schwartz et al., 2009), making it imperative to investigate in a Swedish context. The aim of the present study is therefore to explore ethnic identity in relation to country of birth among young people in Sweden and the possible influence on identity development and psychological well-being.

Ethnic identity

> "Ethnicity is defined by the law as an individual's national or ethnic origin, skin colour or other similar characteristic. All people have ethnicities of one kind or another, which means anyone can be exposed to ethnic discrimination – Samis, Roma, people of Swedish, Somali or Bosnian origin, and so on. Ethnicity is based on a person's self identity. Thus it is the individual alone who defines his or her own ethnicity or ethnicities."
>
> ("Grounds for discrimination", 2010)

Outlined above is the 2010 definition of ethnicity from the Swedish Equality Ombudsman. This is also the definition used in this study which means that ethnic identity is within this study based on a self-defined ethnic identity. When discussing ethnicity words like race and culture often surface. In Europe the word race is often associated with racism due to its historical connotations (Wikström, 2009). Race is often viewed as an objective category that is given to the individual and different from ethnicity which is regarded as a subjective identification. Schwartz et al. (2014) however, discuss the issues in research regarding ethnic and racial identity for minorities in the context within the United States and defines both ethnic and racial identity as "a subjective, self-ascribed sense of oneself as a member of an ethnic or racial group" (p. 59). Hence, there is an issue of whether ethnic identity and racial identity can be separated within this cultural context and in everyday life ethnicity and race are often regarded as one and the same in the United States (Schwartz et al., 2014). However, in Sweden ethnicity is not to be regarded as a well-defined and commonly used concept in everyday life (Wikström, 2009). According to Worrell (2015) ethnic and racial identity are ways to categorize both the world and ones' self. It works as the lens through which the world is viewed, and ethnic identity should therefore be present in the Swedish everyday life but might be expressed in a somewhat different way in the Swedish context.

In the Swedish context, the borders of being Swedish are mostly constructed around whiteness and non-whiteness (Lundström, 2007). Thus, the social identity of ethnicity is foremost reduced to "Swede" or "immigrant", with ethnicity being second to that (Ferrer-Wreder, Trost, Lorente, & Mansoory, 2012; Lundström, 2007). Research has for example shown that eight graders in a multi-ethnic residential area in Sweden used language and symbols to define in- and out-groups (Wiltgren, 2017). The in-group was mostly described as immigrants and the out-group as Swedes. Other research regarding ethnic identity among the Swedish youth has found that themes of being in-between cultures or ethnicities was part of ethnicity related experiences (Gyberg, Frisén, Syed, Wängqvist, & Svensson, 2017), but also that others were a part in defining the individuals ethnic identity (Gyberg et al., 2017; Svensson, Berne, & Syed, 2018). Thus, to understand ethnic identity in Sweden it is necessary to understand the cultural context of Sweden.

The cultural context of Sweden. The integration and refugee policy in Sweden is known worldwide and can be described by three concepts: equality, access to the Swedish welfare system for all in Sweden; freedom of choice, the possibility to get education in one's mother tongue through the public schools; and partnership, Sweden invests in the people coming here and expects them to give their best and for example learn Swedish (Vedder & Virta, 2005). Ferrer-Wreder et al. (2012) describe Sweden as a country "with marked aspirations towards gender equity and social welfare as well as cultural values favorable to democracy" (p.72). In studies from the International Comparative Study of Ethnocultural Youth, comparing 13 countries around the world,

Sweden stands out with regards to ethnic identity since it has been shown to be linked to more positive outcomes among youth compared to other countries (Vedder & Virta, 2005; Virta, Sam, & Westin, 2004), regarding for example higher levels of psychological well-being and adaptation (Virta et al., 2004). Sweden is also the second most secular-rational country in the world and the country that has the most pronounced beliefs in emancipative values (World Value Survey, 2015). Although Sweden stands out as cultural context in ways that might influence ethnicity related issues, the research regarding ethnicity among youth is scarce and not as rich and extensive as in for example the United States (Ferrer-Wreder et al., 2012). Therefore, it is important to investigate ethnic identity among young people in Sweden in relation to key areas such as identity development and psychological well-being.

Identity Development

Identity development can be described as constructing a subjective feeling of continuity and sameness across the lifespan (Erikson, 1968; McLean & Syed, 2015). Thus, identity development concerns integration of personal beliefs and goals, as well as integration of the social identity concerning connections to different groups such as gender and ethnicity (McLean & Syed, 2015). In the process of identity development Erikson (1968) viewed identity crisis as a natural part, in which the outcome determines the trajectory of one's life (Erikson 1968; Hammack, 2015). Identity crisis is thus a part of identity development and the conflict to be resolved is identity versus identity confusion (Erikson, 1968).

The process of identity development begins during the time of adolescence due to psychological growth, enough development of cognitive abilities and new social responsibilities that enable this process (Erikson, 1968; McLean & Syed, 2015). Erikson (1968) recognized that in industrialized western countries the task of identity development is central, not only in adolescence, but also in the years that follow (Arnett, 2014; Erikson 1968). Arnett (2000) coined the term emerging adults to describe this in-between group that is not adolescents nor young adults and ranges from ages 19 to 29, depending on the cultural context (Arnett, 2014). This group mainly exists in industrialized societies and is a form of prolonged adolescence, characterized by: identity explorations, answering the question "who am I?"; instability, mainly regarding work and love; self-focus, more compared to the rest of the lifespan; feeling in-between, not being neither adolescent nor adult; and possibilities, to for example change one's life (Arnett, 2014). As the process of identity development is prolonged, lasting through adolescence and emerging adulthood, for countries such as Sweden (Wängqvist & Frisén, 2015), the time of crisis and distress may be prolonged as well.

