

Acculturation and Identity in Adolescents in Norway

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Abstract

This survey is inspired by the International Comparative Study of Ethnocultural Youth (ICSEY), a comprehensive study which has looked at acculturation and cultural identity in adolescents from immigrant families across 13 countries. In the present survey 16 immigrant youths from two different ethnic minority groups in Norway – Somali and Albanian – were interviewed to find out more about their *acculturation attitudes and experiences* and their *cultural identities*. Eight Norwegian teenagers were also questioned. As regards acculturation, the Somali and Albanian adolescents were interviewed about how they prefer to live in the Norwegian society, i.e. to what extent they wish to retain their ethnic culture and to what extent they prefer to become involved with the larger society. In addition, they were questioned about their social contacts with peers, language proficiency and use, values as regards family relationships, as well as their perceived notion of discrimination. The Norwegian adolescents, on the other hand, were questioned on their attitudes towards cultural maintenance and intercultural contact, their social contacts with peers and their family relationship values. As to the question of cultural identity, the focus has been on to what extent the respondents identify with their ethnic group and with the larger society. The survey shows that the respondents generally favour an integration profile, and the non-Norwegian adolescents on average display a somewhat stronger ethnic identity than a Norwegian identity.

Key words: *acculturation, adaptation, adolescents, Albanian, attitudes, cultural, discrimination, ethnic, identity, immigration, minority, Norwegian, Somali, values, youth*

1. Introduction

In the wake of the riots in the French suburbs in the autumn of 2005, the debate about the successful integration of immigrant youth has intensified in many European countries. Norway has been no exception. Government white papers, scientific reports, newspaper articles and the general public debate have revolved around topics such as government policies towards immigration and integration, drop-out rates in upper secondary school, juvenile delinquents, discrimination, discussions on the use of discriminatory language and the like. This can be observed both on the national level and in the local communities. In the small town of Halden, with its 27,000 citizens in the south-eastern corner of Norway, the local authorities are now working on a report on the situation concerning adolescents with immigrant backgrounds and their adaptation. The situation in Halden may serve as a starting point for this paper, as the focus here is on how immigrant youth live in, and adapt to, the larger society – and as local adolescents have been used as sources of information. Central concepts in this respect are *cultural identity* and *acculturation*.

The present survey is inspired by the International Comparative Study of Ethnocultural Youth (ICSEY), a comprehensive project which has looked at acculturation and cultural identity in more than 5,000 immigrant youth in 13 different countries (Berry, Phinney, Sam & Vedder 2006). Working within the field of cross-cultural psychology, the designers of this study have aimed at gathering empirical data to find out more about "how, and how well, immigrants (as groups and as individuals) adapt to the larger society" (p. 2). As my own survey is comparably much smaller it is obviously impossible to cover all the aspects of a study such as that one. However, some of the features included in the ICSEY project have been applied in this survey in the analysis of how representatives of three different ethnocultural adolescent (1) groups in Halden relate to acculturation and cultural identity. In particular, I am interested

in to what extent they identify with members of their own ethnocultural group and with the members of the larger society.

2. Theoretical framework

2.1 Acculturation

One important tradition of research in the study of immigration phenomena is the study of *acculturation*. The concept of acculturation was developed in anthropology to help explain and understand the changes that take place when cultural groups come into contact with other cultural groups. A classical definition from Redfield, Linton and Herskovits (1936) refers to it as "those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original culture patterns of either or both groups" (quoted in Phinney, Berry, Vedder & Liebkind 2006:72). As can be seen, this definition emphasises changes that take place at the *group* level. However, as it is fairly well established that there may be considerable variations in how individuals within a group experience and relate to such changes, it may be equally interesting to look at changes on the *individual* level. In cross-cultural psychology, this is often referred to as *psychological acculturation* (see e.g. Berry & Sam 1997). When studying how, and how well, individuals in a culture contact situation adapt, it may be fruitful to look at both levels.

Acculturation, both in groups and across individuals, involves a number of different aspects. One such aspect concerns the attitudes that individuals have towards the fact that they live in, and between, two cultures. Such attitudes may be feelings and opinions towards their own cultural heritage and towards that of the larger society. Other aspects are the extent of social contacts with peers, language proficiency and use, values as regards family relationships and perceived discrimination. Still other aspects could be added. In this survey, however, I have chosen to restrict my investigation to the five mentioned here.

2.2 Cultural identity

Another important field of study within immigration research is *cultural identity* formation. Interestingly, in the acculturation literature it is not uncommon to include cultural identity within the concept of acculturation. According to Phinney, Berry, Vedder & Liebkind (2006), "[c]ultural identity can be thought of as an aspect of acculturation that focuses on immigrants' sense of self [...]. Conceptually, it includes both ethnic identity and national identity" (p. 71). One reason for subsuming cultural identity under acculturation is, of course, that people's identities are prone to change in response to contextual factors. I will return to this in some detail below.

The definition by Phinney et. al. is also relevant here for two other reasons: firstly, because it emphasises the *self-evaluative* characteristic of identity, and, secondly, because it divides the conception into *ethnic* and *national*.(2) The self-evaluative element is something which is also stressed by scholars outside the field of cross-cultural psychology. Hall & McGrew (1992), for example, working from a culture study tradition, points to how we all construct our own identities by developing "'narratives of the self' about ourselves". (p. 272). The other point made, namely the division of identity into ethnic and national, is interesting here as the major focus of this survey is on to what extent immigrant youth identify with the two levels. Before I elaborate on this, however, a closer examination of the term ethnic identity is called for.

