

IDENTITY:

Understanding Aspects of Process, Content, and Structure in Context

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Avhandlingen för avläggande av filosofie doktorsexamen i psykologi, som med vederbörligt tillstånd av samhällsvetenskapliga fakultetsstyrelsen vid Göteborgs universitet kommer att offentligas försvaras fredagen den 8 november 2019, klockan 10.00 i sal F1, Psykologiska institutionen, Haraldsgatan 1, Göteborg.

Fakultetsopponent: Professor Renee V. Galliher, Department of Psychology, Utah State University, U.S.

Föreliggande avhandling grundar sig på följande artiklar:

- I. Gyberg, F., & Friséen, A. (2017). Identity status, gender, and social comparison among young adults. *Identity, 17*, 239-252. doi:10.1080/15283488.2017.1379905
- II. Gyberg, F., Friséen, A., Syed, M., Wängqvist, M., & Svensson, Y. (2018). "Another kind of Swede": Swedish youth's ethnic identity narratives. *Emerging Adulthood, 6*, 17-31. doi:10.1177/2167696817690087
- III. Gyberg, F., Friséen, A., & Syed, M. (2019). "Being stuck between two worlds": *Identity configurations of occupational and family identities*. Provisional acceptance in Identity.



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Abstract

Gyberg, F. (2019). *Identity: Understanding aspects of process, content, and structure in context*. Department of Psychology, University of Gothenburg, Sweden.

The overall aim of this thesis was to broaden our knowledge of identity by using an integrated theoretical approach to understanding multidimensional aspects of identity process, content, and structure. Specifically, in **Study I**, the aim was to investigate identity processes among young adults in Sweden by studying identity status (i.e., varying degrees of exploration and commitment to identity-defining issues) globally and across domains (i.e., occupation, romantic relationships, parenthood, and work/family priorities). In addition, differences in social comparison between identity statuses were investigated. The results indicated that most of the 124 participants (50% women, *Age* 33.29 years) had made identity-defining commitments, and gender differences in identity status were found in the occupational and parenthood domains. In addition, differences in social comparison orientation were found only in the parenthood domain, where those actively exploring without making commitments scored higher in social comparison than did those who had not explored this domain. The aim of **Study II** was to investigate identity content by studying what types of ethnicity-related experiences were prevalent among young people in Sweden with and without an immigrant background (i.e., at least one parent born outside Sweden). Using a narrative approach, 95 participants (87% women, 66% with an immigrant background, *Age* = 19.62) shared their ethnicity-related experiences. Through thematic analysis, we found six themes for which most of the related narratives were about struggling to adapt and fit in, regardless of age, ethnicity, or immigrant status. In **Study III**, the aim was to investigate identity structure by studying how young adults in Sweden negotiated their sometimes conflicting multiple identifications of occupation and family into different types of identity configurations. Six different types of identity configurations were found among the participants (the same sample as in Study I) varying conceptually on two dimensions: 1) choosing or not choosing one identification over another and 2) level of certainty, ambivalence, or discrepancy in prioritizing between work and family. Few gender differences were found across the identity configurations. The quantitative analyses indicated differences in the degree of internal conflict and life satisfaction between different identity configurations. In sum, this thesis emphasizes the complexity of identity development and the importance of cultural context in obtaining a multidimensional understanding of aspects related to the process, content, and structure that constitute identity.

Keywords: identity development, identity process, identity content, identity structure, gender, ethnicity, cultural context