Identity distress and sense of identity. As mentioned above identity crisis and the challenges related to it is a natural part of identity development. The development of identity can be related to distress in identity areas such as long-term goals, work, friendship, sexuality, religion, values and group loyalties (Berman, Montgomery & Kurtines, 2004; Berman & Weems, 2011). Although challenges in these areas are normal they may cause more distress for some individuals than others (Berman et al., 2004; Berman & Weems, 2011).

Identity synthesis, a sense of identity, is the solution to the conflict of identity versus identity confusion (Erikson, 1968). It is considered to strongly predict

psychosocial functioning (Schwartz et al., 2009) and can be defined as the extent to which the individual has reworked his/her childhood identifications and various different aspects of identity into a coherent identity consistent over time (McLean & Syed, 2015; Schwartz et al., 2009), thus creating a sense of identity. Identity synthesis can be studied by investigating identity coherence, a sense of self-worth and overall direction and purpose in life; and identity confusion, a sense of confusion and overall lack of direction and purpose in life (Rosenthal, Gurney, & Moore, 1981; Schwartz et al., 2009). Initially these two, identity coherence and identity confusion, were thought to be opposites on a continuum but later research have demonstrated that they should be regarded as two separate constructs, part of the sense of identity (Rosenthal et al., 1981; Schwartz et al., 2009). Meaning that absence of confusion must not imply coherence, nor does the absence of coherence always imply confusion (Törnblom, 2015).

Ethnic Identity, Identity Development and Cultural Context.

The process of identity development and developing an ethnic identity may look different depending on the cultures involved (Jensen, 2003) and there is a need of contextual research regarding identity development. The multicultural context of industrialized countries, such as Sweden, makes the task of creating a coherent identity more complex (Jensen, 2003) since the cultural context may limit the opportunities to explore various aspects of identity and the length of the developmental process (Arnett, 2014). Ethnic minorities for example tend to have fewer opportunities than the majority and must adapt to several cultures, which may be cause for distress (Arnett, 2014; Berman, Ratner, Cheng, Li, Jhingon, & Sukumaran, 2014). However, the ability to mix new norms, as a result of globalization, with old values, in the existing culture, seems to also reduce identity distress (Berman et al., 2014). The multicultural society contributes to research difficulties because it is becoming increasingly difficult for researchers to categorize individuals with a multicultural background (Schwartz et al., 2014). Therefore, there is a need for research regarding this mixed group of individuals.

Ethnic identity development in the Swedish context. Gyberg et al. (2017) found in their research that the formation of ethnic identity for young people in Sweden contained experiences of otherness and segregation. This was mostly the same for all individuals regardless of origin. Another Swedish study on adolescents and emerging adults showed that others have the ability to deny the individual his/her self-defined ethnic identity and that a multicultural environment also activates ethnic identity exploration in the native majority (Svensson et al., 2018). Research have also shown that for Swedish adolescents and emerging adults there is no difference between the ethnic minority and ethnic majority regarding identity distress (Eriksson, 2014) and that sense of identity is equal across all ethnicities (Törnblom, 2015). However, none of these previous studies explore the relation of ethnic identity and country of birth nor the possible influence of these two on identity, making these important areas to investigate. These previous studies indicate that young people in Sweden seem to experience issues related to ethnic identity (Gyberg et al., 2017; Svensson et al., 2018) and that these experiences do not differ between ethnic minority and ethnic majority in Sweden.

Ethnic identity and psychological well-being with regards to the cultural context of Sweden. Closely linked to ethnic identity and identity development is psychological well-being (Barnett, 2010). Psychological well-being can be regarded as

life satisfaction and self-esteem which are subjective experiences (Barnett, 2010; Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985), and may therefore be experienced differently across cultures (Oishi, 2006).

A study investigating the psychological well-being and adaptation, among Turkish adolescents in Norway and Sweden found that the psychological well-being and adaptation among the Turkish adolescents (i.e., belonging to the same ethnic group), differed in the two neighboring countries, Sweden and Norway, where the Turkish adolescents in Sweden showed higher levels of psychological well-being and adaptation than the Norwegian Turks (Virta et al., 2004). This concurs with other studies that have shown cultural variations in life satisfaction (Oishi, 2006) and that across cultures, values and needs may act as moderators of the level of life satisfaction (Oishi, Lucas & Suh, 2009). Therefore, and because there is a need for public health studies concerning first- and second-generation immigrants in Sweden (Lindström, Modén & Rosvall, 2014), it is relevant to investigate the influence of ethnic identity and country of birth on psychological well-being in a Swedish cultural context.

Purpose of this Study

The purpose of the present study was to explore ethnic identity in relation to country of birth among young people in Sweden and their possible influence on identity development and psychological well-being. Following questions will be investigated:
1. How does ethnic identity relate to country of birth?
2. Does ethnic identity and country of birth influence identity development in adolescence and emerging adulthood with regards to identity distress and sense of identity?
3. Does ethnic identity and country of birth influence psychological well-being in adolescence and emerging adulthood with regards to life satisfaction and self-esteem?

Method

Procedure

This thesis is a part of the GREEN-project (Gothenburg Research on Ethnicity-related Experiences and identity Narratives), with the main purpose to examine aspects of ethnicity related experiences and ethnic identity as well as identity narratives. The project is a cross-national collaboration between researchers at the Department of Psychology at the University of Gothenburg and Assistant Professor Moin Syed at the University of Minnesota.