Ethnic identity theory draws on social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner 1979), which stresses the importance of group membership for individual identity and looks at the influence of social categorisation and social comparison on self-esteem. According to Ward, Bochner & Furnham (2001), "[o]n the most basic level ethnic or cultural identification involves the recognition, categorisation or self-identification of oneself as a member of an ethnocultural group" (p. 99). In other words, the fundamental question of "Who am I?" is often answered by pointing to membership of a particular ethnocultural group. More specifically, the self-identification component also often involves elements of affirmation, pride, and a positive evaluation of the group that one identifies with. Thus, in acculturation research there is typically focus on variables like belongingness (to what extent does one feel that one belongs to a particular group), centrality (how important is group membership for one's self-identification), evaluation

(positive and negative views of one's own group) and traditions (acceptance and practice of the group's customs and traditions) (*ibid.* p. 100).

The reason why some researchers choose to include identity formation in acculturation research is, as pointed out above, that the concept of self in many immigrants, especially younger ones, typically evolves (Phinney 2003). By improving language proficiency, establishing new contacts with members of the larger society and learning to crack the cultural codes of the national culture, immigrants often start identifying with it to a larger degree. Not infrequently, several immigrants therefore start adopting double self-identification labels, such as "Mexican-American" or "Pakistani-Norwegian". This is commonly referred to as *bicultural identity* (see e.g. Berry & Sam 1997:297). Over time this can even develop into a situation where the national identification becomes the stronger one and people adopt only the national identification label, such as "American" or "Norwegian" (Phinney, Berry, Vedder & Liebkind 2006:77).

2.3 Acculturation attitudes

As previously mentioned, individuals' attitudes towards the fact that they live in a culture contact situation are an important aspect of acculturation research. In much of the literature, such attitudes have been linked to cultural identity on a one-dimensional scale. In this approach, researchers have looked at to what extent people wish to orient themselves either towards their own ethnic group or towards the national society. In a more recently developed model, however, Berry (1974, 1980) suggests that acculturation preference should be studied along two dimensions: (i) to what extent do individuals wish to maintain or give up their cultural attributes, and (ii) to what extent do individuals want to have contact with other groups, or to stick to members of their own groups. When measuring these dimensions against each other, the different orientations will yield four acculturation profiles: a) when immigrants want to maintain their own ethnic culture but do not want to have contact with other groups, they prefer *separation*; b) when immigrants want to hold on to their ethnic traditions and at the same time seek contact with other groups, they favour *integration*; c) when they do not want to cultivate their ethnic heritage and prefer contact with other cultural groups, this can be labelled *assimilation*; and d) when they neither want to maintain their ethnic background nor want contact with other groups, this may be termed *marginalisation* (Phinney, Berry, Vedder & Liebkind 2006:74-75). These four profiles can be visualised as follows:

Fig. 1.1 Acculturation attitudes of immigrant groups

[Click here for figure \(appearing soon\)](#)

According to Phinney, Berry, Vedder & Liebkind (2006) "[f]or integration to occur, a mutual accommodation is required, involving the acceptance by both dominant and nondominant groups of the rights of all groups to live as culturally different people who interact within the same society" (p.74). Therefore, in the discussion on immigrants' acculturation profiles, it is also interesting to look at the acculturation attitudes of the *dominant ethnocultural group* in the society of settlement. These acculturation attitudes can be found by asking members of the larger society whether immigrants should (i) maintain or give up their cultural attributes, and (ii) stick to themselves or seek contact with other ethnocultural groups. The results then will yield another two-dimensional pattern similar to the one just mentioned (compare the four profiles above): a) segregation; b) multiculturalism; c) melting pot; and d) exclusion. These four profiles can be illustrated as follows:

Fig. 1.2 Acculturation attitudes of the larger society

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3. Methodological considerations

In this study eight Kosovo-Albanian and eight Somali adolescents aged 16-21 were interviewed to find out more about their acculturation attitudes, cultural identity, language proficiency and use, values as regards family relationships and perceived notion of discrimination. 13 of them are students at the local upper secondary school in Halden. Three are students at Østfold University College. In addition, eight

ethnic Norwegian upper secondary students were interviewed to provide examples of acculturation attitudes of national adolescents.

Data was collected using strategic selection, with a view to ensuring a sample that was as representative as possible. Students from five different study branches were interviewed, and the sample was divided equally between boys and girls. The respondents were asked background questions concerning ethnic origin, time spent in Norway and branch of study. As for acculturation variables, they were asked about their perceived language proficiency, use of ethnic language vs. use of Norwegian at home, time spent with peers from their own cultural groups vs. other groups and to what extent they feel discriminated against because of their ethnic background. When it comes to identity (ethnic and national), the adolescents were asked to what extent they feel, and are proud, that they are Somali / Kosovo-Albanian and to what extent they feel, and are proud, that they are Norwegian.(4)

The questions were based largely on questions from the ICSEY project. For example, for the acculturation variable 'want contact with other groups', the students were asked to what extent they agreed with statements like "I want to have only [ethnic group] friends" and "I want to have both [ethnic group] friends and ethnic Norwegian friends" on a scale from 1 (not at all) to 5 (totally agree).

Attempts were made to clarify all questions with the respondents before they answered, and at some points follow-up questions were made (like "why do you not feel proud of being Norwegian?"). At the end of the questioning session, I had a brief discussion with the respondents on their views of integration of immigrants in general and their opinions on the media focus of the last months on immigrant youth and adaptation.

No specific statistical method was made to compute the answers, and strict methodological considerations of reliability and validity have not been made. Rather, the questions were used as a starting point for a discussion of identity and acculturation of immigrant youth in Halden and Norway.

Obviously, the small number of respondents makes the generalization value of the findings rather limited. However, the main aim here has been to find out more about how some immigrant youth in Halden relate to questions of identity and adaptation. No categorical conclusions as to the general state of affairs among ethnocultural youth in Norway will therefore be made.

4. Findings

4.1 Somalis

4.1.1 Background and language

The majority of the Somali adolescents in this study have lived in Norway for a long time: six of them for 13 years or more, one for six years and one for five years. In the ICSEY study the former six would be labelled second generation immigrants (born in the country of settlement or having immigrated before the age of seven), whereas the latter two would be defined as first generation.

All of them indicate a language proficiency of between 3 (average) and 5 (excellent).(5) Interestingly, all the girls report excellent proficiency on all the four variables (understanding, speaking, reading, writing), whereas the boys report a slightly lower level of proficiency, especially on the speaking and writing variables. The student with the shortest period of stay reports the lowest score: average on speaking and average on writing. As for use of language, the respondents indicate that they speak more Somali at home (three boys have put "all the time" and four girls have put "often") than they speak Norwegian (two of the girls and one of the boys indicate "often", whereas the one with only five years in Norway says "never"). As expected, some of the adolescents point out that they speak more Norwegian with their brothers and sisters than with their parents.

In terms of contact with peers, all the students state that they have both Somali and Norwegian close friends. Here it is interesting to observe that most of them seem to spend just as much time with their Norwegian friends as with their Somali friends. One of them also emphasises that she has a mix of Norwegian and Somali friends.

4.1.2 Identity

Concerning *identity*, all the respondents agree strongly with the statement "I am proud of being Somali". When confronted with the statement "I feel that I am Somali", four of them strongly agree, three of them partially agree and one is neutral. There are no conspicuous differences between boys and girls. When asked about Norwegian identity, the respondents are less resolute: three strongly agree with the statement "proud of being Norwegian", one partially agrees, one is neutral, one partially disagrees and one strongly disagrees. One strongly agrees that she feels Norwegian, one partially agrees, three are neutral, two partially disagree and one strongly disagrees. There are no conspicuous differences between boys and girls. However, the one with the shortest stay in Norway strongly disagrees with both the statements "proud that I am Norwegian and "feel that I am Norwegian".

When asked to comment on the feeling of being Norwegian, one of the girls does not quite seem to understand the question, saying: "But I am not Norwegian". When further queried about this point she elaborates: "I am not Norwegian, but I am proud of living in Norway". Another respondent – the oldest of the girls – says that, when it comes to identity, "I feel like somewhere in the middle, not completely Somali and not completely Norwegian".

Consequently, on the identity variable, it seems clear that these adolescents generally feel more strongly Somali than Norwegian. Most of them also feel Norwegian to some extent, but there is more individual variation in their answers on this variable. For example, when asked to go into detail on this issue, two of them answer that Norwegian identity for them has more to do with citizenship than cultural identity.

Interestingly, the one who strongly agrees with the statements "I feel that I am Norwegian" and "I am proud of being Norwegian", is a girl who has lived in Norway since the age of one. She also reports excellent language proficiency and frequent use of Norwegian at home and has three to six Norwegian friends with whom she spends a lot of time. Conversely, the one who strongly disagrees with the same two statements is a boy who has stayed only five years in the country. He reports average oral and written proficiency and no use of Norwegian at home, and he has very few close Norwegian friends with whom he hardly ever spends any time. These two examples, although single cases, lend support to the hypothesis that young immigrants who have stayed in the country of settlement for a long time, who speak the language well and who have extensive contact with members of the dominant culture develop towards a *bicultural* identity (see section 2.2).

4.1.3 Acculturation profiles

As for the *acculturation profiles* discussed in section 2.3 we will now look at to what extent the students want to give up or maintain their heritage culture, and to what extent they want contact with their own ethnic group and with members of the national society.

In terms of attitudes towards heritage culture maintenance it has already been established that all the respondents are proud of being Somali. To find out more about these attitudes I asked them to report on their celebration of Somali holidays (including religious festivals) and state whether they engage in "Somali cultural activities in their spare time". None of the respondents seemed to engage in Somali cultural activities. Many of them were in doubt as to what was meant by this question, and when I suggested "for example, Somali folk music or folk dance", they replied negatively. However, when it comes to religious festivals (such as Eid), five report that they "very often" take part in such festivals, two report "often", and only one puts "rarely". The one indicating "rarely" was the same student who said that she felt "not completely Somali and not completely Norwegian" (see above).

Thus, it seems fair to say that the Somali youth in this study score high on the cultural maintenance variable. Although they deny taking part in Somali cultural activities like folk dance in their spare time, one could consider religion to be a sufficiently important cultural factor to warrant this interpretation.

Regarding *preferred contact* with other groups, all the Somali students maintain that they want contact with both Somali and ethnic Norwegian peers (two of them partially agree and six of them strongly agree with the statement "I want to have both Somali and ethnic Norwegian friends"). Similarly, they partially or strongly disagree with the statements "I want to have only Norwegian / only Somali / neither

Norwegian, nor Somali friends". This indicates that they prefer assimilation or integration, rather than separation or marginalisation (cf. fig. 1.1).

In consequence, when measuring the cultural maintenance variable against the contact variable, it becomes clear that most of the Somali youths under investigation display an integration profile. They are proud of, and seem to want to hold on to, their Somali culture, at the same time as they want contact with ethnic Norwegian youth (cf. fig. 1.1).

4.1.4 Family relationship values

The retention or rejection of family relationship values is another indicator of acculturation. Research has shown that non-Western immigrants are generally more likely to value close family relationships and obligations towards the family than do members of the dominant culture in many Western countries (see e.g. Phinney, Berry, Vedder & Liebkind 2006:81). It can therefore be relevant to include questions related to this issue in a study such as this. Attempts have therefore been made to find out whether the respondents had noticed any differences in values between their own ethnic culture and the Norwegian one, and, if so, what they thought about it.