The data for this study was collected as part of the GREEN-project. The material was collected at universities and gymnasiums in Sweden. The questionnaire was constructed for online use as well as paper and pencil use. The total questionnaire took approximately 40 minutes to answer. The participants were informed about purpose of the study both orally and in written form, they were also informed that participation was voluntary, anonymous and that they could end their participation at any time. The participants were also informed of the definition of ethnicity (as defined by the Equality

Ombudsman, 2010) in the survey. All scales used in this study was presented at the end of the survey part of the GREEN-project. The Erikson Psychosocial Inventory Scale (EPSI), measuring sense of identity, was randomized and therefore distributed to half of the participants and not the entire sample.

Participants

Participants were students attending gymnasium ($n = 373$, $M_{age} = 17.09$, $SD_{age} = 0.8$) or university ($n = 251$, $M_{age} = 22.88$, $SD_{age} = 2.8$). In total there were 624 participants (ages 15-29, $M_{age} = 19.42$, $SD_{age} = 3.4$), 447 women, 170 men, 2 with another gender and 5 who did not answer the question of gender.

In total 719 participants answered the survey and 95 participants were excluded for the analysis in this study. The criterions for exclusion were being adopted ($n = 17$); not providing information about whether the participant was born in Sweden or not ($n = 24$); not providing information about any parent and whether he/she was born in Sweden or not ($n = 10$); having been born abroad but with all parents born in Sweden ($n = 3$); and being above 29 years old ($n = 40$).

Measures

Ethnic identity. Ethnic identity was based on self-definition. The participants were given the definition of ethnicity (by the Equality Ombudsman cited above) and were asked what ethnicity they identified with, the participants were also informed that there was no limit for how many ethnicities they could identify with. Ethnic identity was then coded into three groups in accordance with the definition used in Svensson et al. (2018): ethnic majority identity ($n = 373$), the participants whom defined themselves as Swedish and no other ethnicity; mixed ethnic identity ($n = 134$), the participants whom defined themselves as Swedish and one or more other ethnicities; and ethnic minority identity ($n = 61$), the participants whom defined themselves as one or more ethnicities, none being Swedish.

Country of birth/background. The participants were asked to state where they and their parents were born. This information was then coded and categorized into four groups: Swedish background ($n = 406$), where parents and participant were born in Sweden; combined parental background ($n = 63$), where the participant were born either abroad or in Sweden with one parent born abroad and one parent born in Sweden; Swedish participant, non-Swedish parental background ($n = 91$), where the parents were born abroad and the participant were born in Sweden; and non-Swedish background ($n = 64$), where parents and participant were born abroad

Identity distress survey (IDS). The IDS (Berman et al., 2004) measures identity distress during the process of identity development and consist of ten questions. Seven of these questions were used in this study to measure identity issue distress (IID). Participants were asked: "To what degree have you recently been upset, distressed or worried over the following issues in your life?" followed by issues regarding: long term goals, work, friendships, sexuality, religion, values and group loyalties. The participants were asked to rate this on a five-point scale ranging from 1 (Not at all) to 5 (Very Severely) (Berman et al., 2004). The internal consistency of IDS has been reported to

alpha 0.84 and a test-retest reability of 0.82 (Berman et al., 2004). In this study IID had an internal consistency of Cronbach's alpha 0.72.

Sense of identity. To measure sense of identity, Erikson Psychosocial Inventory Scale (EPSI) was used (Rosenthal et al., 1981). The identity subscale consists of 12 items where six items measures *identity coherence* and six item measures *identity confusion* (Schwartz et al., 2009). The identity confusion subscale contains items that measures a feeling of confusion and lack of purpose and direction in life, for example "I change my opinion of myself a lot" (Schwartz et al., 2009). The identity coherence subscale contains items that measures a sense of self-worth, purpose and direction in life, for example "I know what kind of person I am" (Schwartz et al., 2009). For the subscale of identity coherence research has indicated that the item "I have a strong sense of what it means to be female/male" may have to be revised or removed (Schwartz et al., 2009). Therefore, the item was rephrased as "I have a strong sense of the meaning of my gender" in this study. The participants rated the items on a five-point scale ranging from 1 (Not accurate at all) to 5 (Entirely accurate).

To examine whether the missing values for both subscales were missing at random Little's MCAR test was conducted. It revealed that the missing values were not random for the identity coherence scale, this due to the item "I have a strong sense of the meaning of my gender" ($p <.05$). This item was deleted from the subscale and the subscale was re-tested ($p = .36$) (in accordance with Törnblom, 2015). The test for the confusion subscale also indicated that the values were missing at random ($p = .17$). The identity coherence subscale internal consistency reported a Cronbach's alpha of 0.75 for this study. The identity confusion subscale also reported a good internal consistency with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.72.

Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS). To assess global life satisfaction SWLS was used (Diener et al., 1985). It consists of five items ("In most ways my life is close to my ideal," "The conditions of my life are excellent," "I am satisfied with my life," "So far I have gotten the important things I want in life," and " If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing") (Diener et al., 1985). The SWLS is rated on a seven-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). In a Swedish study with university students, internal consistency using Cronbach's alpha was reported to 0.88 (Hultell & Gustavsson, 2007). In this study SWLS reported an internal consistency of Cronbach's alpha 0.79.

Self-esteem. To measure self-esteem, single item self-esteem scale (SISE) was used. The SISE consists of the item "I have good self-esteem" and is rated on a five-point scale rating from 1 (not very true of me) to 5 (very true of me). The SISE has shown validity with both college students and various ethnic groups and studies suggest that it is a shorter option to the well-researched Rosenberg Self-esteem scale (RSE) (Robins, Hendin & Trzesniewski, 2001).

Data Analyses

To explore ethnic identity in relation to country of birth, three chi-square tests were conducted (2 by 2 design) and the three groups of ethnic identity respectively the four groups of country of birth were modified into two categories for each variable. These modifications and the categories used for each of the three chi-square analyses that were performed, as well as the frequencies for each chi-square test, are presented in table 1.