When confronted with the statement "16-year-olds should always obey their parents", five of the students strongly agree, two are neutral and one partially disagrees. As to the statement "When a girl is 16, it is up to her to decide whom to date" one partially disagrees, five are neutral and two strongly agree. Regarding these two questions, then, the respondents seem to hold strong or fairly strong family relationship values. However, when asked to comment on the statement "Young people have a duty to help their parents in the home", there is much more disagreement between the respondents (the answers also differ equally between boys and girls). Progressing to the statements "Young people should decide for themselves whom to be friends with" and "Young people should decide for themselves what education to take", most of the respondents strongly agree. Working from the hypothesis that their parents want a stronger influence on the choice of their children's friends and the choice of their education, one may conclude that on these issues, the adolescents do not hold equally strong family relationship values.(6)

When asked what they think of family relationship values generally and differences between Norwegian and Somali culture in particular, all of them agree that there are differences. One of the boys sums it up quite characteristically, saying that "immigrant youth have more respect for their parents. Norwegian youth should have more respect". Another one says: "Your parents have more experience and know what is good for you". The oldest of the girls first states that one should always obey one's parents, but then modifies this, saying that she strongly agrees that young people should be allowed to both choose their own friends, decide their own education, and decide for themselves whom to date. She comments: "If you are too protected, you won't learn anything". Regarding the question of whether their parents' values conflict with those of their own, one girl comments: "Some of the things your parents want you to do are easier to accept than others". Here it can be relevant to point to an additional comment given by one of the boys concerning the right of a young girl to choose a boyfriend: "In Islam you are not supposed to have a boy or a girlfriend before marriage, so in that sense the statement is irrelevant." This comment supports the assumption that religion can be an influential factor on family values, as discussed above (cf. above).

In conclusion, the Somali adolescents display fairly strong family relationship values, but compared to the Norwegian adolescents only marginally stronger (cf. section 4.3.3). Many of the respondents, across all ethnic groups, are quick to point out that there are a lot of factors complicating the questions, such as the type of issue under discussion ("what is it that your parents want you to do / to refrain from?") and the age of the adolescent ("there are differences between 16-year-olds and 20-year-olds"). Whether or not the results can be explained in terms of accultural changes – i.e. changes in the value system of the Somali adolescents because of influence from the Norwegian culture – is difficult to say on the basis of the very small student sample. Still, the findings correspond to the results of similar research. In this survey the boy with the shortest stay (five years) is the one who displays the strongest family relationship values, whereas the oldest of the girls, with more than 14 years in Norway behind her, exhibits the weakest family relationship values. Similarly, in the ICSEY study, young people who have stayed less than seven years in the new society show higher levels of support for family obligations (Phinney & Vedder 2006: 182). Thus, the family values of young people generally seem to be subject to accultural

change. According to Phinney and Vedder, there is "substantial research showing that immigrant adolescents adopt new attitudes and values more rapidly than do their parents" (ibid).

4.1.5 Perceived discrimination

Another factor which can affect acculturation is the perceived notions of prejudice and discrimination. As for the Somali students in this study, they report various types of experiences with this. When it comes to being discriminated against by teachers, they answer fairly consistently that they have not, or rarely, experienced such discrimination. Five of them strongly disagree with the statement "Norwegian teachers discriminate against ethnic non-dominant students", two partially disagree, and one strongly agrees. The one who agrees here is, interestingly enough, the oldest girl, who says that "Norwegian teachers typically believe that immigrant students do not know anything". There are no conspicuous differences between boys and girls.

When asked to comment on the statements "Norwegian students are negative towards ethnic minority students", the respondents seem to think that there is more discrimination: four partially disagree, two are neutral and two partially agree. As for the statement "Norwegians generally discriminate against ethnic minority students" two strongly disagree, two partially disagree, two are neutral, one partially disagrees and one strongly agrees." The oldest of the boys says the degree of discrimination is dependent on age, so that older Norwegians are more negative towards immigrants than younger people. The oldest girl, on her part, maintains that people are more negative outside Oslo. Finally, in response to the statement "I have often been called by a derogatory term because of my ethnic background", three strongly disagree, three partially disagree, one is neutral and one partially agrees with this statement.

In conclusion, it seems that most of the students generally do not feel discriminated against by teachers. Nor do they seem to have been exposed to much direct discrimination in terms of people calling them names. However, when it comes to discrimination from fellow students or Norwegians in general, some of them report that they have experienced more negative attitudes and behaviour. In a final comment on this issue, one of the girls insists that there is little discrimination and prejudice in Norway compared to other countries. The one who thinks that there is more discrimination in society at large says that "the media gives Norwegians a negative image of immigrants".

4.2 Kosovo-Albanians

4.2.1 Background and language

All the eight Kosovo-Albanians in this sample can be characterised as second generation immigrants (i.e. born in Norway or having immigrated before the age of seven). Aged 16 to 20, they have lived in Norway between 13 and 20 years. All of them report excellent Norwegian language skills. When it comes to language use at home, five of them insist that they speak Albanian all the time, two say "often" and one says "regularly".(7) In terms of using Norwegian at home, one says never, four say "rarely" and three say "regularly". There seems to be only minor differences between boys and girls. As was the case with the some of the Somali respondents, there are three Kosovo-Albanians who comment that they speak some Norwegian with their brothers and sisters, but rarely or never with their parents. One of the girls points out that her parents insist on speaking Albanian at home "in order that we should not forget our ethnic origin".

As for *contact* with peers, all the respondents, except one, report that they have both Kosovo-Albanian and Norwegian friends. The boys maintain that they have more Kosovo-Albanian friends than the girls, whereas the girls report that they have more Norwegian friends than the boys do. The girls also indicate that they spend more time with Norwegian friends than the boys do. When asked to elaborate on this issue, one of the girls stresses that she spends little time with friends in general because she is determined to get good grades in school and therefore wants to prioritize her school work. Two of the other girls – the oldest ones – report that they have a mix of close Norwegian and Kosovo-Albanian friends with whom they spend a lot of time. This stands in contrast to the boys, who – with one exception – point out that they have less contact with Norwegian friends (one of them says "no contact at all"). For the two who report some contact with Norwegian friends in their spare time, they say that they have developed these contacts through sports activities, such as football and basketball. As I will return to subsequently,

the boys seem to display a somewhat weaker integration profile than the girls – with one clear exception.

4.2.2 Identity

As with the Somali adolescents, all the Kosovo-Albanians strongly agree that they are proud of their ethnic origin. Regarding the feeling of being Kosovo-Albanian, they also all strongly agree – thereby displaying an even stronger ethnic identity than the Somalis. However, when probed on the national identity variable, they are, like the Somalis, less adamant. One of the girls strongly disagrees with the statement "I feel that I am Norwegian", two of them partially disagree and one is neutral. Yet, when asked whether they are proud of being Norwegian, two of the girls strongly agree, one partially agrees and one is neutral. Elaborating on this point, one of them declares that she is proud of living in Norway and one comments that she feels like a Norwegian citizen. Another one says: "In my heart I am Albanian". However, the one who puts "neutral" when confronted with the statement "I feel that I am Norwegian", maintains that "we are very Norwegian at home". Nevertheless, it seems fair to say that the girls score fairly low on the national identity variable.

Interestingly enough, the boys seem to score even lower on this variable. Two of them strongly disagree and two partially disagree with the statement "I feel that I am Norwegian". Moreover, three of them strongly disagree and one partially disagrees with the statement "I am proud of being Norwegian". It was difficult to make them elaborate on this point, as they were not very interested in reflecting on what it meant to be Norwegian, or on positive aspects of being a Norwegian citizen. As one of them stated: "In order to be Norwegian, you must be born by Norwegian parents in Norway".

In sum, the Kosovo-Albanian youths in this sample display a very strong ethnic identity – even higher than the Somali respondents. In addition, they display an even weaker national identity than the Somalis. This holds especially true for the boys. Positive aspects of being Norwegian are typically linked to citizenship – just as was the case with several of the Somali adolescents. Therefore, it is more difficult to find support for the bicultural identity development hypothesis as described above. Even if all of these adolescents have lived in Norway for a long time, speak Norwegian very well, and many of them have Norwegian friends with whom they spend considerable time, they still do not seem to identify that strongly with the national society. The one with the highest score on the national identity variable is a 17-year-old girl who has lived in Norway since the age of one. She partially agrees with the statement "I am proud of being Norwegian", is neutral on the statement "I feel that I am Norwegian", and contends that "we are very Norwegian at home". Still, she does not stand out from two of the older girls in terms of age, number of years in Norway, language proficiency and number of Norwegian friends. Consequently, it is important to be cautious when drawing conclusions about identity development here.

4.2.3 Acculturation profiles

Again, we are interested in finding out to what extent the respondents want to give up or maintain their cultural heritage, and to what extent they want contact with their own ethnic group and with members of the national society.

The strong ethnic identity score of the Kosovo-Albanians in this investigation is an indication that they may score high on cultural heritage maintenance as well. To look further into this, I asked them questions about their celebration of Kosovo-Albanian and Norwegian holidays and participation in Kosovo-Albanian and Norwegian cultural activities. As was the case with the Somali respondents, the Kosovo-Albanians were in doubt as to what was meant by "being engaged in Kosovo-Albanian activities". They denied taking part in cultural activities like folk music and folk dancing, but their overall confirmation of frequent celebrations of religious festivals and the Kosovo-Albanian national day, points to positive attitudes towards the retention of their Kosovo-Albanian culture.

More specifically, three of the girls answer that they celebrate Kosovo-Albanian holidays, such as Eid and the national day, "very often". The fourth girl answers "regularly". She is the same girl who maintained that "we are very Norwegian at home". She also reports that she celebrates Norwegian holidays "regularly". In another comment she says that, "even if we don't celebrate Christmas, I always decorate a Christmas tree by myself". Two of the other girls say that they rarely celebrate Norwegian

holidays, whereas the oldest of the girls says "very often". It should be pointed out here that she is the only one with a non-Muslim background. Her family is Roman-Catholic.

All the boys answer that they celebrate Kosovo-Albanian holidays very often. As for Norwegian holidays, two put "often" and two say "rarely". They all stress that the celebration of Norwegian holidays mainly relates to the Norwegian national day.

Considering these adolescents' *preferred contact* with other groups, all of them maintain that they want both Norwegian and Kosovo-Albanian friends (five of them strongly agree, two partially agree and one is neutral). There are no obvious differences between boys and girls. However, when confronted with the statement "I want only Kosovo-Albanian friends", the boys agree more strongly than do the girls (two of the boys are neutral and two partially agree, whereas three of the girls strongly disagree and one partially disagrees). As I shall return to in more detail below, this may be an indication of their secondary contact preference. Finally, all the respondents strongly disagree with the statement "I want neither Kosovo-Albanian nor Norwegian friends".

To sum up the acculturation profiles of the Kosovo-Albanians, the answers here indicate that the respondents ideally prefer *integration*. They clearly want to hold on to their ethnic culture, and they also report that they want contact with Norwegian peers. As for preferred contact with Norwegian adolescents, the girls seem to be more positive than the boys. Although affirming that they partially or strongly agree with the statement "I want both Kosovo-Albanian and Norwegian friends", two of the boys partially agree and two are neutral in response to the statement "I want only Albanian friends" (the girls consistently put "strongly disagree" here). This may seem like a contradiction, but it could be taken as an indication that they will prefer a separation profile if they feel excluded from contact with Norwegian peers. Consequently it seems that, of all the immigrant adolescents in this study, the Kosovo-Albanian boys are the ones who lean the most towards a separation profile. I will get back to this point in my conclusion.