Table 1

The two categories within ethnic identity respectively country of birth and frequencies (n)
for each chi-square test are presented below.

	Ethnic identity categories		Country of birth categories	
Chi-square	Category 1	Category 2	Category 1	Category 2
The first chi-square test	Ethnic majority identity (397)	All other ethnic identity groups (195)	Swedish background (392)	All other country of birth groups (200)
The second chi-square test	Mixed ethnic identity (134)	All other ethnic identity groups (458)	Swedish participant, non-Swedish parental background and combined parental background (140)	All other country of birth groups (452)
The third chi-square test	Ethnic minority identity (61)	All other ethnic identity groups (531)	Non-Swedish background (60)	All other country of birth groups (532)

To explore the influence of ethnic identity and country of birth on IID, two-way ANOVAs were performed for each item on IID. In cases were equal variances could not be assumed one-way ANOVAs were conducted for ethnic identity and country of birth separately, to ensure the possibility of using a more robust measure as Welch *F* ratio. If equal variances could not be assumed in the one-way ANOVA Welch *F* ratio was used, as well as Games Howell for post hoc testing (Field, 2013; Pallant, 2013). When an interaction effect was found in the two-way ANOVA, the split file function in SPSS was used to investigate the effects by splitting the file by country of birth to look at the impact of ethnic identity on IID separately for the different country of birth groups. Then the impact of ethnic identity was analyzed by doing a series of one-way ANOVAs for each category of country of birth (Pallant, 2013). For the IID item religion assumptions for one-way ANOVAs could not be met, mainly due to many outliers, therefore the non-parametric Kruskal Wallis test was conducted for ethnic identity and country of birth separately.

To investigate variations in sense of identity, with regards to ethnic identity and country of birth, a two-way MANOVA was performed. The dependent variables being identity coherence and identity confusion from EPSI.

The same approach was used for both SWLS and SISE. To explore variations of ethnic identity and country of birth on SWLS and SISE means of SWLS and SISE were compared using two-way ANOVAs. Since equal variances could not be assumed for neither SWLS nor SISE one-way ANOVAs were conducted separately for ethnic identity and country of birth. If equal variances could not be assumed in the one-way ANOVA Welch *F* ratio was used as a robust measure, as well as Games Howell for post hoc testing (Field, 2013; Pallant, 2013). The alpha level in all analyses was set to $p < .05$.

Ethical considerations

The GREEN-project was approved by the Institutional Review Board at University of Minnesota. Since this study handles sensitive information regarding ethnic identity and country of birth there were some considerations to be made. The categorizations made in this study are based on previous research (e.g. Svensson et al., 2018) and an effort were made to make the groups as detailed and flexible as possible. Nevertheless, when categorizing individuals based on information regarding ethnicity and origin there is always a risk of racism (Wikström, 2009), and research regarding these subjects is at risk of being misused. Therefore the results of this study should be interpreted carefully and not be taken out of context.

Results

The purpose of the present study was to explore ethnic identity in relation to country of birth among young people in Sweden and their possible influence on identity development and psychological well-being.

Ethnic Identity and Country of Birth

The descriptive statistics for the participants' ethnic identity, separated by ethnic majority identity, mixed ethnic identity and ethnic minority identity, and country of birth are presented in table 2.

Table 2

Frequencies and percentages of column for participants ethnic identity and country of birth

	Ethnic identity			
Country of birth	Majority n (%)	Mixed n (%)	Minority n (%)	Total N (%)
Non-Swedish background	5 (1.3)	23 (17.2)	32 (52.5)	60 (10.1)
Swedish participant, non-Swedish parental background	7 (1.8)	47 (35.1)	25 (41.0)	79 (13.3)
Combined parental background	21 (5.3)	37 (27.6)	3 (4.9)	61 (10.3)
Swedish background	364 (91.7)	27 (20.1)	1 (1.6)	392 (66.2)
Total	397 (100)	134 (100)	61 (100)	592 (100)

To explore how ethnic identity relates to country of birth three chi-square tests were conducted, the categories for each chi-square test are presented in table 1. The fist chi-square test showed that ethnic majority identity participants more often had a Swedish background, $\chi2$ (1, N = 592) = 350, p< .001, ϕ = 0.77, than participants with mixed ethnic identity or ethnic minority identity. The second chi-square test showed that those with mixed ethnic identity more often were in the country of birth categories: combined parental background or Swedish participant, non-Swedish parental

background, than the participants with ethnic majority identity or ethnic minority identity, $\chi2$ (1, $N = 592$) = 146, $p < 0,001$, $\phi = 0.50$.

The final chi-square test showed that the participants with ethnic minority identity more often had a non-Swedish background compared to participants with ethnic majority identity or mixed ethnic identity $\chi2$ (1, $N = 592$) = 134, $p < 0,001$, $\phi = 0.48$.

Identity Distress, Ethnic Identity and Country of Birth

To investigate the influence of ethnic identity and country of birth on the identity issue distress scale as well as check for interaction effects, two-way ANOVAs were performed. The descriptive statistics for all issues on the identity issue distress scale are presented in table 4. Since equal variances could not be assumed for the identity distress issue of group loyalties, one-way ANOVAs were conducted separately for ethnic identity and country of birth (due to the possibility of using Welch F ratio), showing no significant differences for ethnic identity $F(2, 121.19) = 0.73$, $p = .38$) or country of birth $F(3, 118.90) = 0.37$, $p = .78$) (Welch F ratio was used since Levene's test showed equal variances could not be assumed). Nor were significant differences found, for the identity distress issues: long term goals, work, friendship, sexuality, group loyalties, or the total score on IID, results of the two-way ANOVAs are shown in table 3.

Table 3

F- values for two-way ANOVAS of ethnic identity and country of birth on the identity issue distress scale. Presented for issues long term goals, work, friendship, sexuality, values and the total score on identity issue distress (IID).

	Ethnic identity		Country of birth		Ethnic identity x Country of birth		
Scale	df	F	df	F	df	F	N
IDS							
Long term goals	2	0.83	3	0.22	6	1.16	527
Work	2	1.74	3	0.56	6	0.60	521
Friendship	2	0.08	3	0.94	6	0.95	525
Sexuality	2	0.10	3	0.37	6	0.65	520
Values	2	2.68	3	0.72	6	2.20*	521
IID	2	0.94	3	0.03	6	1.48	523

Note. Values and ratings from 1 (Not at all) to 5 (Very Severely) *$p < .05$

Table 4

Means, standard deviations and number of participants for ethnic identity and country of birth on the issues of the identity issue distress scale.

| | Ethnic identity | | | | | | | | | | | | Country of birth | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Majority | | | Mixed | | | Minority | | | Swedish background | | | Combined parental background | | | Swedish participant, non-Swedish parental background | | | Non-Swedish background | | |
Scale	*M*	*(SD)*	*N*	*M*	*(SD)*	*N*	*M*	*(SD)*	*N*	*M*	*(SD)*	*N*	*M*	*(SD)*	*N*	*M*	*(SD)*	*N*	*M*	*(SD)*	*N*
IDS																					
Long term goals	3.19	(1.27)	356	3.23	(1.36)	115	3.46	(1.30)	56	3.16	(1.27)	348	3.32	(1.18)	57	3.28	(1.32)	71	3.25	(1.51)	51
Work	2.91	(1.32)	353	2.92	(1.43)	114	3.31	(1.52)	54	2.91	(1.31)	347	2.98	(1.40)	56	3.24	(1.48)	68	2.88	(1.57)	50
Friendship	2.44	(1.31)	354	2.50	(1.29)	116	2.80	(1.28)	55	2.48	(1.32)	347	2.31	(1.19)	58	2.44	(1.20)	70	2.86	(1.44)	50
Sexuality	1.73	(1.12)	352	1.58	(1.07)	113	1.67	(0.96)	55	1.74	(1.11)	345	1.63	(1.09)	56	1.54	(1.07)	70	1.63	(0.97)	49
Values	2.07	(1.14)	352	2.27	(1.13)	115	2.46	(1.16)	54	2.12	(1.13)	345	2.00	(1.17)	57	2.23	(1.10)	69	2.46	(1.23)	50
Religion	1.22	(0.67)	353	1.34	(0.83)	114	1.46	(1.02)	54	1.21	(0.66)	354	1.25	(0.78)	59	1.44	(0.92)	78	1.61	(1.17)	51
Group loyalties	1.89	(1.04)	353	1.93	(1.20)	114	2.11	(1.32)	55	1.90	(1.05)	354	1.93	(1.17)	59	2.00	(1.30)	77	2.08	(1.38)	52
IID	2.21	(0.68)	354	2.25	(0.73)	114	2.44	(0.72)	55	2.22	(0.68)	347	2.20	(0.69)	57	2.28	(0.78)	69	2.34	(0.83)	50

Note. Values and ratings from 1 (Not at all) to 5 (Very Severely)

However, for the identity distress issue values, there was an interaction effect between ethnic identity and country of birth, $F(6, 509) = 2.20$, $p= .04$, $\eta^2 = 0.025$, the effect of the interaction was small and explained only 2,5 % of the variance. To further analyze the interaction the "split file" function in SPSS was used by splitting the file by country of birth in order to look at the impact of ethnic identity on values separately for the different country of birth groups. Then the impact of ethnic identity was analyzed by doing a series of one-way ANOVAs for each category of country of birth (descriptive statistics are presented in table 5). There were significant differences $F(2, 5.31) = 6.47$, $p = .04$, $\omega^2 = 0.139$ (Welch F ratio was used since Levene's test showed equal variances could not be assumed) on the one-way ANOVA for ethnic identity, regarding participants with combined parental background. Pairwise comparisons using Games Howell post hoc test showed a significant difference between those with ethnic majority identity and those with mixed ethnic identity, were those with ethnic majority identity rated lower levels of identity distress, regarding the issue values. The rest of the split file one-way ANOVAs showed no significant differences for ethnic identity on values for; non-Swedish background $F(2, 27) = 5.98$, $p = .14$); Swedish participant, non-Swedish parental background $F(2, 66) = 1.93$, $p= .46$); and Swedish background $F(2, 342) = 3.55$, $p = .25$).

For the IID issue of religion, the non-parametric Kruskal Wallis test was used. Significant differences regarding country of birth were found for the issue of religion, $H = 11.30$, $p = .01$, $\eta^2 = 0.021$. Pairwise comparisons, using Bonferroni correction, showed that participants with non-Swedish background rated higher levels of distress, regarding religion, than participants with a Swedish background ($p = .049$). Kruskal Wallis test showed no significant differences regarding ethnic identity for the issue of religion, $H = 5.43$, $p = .07$. Descriptive statistics for the identity distress issue of religion are presented in table 4.