4.2.4 Family relationship values

When asked whether 16-year-olds always have an obligation to obey their parents, six of them strongly agree, one partially agrees and one partially disagrees. The one who partially disagrees is the same girl who claimed that "we are very Norwegian at home". On the question of whether young people have a duty to help their parents in the home, she also partially disagrees. One of the boys also partially disagrees on this question, but the others partially or strongly agree. When it comes to these two questions, then, the Kosovo-Albanians generally display very strong family relationship values – even stronger than the Somalis.

However, in terms of whether young people have the right to decide for themselves what education to take they are – like the Somali respondents – quite clear that this is up to the individual adolescent to decide. Seven of them strongly agree and one partially agrees with this statement. On the question of the right to choose their own friends, three are neutral, three partially agree and two strongly agree. Thus, on these two variables they display weak family relationship values – just like the Somalis.

Finally, regarding the right of a 16-year-old girl to choose whom to date, there were some interesting answers and comments. Firstly, there was considerable disagreement between the respondents. One of the girls strongly disagreed, one partially disagreed and two strongly agreed. The one who partially disagreed pointed out that "when she is 16, she is too young to decide whom to date; when she is 20, however, she can decide herself". Interestingly enough, aged 19, she had just married, and she insisted that she had chosen her partner all by herself. As for the boys, the one who stands out from the three others in displaying a very strong integration profile strongly agrees that girls must decide for themselves. The other three partially or strongly disagree. Two of them even say that her age does not matter ("regardless of whether she is 20 or 40 or 60, she shouldn't decide herself"). When asked why, they reply that "girls need to be protected" and "you don't know what could happen to her".

Consequently, the responses given here indicate that the Kosovo-Albanian students in this study display strong family relationship values. With the exception of the right of young people to choose their own friends and what type of education to take, they seem concerned that young people should generally obey their parents and listen carefully to their advice. One of the girls comments on the issue by saying: "You

should respect your parents. They have created you". Another one says that "the family is more important to us than to Norwegian youngsters" and "nothing bad will ever happen to me if I listen to my parents". Concerning the question of development towards a bicultural identity, it is again difficult to give a clear answer. A couple of the respondents display weaker family relationship values, but this could be explained in terms of their parents having more Western values than some of the other respondents' parents.

4.2.5 Perceived discrimination

In terms of perceived discrimination and prejudice, the Kosovo-Albanian students score on average somewhat higher than the Somalis. Moreover, the average score of the boys is higher than that of the girls. Regarding discrimination from teachers, two of the girls strongly disagree that Norwegian teachers discriminate against them, one partially disagrees and one is neutral. The boys, on the other hand, feel more strongly that the teachers are negative. One of them partially agrees and three of them are neutral on this question. Again, it is the boy with the strongest integration profile who feels the least discriminated against.

This is, in fact, a recurring pattern on all the statements concerning discrimination. The boy with the strongest integration profile, together with the girls, feel less strongly that they are discriminated against. The three other boys feel more strongly that Norwegians in general, and Norwegian students in particular, are negative towards ethnic minority students. Actually, the three Kosovo-Albanian students stand out as the ones with the highest scores on this issue compared with all the other respondents. Follow-up questions were therefore asked to try to gain further insight into these differences.

When asked to comment on recent newspaper reports about immigrant youth and adaptation problems – on the local and national levels – one of the girls contends that there are examples of immigrant youth being involved in gangs and crime. She also explicitly links this to the question of discrimination, saying that "I have very rarely been discriminated against. How you are treated often depends on how you behave yourself. [Those Kosovo-Albanian youth who have adaptation problems] are silly. I am a serious type of person." Another one of the girls says: "some Kosovo-Albanian youth ask for trouble. I have never been treated badly. It depends on how you behave yourself". The boy with the strongest integration profile explains why he thinks some Norwegian students are negative to immigrant youth in the following way: "There is a small group of immigrant youth who gives everybody a bad reputation. [...] My parents encourage me to have Norwegian friends in order not to get into trouble."

The three other boys, however, feel much more strongly that there are other explanations to why there has been some negative focus on immigrant youth in Halden recently. All of them agree that negative descriptions of immigrant youth in the media are partly to blame. Two of them even contend that "the [local] newspaper tells lies" and gives as an example an incident where the local paper reported an assault on a man by a youth gang. They also criticise the police for being overly negative. As one of them says: "The police are impudent. Once my friends and I were threatened that we would be arrested if we continued speaking Albanian to each other." In addition, they think that a lot of local residents are prejudiced. "People in Halden talk dirty behind our backs", one of them says.

4.3 Norwegians

4.3.1 Background

As was pointed out in section 2.3, the attitudes of the dominant ethnocultural group towards immigration and immigrants is also interesting in a survey such as this. The following section is therefore devoted to the attitudes of Norwegian students on this issue. In particular it is interesting to see what kind of attitudes the Norwegian students have towards the acculturation profiles of members of non-dominant ethnocultural groups (cf. fig. 1.2).

The Norwegian student sample consists of eight upper secondary school students, aged 16 to 18, equally divided between boys and girls and between the vocational and the general studies branches. The students were asked questions concerning contact with peers, attitudes towards acculturation, family relationship values and discrimination of non-dominant ethnocultural youth.

Six of the Norwegian students maintain that they have both close Norwegian youth friends and immigrant youth friends. Two indicate that they have only Norwegian friends. The ones who report having only Norwegian friends here are an 18-year-old girl at the general studies branch and a 16-year-old boy at a vocational studies branch. As we shall see later, however, these two have very different attitudes towards the acculturation profiles of immigrants. Those who claim that they do have ethnic minority group friends, generally report that they spend considerably less time with these than with their Norwegian friends.(8)

4.3.2 Attitudes towards immigrant youths

Regarding the question of whether immigrant youth should be allowed to retain their ethnic culture, one of the girls strongly agrees with this and three are neutral. As for the boys, one partially disagrees, two partially agrees and one strongly agree with the same statement.