Table 5

Means, standard deviations and number of participants for the "values" issue on identity issue distress scale presented as ethnic identity split by country of birth

| | Ethnic identity | | | | | | | | |
| | Majority | | | Mixed | | | Minority | | |
Country of birth	M	(SD)	N	M	(SD)	N	M	(SD)	N
Non-Swedish background	1.60	(0.89)	5	2.29	(1.26)	17	2.71	(1.21)	50
Swedish participant, non-Swedish parental background	2.75	(1.50)	4	2.28	(1.14)	43	2.05	(0.95)	22
Combined parental background	1.38[a]	(0.67)	21	2.33[b]	(1.24)	33	2.67	(1.53)	3
Swedish background	2.11	(1.15)	322	2.14	(0.83)	22	4.00	.	1

Note. Values and ratings from 1 (Not at all) to 5 (Very severely)
[a,b] $p < .05$

Sense of Identity, Ethnic Identity and Country of Birth

A two-way between-groups MANOVA was performed to investigate differences between ethnic identity, country of birth and sense of identity, as measured by EPSI. Two dependent variables were used: EPSI coherence and EPSI confusion. The independent variables were ethnic identity and country of birth, see descriptive statistics in table 6.

Preliminary assumption testing was conducted to check for normality, linearity, univariate and multivariate outliers, homogeneity of variance-covariance matrices and multicollinearity, with no serious violations noted. There were no statistically significant differences for neither ethnic identity, $F(4, 496) = 0.42$, $p=.80$, Pillai's Trace = 0.007; nor country of birth, $F(5, 496) = 0.30$, $p= .94$, Pillai's Trace = 0.007; nor the interaction effect, $F(10, 496) = 0.39$, $p=.95$, Pillai's Trace =0.016.

Table 6

Mean, standard deviations and number of participants for ethnic identity and country of birth on the continuous scale of EPSI, subscales identity coherence and identity confusion

	EPSI coherence		EPSI confusion		
Independent variables	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*N*
Ethnic identity					
Majority	3.69	(0.75)	2.50	(0.74)	173
Mixed	3.81	(0.68)	2.59	(0.82)	61
Minority	3.63	(0.68)	2.79	(0.65)	25
Country of birth					
Swedish background	3.70	(0.73)	2.49	(0.74)	169
Combined parental background	3.79	(0.82)	2.48	(0.71)	30
Swedish participant, non-Swedish parental background	3.66	(0.59)	2.73	(0.67)	35
Non-Swedish background	3.64	(0.81)	2.75	(0.96)	25
Total	3.70	(0.73)	2.55	(0.76)	259

Note. Values and ratings from 1 (Not accurate at all) to 5 (Entirely accurate).

Satisfaction with Life, Ethnic Identity and Country of Birth

To explore the influence of ethnic identity and country of birth on SWLS, a two-way ANOVA was conducted. However, equal variances could not be assumed, and two separate one-way ANOVAs were performed to enable measures that are more robust. A one-way ANOVA exploring the influence of country of birth on SWLS showed a significant effect $F(3, 111.34) = 3.19$, $p= .03$, $\omega^2 = 0.001$ (Welch F ratio was used since Levene's test showed equal variances could not be assumed). Pairwise comparisons using Games Howell post hoc test showed no significant difference between the different groups: Swedish background ($M = 25.43$, $SD = 5.04$); combined parental background ($M = 25.50$, $SD = 5.78$); Swedish participant, non-Swedish parental background ($M = 24.04$, $SD = 5.25$) and non-Swedish background ($M = 22.90$, $SD = 6.89$).

Another one-way ANOVA exploring the influence of ethnic identity on SWLS showed a significant effect $F(2, 502) = 6.41$, $p= .002$, $\eta^2 = 0.025$. Pairwise comparisons, using Tukey HSD post hoc, reported a significant difference $p= .001$ between ethnic majority identity ($M = 25.42$, $SD = 5.10$) and ethnic minority identity, were participants with ethnic minority identity rated lover levels of life satisfaction ($M = 22.59$, $SD = 6.17$). No significant difference between participants with mixed ethnic identity ($M = 24.86$, $SD = 5.42$) and any of the other groups were found.

Self-Esteem, Ethnic Identity and Country of Birth

To explore the influence of ethnic identity and country of birth on SISE, one-way ANOVAs were conducted, since assumptions to conduct a two-way ANOVA could not be met. The one-way ANOVA exploring the influence of ethnic identity on SISE reported no significant differences between ethnic majority identity ($M = 3.59$, $SD = 1.01$), mixed ethnic identity ($M = 3.77$, $SD = 1.04$) and ethnic minority identity ($M = 3.46$, $SD = 1.03$), $F(2, 527) = 2.04$, $p = .13$.

A one-way ANOVA investigating the influence of country of birth on SISE showed no significant differences, $F(3, 126.12) = 1.51$, $p = .22$ (Welch F ratio was used since Levene's test showed equal variances could not be assumed). The different groups in country of birth were: Swedish background ($M = 3.60$, $SD = 1.00$); combined parental background ($M = 3.77$, $SD = 1.05$); Swedish participant, non-Swedish parental background ($M = 3.76$, $SD = 0.79$) and non-Swedish background ($M = 3.41$, $SD = 1.34$).

Discussion

The purpose of the present study was to explore ethnic identity in relation to country of birth among young people in Sweden and the possible influence on identity development and psychological well-being. The main results indicated that ethnic identity and country of birth relate to each other in such a way that participants with ethnic majority identity tended to have a Swedish background; participants with mixed ethnic identity tended to have a more varied background (e.g. combined parental background or Swedish participant, non-Swedish parental background); and participants with ethnic minority identity tended to have a non-Swedish background. Other results in this study were: differences in perceived stress regarding religion for country of birth; an interaction between country of birth and ethnic identity for the identity distress issue of values; and differences in life satisfaction regarding ethnic identity. In the discussion below these results are discussed in relation to the three areas that were investigated in this study: how does ethnic identity relate to country of birth, and the influence of ethnic identity and country of birth on identity development as well as the influence on psychological well-being.

How does ethnic identity relate to country of birth?