As for the statement "Minority youth should be proud of their heritage culture", one of the girls partially disagrees and the three others strongly agree. Here, one of the boys partially disagrees, one partially agrees and two strongly agree. Moreover, in response to the statements "Minority youth should be proud of being Norwegian" and "Minority youth should become as Norwegian as possible" the girls consistently answer "partially disagree" or "neutral", whereas the boys' answers range from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree".

On this variable, then, the Norwegian respondents seem generally to approve of ethnic culture maintenance in immigrants. The clear exception in the sample, is the before mentioned 16-year-old boy at the vocational studies branch. He partially disagrees that immigrant youth should be proud of, and should be allowed to retain, their culture, and he strongly disagrees that they should be proud of, and should attempt to become, Norwegian.

Turning to the question of attitudes towards minority youths' acculturation strategies, I find – in retrospect – that some of the statements used should have been formulated differently. When confronted with the statements "Minority youth should have as many Norwegian friends as possible" and "Minority youth should have as many friends as possible of the same ethnic background", it seems that some of the respondents were slightly confused by the wording "as many [...] as possible". The idea here was to test whether they thought immigrants should choose a separation/marginalisation strategy or whether they should choose an integration/assimilation strategy. When some of them answer "partially disagree" on these statements, but then emphasise that "they should be allowed to choose for themselves", it leads me to the conclusion that the wording of the statements was confusing. Nevertheless, the comments they give indicate that all of them, except for one respondent, want immigrant youth to choose an integration/assimilation profile. The one who thinks that they should stick to themselves, is the same 16-year-old male student who appeared to approve of the separation/marginalisation option above.

Thus, with one exception, the Norwegian adolescents seem to endorse an integration profile. They think that immigrant youth should be proud of, and be allowed to retain, their ethnic heritage culture, and they think that it is positive that they have contact with the larger society. The before mentioned girl at the general studies branch, who says that she has no immigrant youth friends, also approves of this option. The only one who does not think so is the 16-year-old respondent at the vocational studies branch, who has no ethnic minority friends.

4.3.3 Family relationship values

When asked whether 16-year-olds should always obey their parents, seven of the Norwegian respondents partially agree and one partially disagrees. This was fairly unexpected, as they here display, on average, stronger family relationship values than the Somalis, and only slightly weaker family relationship values than the Kosovo-Albanians. Moreover, when it comes to the question of whether young people have a duty to help their parents in the home, the Norwegian respondents score fairly close to the other two groups.

Similarly, when asked whether young people should be allowed to decide for themselves what education to take and whom to be friends with, the Norwegian students are very much in agreement with the

respondents in the two other groups: all the Norwegians strongly agree. As we have previously seen, only one Somali and one Kosovo-Albanian student did not strongly agree here.

However, when asked whether a 16-year-old girl should decide for herself whom to date, the Norwegians deviate somewhat from the other two groups: two are neutral, four slightly agree and four strongly agree – with no major differences between boys and girls. Some of the Norwegian students were quick to point out, as some of the Somalis and Kosovo-Albanians were, that the whole question depends on different factors – such as age and whom the girl actually wishes to date.

In sum, contrary to expectations, the Norwegian students do not display considerably weaker family relationship values than the Somali and the Kosovo-Albanian adolescents. Apart from the question of young girls' rights in terms of whom to date, the Norwegian students seem equally concerned with obeying their parents as the other respondents in this study. However, this could of course be partly explained by other factors, such as the Norwegian parents having weaker family relationship values than the parents of the immigrant youth. As no parents have been interviewed, it is difficult to know this. Still, if we assume that the Norwegian parents give their children more freedom of choice, these children may have answered the questions differently if they were met with more restrictions and rules at home.

4.3.4 Perceived discrimination

Finally, in terms of whether Norwegians are prejudiced towards, and discriminate against, immigrant youth, the Norwegian respondents maintain that discrimination exists to various degrees. They report that Norwegian teachers, on the whole, are less discriminatory than Norwegians generally, and Norwegian students in particular. They also report that they have frequently heard Norwegians giving immigrants negative remarks.

Commenting on this, one of the girls at the general studies branch says: "Young people in lower secondary school are more negative towards immigrant youth than students in upper secondary. [...] There are of course those who bring with them racist views from home, but I haven't seen much of it." One of the girls at a vocational studies branch says: "There has been some trouble in town previously – fights and so on, but now things are much calmer". The other girl at the same vocational branch maintains: "Some Norwegians may be negative towards immigrants, but immigrants are not totally without blame". As for the boys, a general studies branch student says: "Some foreign youth treat you in a bad way; some of them are destroying the reputation of the whole group". Interestingly, the boy with the most negative attitudes towards integration (cf. above) says: "I believe students at the vocational studies branches are more negative towards immigrants than people at the general studies branch." It is also worth noting that the girl who reports having no immigrant youth friends, strongly supports that they should be proud of, and should be allowed to retain, their culture. She also emphasises that they should be allowed to decide for themselves what kind of friends they want, and she is clear that they should not stick to themselves, but "be integrated into the society".

5. Summary and conclusions

Using the theoretical framework of the International Comparative Study of Ethnocultural Youth (ICSEY) as a backdrop, the main focus in this survey has been on identity and acculturation. The concept of identity has been analysed in terms of ethnic identity and national identity. Acculturation has been examined in terms of language proficiency and use, contact with peers, attitudes towards one's own ethnic culture and that of the larger society, family relationship values and perceived discrimination. It should be noted that the number of respondents in this survey was very limited, something which means that the generalization value of the data is rather restricted.

With two exceptions, all the Somali and Kosovo-Albanian adolescents have lived in Norway for a long time. All of them report good to excellent language skills. However, they maintain that they use their ethnic language to a larger extent than they use Norwegian at home. In addition, all except one report that they have close Norwegian friends, in addition to ethnic group friends.

When it comes to identity, all the Somalis and Kosovo-Albanians score high on the ethnic identity variable, and most of them average-to-low on the national identity variable. The girls, both the Somali and the Kosovo-Albanian, seem to score higher on national identity than the boys, especially when

compared to three of the Kosovo-Albanian ones. It is difficult to say whether their identities have changed, or are changing, as we are not doing longitudinal research. However, in a couple of cases it is possible to find support for the bicultural hypothesis, which says that immigrants over time may develop towards a bicultural identity, with improved language proficiency and increasing contact with members of the larger society.

As for acculturation attitudes, all of the non-Norwegian respondents, to varying degrees, display an integration profile, meaning that they prefer to maintain their ethnic heritage culture, at the same time as they want contact with Norwegian peers. One of the male Somali respondents, together with the three previously mentioned Kosovo-Albanian boys display a somewhat weaker integration profile. It is clear that they want to hold on to their ethnic culture, but they seem to be slightly more sceptical towards having contact with members of the larger society – especially if they feel that they are denied such contact.

It is interesting to compare the acculturation attitudes of the Somalis and the Kosovo-Albanians with those of the Norwegian respondents. With one clear exception, the Norwegian adolescents approve of the integration profile. In other words, from the larger society's point of view, multiculturalism is the preferred profile: the Norwegian students think the Somalis and the Kosovo-Albanians should be allowed to maintain their ethnic culture, at the same time as they should have contact with ethnic Norwegians.

Concerning family relationship values, it was expected that the Somali and Kosovo-Albanian students would display higher family relationship values than the Norwegian students. This is also the case, but the differences are – with the exception of one value variable – only marginal. The one exception, which stands out, is the question of whether a 16-year-old girl should be allowed to decide for herself whom to date. On this question the Somalis and the Kosovo-Albanians, especially three of the boys, clearly display stronger family relationship values than the Norwegian students.

Finally, when it comes to perceived levels of discrimination, there are quite a few differences in the answers given. Most of the students disagree that Norwegian teachers discriminate against immigrant students. When it comes to perceived discrimination from other students and from Norwegians generally, however, they seem to think that there is more such discrimination. Here three of the Kosovo-Albanian boys, together with the Somali boy with the weakest national identity score, stand out as the ones who report the highest levels of discrimination. It is difficult to give a clear answer why this is so, but it is interesting to see that the boys and the girls' answers typically disagree. Whereas some of the girls point out that some minority youth have adaptation problems and must take the responsibility for that, some of the boys point to negative media coverage, as well as discrimination from other students, from the police and the larger society.

Summing up, it is worth noting that the answers here to a large extent correspond to the results from the ICSEY project. As is the case in the present survey, the immigrant youth in the ICSEY study typically prefer integration. They score high on the ethnic identity variable and somewhat weaker on the national identity variable. Moreover, most of them have friends from different ethnocultural groups, and they report good mastery of the national language. They also typically feel that they are rarely discriminated against (cf. Phinney, Berry, Vedder & Liebkind 2006:108).

In conclusion, there seems to be a discrepancy between the reported immigrant youth problems mentioned in the introduction and the findings in this survey. With the exception of one of the Somali and three of the Kosovo-Albanian boys, who seem to lean on a separation profile, the bulk of the adolescents interviewed appear to be well integrated and seem to favour contact with other ethnic groups in the society. How can this discrepancy be accounted for? A lot of different hypotheses could be put forward, of course. One, which is often suggested, is that the above mentioned problems are exaggerated and largely created by the media. Another is that a small group of poorly adapted adolescents may instigate a lot of trouble, thereby tainting the reputation of the well-adapted majority. From the point of view of the findings in the ICSEY study, this latter explanation may have relevance here. The data collected in the ICSEY study show that some few respondents display a marginalization profile (see fig. 1.1 in section 2.3). This means that they neither want to retain their ethnic heritage culture, nor do they want contact with the ethnic majority. Adolescents fitting into this description are more likely to experience adaptation problems (Phinney, Berry, Sam & Vedder 2006:219). Since no respondents in the present survey display

the marginalization profile, this could account for the seemingly well-adapted student sample. In addition, there are of course a lot of factors influencing acculturation which have not been investigated here, such as demographic variables, reasons for migrating (voluntary or involuntary), life satisfaction, school adjustment etc. Possible follow-up studies should ideally take these aspects into account.

Notes

1 In this paper the term *adolescents* includes young people from the age of 16 through 21. I recognise that the term may be used differently in many dictionaries (cf. e.g. *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*).

2 It should be noted that some researchers use the terms *ethnic identity* and *cultural identity* interchangeably. For a further discussion on the use of these terms see e.g. Phinney (1990) or Ward, Bochner & Furnham (2001).

3 I recognise that the issue of generalisability is problematic with such a small sample, but I believe using respondents from only one study branch, or only girls, would have made the findings even less generalisable.

4 For details on questions, see appendices (<http://www.sf.hiof.no/~heb/acculturationappendix.pdf>).

5 For more details on their answers, see appendix 1 (<http://www.sf.hiof.no/~heb/acculturationappendix.pdf>).

6 I acknowledge the fact that we do not know what the parents think, but assuming that research carried out elsewhere holds true (cf. for example Phinney et. al. 2006:81), one may assume that Somali parents want a stronger say in what their children do.

7 For more details on these answers, see appendix 2 (<http://www.sf.hiof.no/~heb/acculturationappendix.pdf>).

8 For more information on answers, see appendix 3 (<http://www.sf.hiof.no/~heb/acculturationappendix.pdf>).

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