There is an assumption that ethnicity and race are closely linked (Schwartz et al., 2014) and, even though country of birth is not the same as race, it is therefore not surprising that in this study individuals who identified themselves with a Swedish ethnic identity (e.g. ethnic majority identity) tended to have a Swedish background. For the rest of the participants a similar pattern could be observed where those with a mixed ethnic identity tended to have a varied country of birth/background (e.g. having a combined parental background or being Swedish with a non-Swedish parental background), and those with ethnic minority identity tended to have a non-Swedish background. However, the results also suggest that there are some important individual differences within these

groups and that although participants mainly follow the pattern presented above it does not tell the whole story of how ethnic identity is related to country of birth in the Swedish context. Many of the participants with an ethnic minority identity (e.g., identifying as one or more ethnicities, none being Swedish) were Swedish participants with a non-Swedish parental background, even if most had a completely non-Swedish background. For the group of participants with mixed ethnic identity (e.g., identifying as both Swedish and at least one other ethnicity) country of birth varied and included all backgrounds, even if Swedish participants with non-Swedish parental background were most common. Perhaps these results can be explained as a result of the integration policies in Sweden, that promote integration but at the same time encourages individuals to keep customs from their country of origin (e.g. entitlement to mother tongue instruction) (Vedder & Virta, 2005), perhaps making integration an acculturation strategy (Vedder & Virta, 2005). This could lead to ethnic identity being less dependent on country of birth and more dependent on for example customs and values. Thus, making ethnic identity and country of birth appear less related in Sweden than for example in the United States, where they appear to be closely linked in everyday life (Schwartz et al., 2014). When categorizing individuals with regards to race, origin or ethnicity there is always a risk of racism (Wikström, 2009) and it is thus important with more research regarding these two categorizations in relation to more variables to get a better understanding of the effects of categorizing individuals by for example ethnic identity and country of birth.

Results from this study indicate that Swedish participants with a non-Swedish parental background and participants with a combined parental background, who are sometimes regarded as one and the same group, should perhaps be regarded as two separate groups. These two groups of participants mainly had a mixed ethnic identity, but for those with a combined parental background the second largest part identified as solely Swedish, whereas for the Swedish participants with a non-Swedish parental background the second largest part, had an ethnic minority identity. This pattern can perhaps be explained by findings in previous research which has showed that adolescents and emerging adults in Sweden experience that others sometimes have the power to limit their ethnic identity and their possibilities to identify as a certain ethnic group (Gyberg et al., 2017; Svensson et al., 2018). In Sweden these borders are foremost dictated by the level of overt "whiteness", and thus "Swedishness", is something an individual possesses (Lundström, 2007), making it perhaps easier for those with parents born abroad (e.g. Swedish participant, non-Swedish parental background) to pass as having a non-Swedish ethnicity than for those with a combined parental background, the same way it may be easier for those with at least one Swedish born parent to pass as Swedish.

The influence of ethnic identity and country of birth on identity and psychological well-being

Identity. The results in this study show that with regards to ethnic identity and country of birth there are no differences in relation to sense of identity. In line with existing research (Schwartz et al., 2009; Törnblom, 2015) this means that sense of coherence and confusion did not differ depending on ethnic identity or country of birth in the Swedish context. This is consistent with EPSI being consistent across ethnicities and the Swedish context does not appear to stand out (Schwartz et al., 2009).

However, with regards to identity distress the results of this study showed some differences with regards to ethnic identity and country of birth concerning issues of religion and values. It is not surprising that differences were found in these areas (religion and values) for they are areas that are often considered to be central to ethnicity (Wikström, 2009). This study showed that participants with a non-Swedish background rated higher levels of distress with regards to the issue of religion than participants with a solely Swedish background. Perhaps this can be explained with Sweden being the second most secular-rational country in the world (World Value Survey, 2015) and the contrast of the participant's country of birth and Sweden may be causes for distress. Previous research regarding young people in Sweden has shown that Swedish emerging adults do not always consider religion a given part of identity and that their own religious beliefs are often changeable (Frisén & Bergh, 2006). However, no significant differences were found for religion and ethnic identity, indicating that when investigating questions related to religion the distinction between country of birth and ethnic identity matter, and that religion is perhaps more closely linked to country of birth than ethnic identity. This would mean that religion may not be as closely linked to social identity and may be more closely linked to nationality and national customs. It is therefore important to consider the theoretical basis when investigating religion in relation to country of birth or ethnic identity.

This study also showed that with regards to values, participants with a combined parental background rated lower levels of distress if they had an ethnic majority identity than if they had a mixed ethnic identity (e.g. identifying as both Swedish and at least one other ethnicity). To understand these results, more research is needed and only speculations can be made as to why these differences exists. Perhaps those with a mixed ethnic identity experience more conflicting values than those with a solely Swedish ethnic identity. It is also possible that those identifying as solely Swedish more often "pass" as Swedish due to physical attributes of "whiteness" than those with a mixed ethnic identity and may therefore not experience being denied their ethnic identity, thus rating lower levels of distress regarding values (Gyberg et al., 2017; Lundström, 2007; Svensson et al., 2018). Another possible explanation is that identifying as solely Swedish in Sweden (e.g. ethnic majority identity) means identifying with Swedish values and therefore causing lower levels of distress.

Although some differences were found regarding the experience of identity distress they were few and the results from this study showed no differences for neither ethnic identity nor country of birth regarding general identity distress or identity distress for areas such as sexuality, friendships and work. This is not consistent with previous research where minorities showed higher levels of distress (Berman et al., 2004), however this research was not performed in Sweden. Sweden is a country with a cultural environment that encourages identity explorations (Ferrer-Wreder et al., 2012) as well as integration (Vedder & Virta, 2005) and identity distress have been shown to be reduced by the ability to mix new norms, because of globalization, with old values, in the existing culture (Berman et al., 2014). Swedish youth from the second and first generation of immigrants showed better school adjustment and less behavioral problems than the native Swedish youth (Sam, Vedder, Liebkind, Neto, & Virta, 2008), indications that the Swedish context may be different than other countries. Thus, it may not be as surprising that the results showed so few differences. Smith, Maas & van Tubergen (2014) showed that ethnic homophily (mainly befriending others with the same ethnicity) regards Swedish adolescents, even when controlling for culture and socioeconomic status. This

may help regulate the levels of identity distress due to ones surrounding having the same values and norms as one self.

Psychological well-being. In this study self-esteem was found to not differ between groups regarding ethnic identity and country of birth. This is also consistent with the findings made by Virta el al. (2004) where Swedish Turks did not differ in self-esteem from their national peers.

Differences were however found in life satisfaction, where those identifying as solely Swedish (e.g. ethnic majority identity) had higher levels of life satisfaction than those with ethnic minority identity. This is not consistent with findings from Virta et al. (2004) who found no difference in life satisfaction between the Swedish majority and Turks in Sweden. However, Vitra et al. (2004) argued that life satisfaction and general psychological well-being could differ not only between majority and minority but also between different ethnic groups. Values and needs can act as moderators for the levels of life satisfaction (Oishi et al., 2009) and it is therefore not surprising that there were differences regarding ethnic identity, since ethnic identity is closely linked to values (Wikström, 2009). The effect of ethnic identity was however small, and the implications of this result should therefore be interpreted with caution.

For country of birth no differences were found regarding levels of life satisfaction. According to Diener (2009) it is questionable to use national borders as means to categorize or compare life satisfaction, for there are many regional differences and cultures within a country. The results of this study indicate that ethnic identity may be a better way of categorizing participants when measuring levels of life satisfaction, as it may be more sensitive to cultures and norms.

Limitations and directions for future research.

The results of this study should be interpreted with regards to its limitations. One of the limitations is the uneven distribution of participants across the groups that can have affected the analyses/results in this study. The group with ethnic majority identity as well as the group with a Swedish background, were much larger than the other groups and some groups, such as the group with individuals with ethnic minority identity and a Swedish background. In this study several analyses are conducted on the same material. This is problematic due to the "multiple comparisons problem", meaning that the risk of finding statistical significance without there actually being one increases when several analyses are conducted on the same material. The results in this study should therefore be interpreted with caution.

In this study the country of birth group *combined parental background* contains both participants born abroad and participants born in Sweden. This is a limitation in the study due to the possibility of this affecting the results for this group. Perhaps later research should avoid this and divide this group, by the participant's background, into two different groups.

Another limitation is that this study excluded some family constellations such as adoptees due to them being few. In this study the participants were asked to give information about two parents, the participants who only gave information about one parent were still included. However, this may exclude other family constellations and participants who feel as though they have more than two parents (e.g. having polygamist parents or separated parents with new partners) may feel excluded or have a tough time

choosing which parents to include information about. This is something to consider in future research.

With regards to measurements, this study used the satisfaction with life scale (SWLS) to assess levels of life satisfaction. Previous research has found invariances on SWLS in relation to age and cultures (Hultell & Gustavsson, 2007; Jang et al., 2017) and Jang et al. (2017) recommend caution when comparing life satisfaction, using SWLS, across cultures. Another limitation regarding measurement in this study was that one item was excluded from the form EPSI, therefore it is important to recognize that the results regarding sense of identity presented in this study does not include the gender dimension of EPSI.

In this study ethnic identity was coded into majority, mixed and minority, and thus the study measures the influence of the ethnic identity position in society rather than the influence of specific ethnic identities. There were theoretical reasons for this, for example the tendency for "Swede" and "immigrant" to be main categories of ethnic identity in Sweden (Ferrer-Wreder, Trost, Lorente, & Mansoory, 2012; Lundström, 2007), but as Virta et al. (2004) argues there can be differences between different ethnic groups. It is therefore important to point out that the mixed ethnic identity group as well as the ethnic minority identity group are not homogenous regarding specific ethnicities.

Lastly, the participants in this study came from Gymnasium and University level, both these levels of education are voluntary in Sweden, although most Swedish adolescents attend Gymnasium, this may mean that marginalized groups in the Swedish society are underrepresented in this study, especially within the students at university level.

Some ideas of considerations to be taken in future research are mentioned above. As for future research it may be relevant to further investigate ethnic identity in relation to country of birth, in both Sweden and other countries and cultures. Another area for research is to investigate how other variables, such as level of integration in residential area and experiences of discrimination, may impact ethnic identity in Sweden.

Conclusion

The aim of the present study was to explore ethnic identity in relation to country of birth among young people in Sweden and their possible influence on identity development and psychological well-being. In this study the results indicate that ethnic identity and country of birth relate to each other in such that participants with ethnic majority identity tend to have a Swedish background; participants with mixed ethnic identity tend to have a more varied background (e.g. combined parental background or Swedish participant, non-Swedish parental background); and participants with ethnic minority identity tend to have a non-Swedish background. However, there are, what could be, important individual deviations from this pattern. The results indicate that identity development does not differ with regards to ethnic identities or country of birth for Swedish youth, except for experiences of identity distress in regard to religion and values. The results also indicate that levels of life satisfaction differ between the ethnic minority and the ethnic majority, but that psychological well-being does not differ otherwise. Thus, the results suggest that ethnic identity and country of birth influence areas of religion, values and life satisfaction for young people in Sweden and that when researching these areas considerations regarding ethnic identity and country of birth should be taken.

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