The Elephant in Multicultural Sweden

How Whites and Non-Whites Morally Navigate through Moments of Tension

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I found a piece of myself whilst writing this thesis. Thanks to loved ones and friends who gave me the time and energy. Also, thanks to my supervisor Chares.

Abstract

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In this study, I have investigated "the elephant in the room", namely the tension surrounding discussions and interactions regarding ethnicity and race in Sweden. Specifically, my aim has been to unveil the dominant ideas that "whites" and "non-whites" use to morally navigate through tensions in this multicultural society. Methodologically, I have conducted four focus group interviews with students from Lund. I used a Vignette method, whereof the participants were introduced to five scenarios each with their own *marker of difference.* In this case, each scenario concerned their own *moment of tension*. As such, I have collected information on three specific issues, which this study presents as following: 1. The dynamic exchanges in the sessions; 2. The similarities between "whites" and "non-whites" views and experiences; 3. The differences between these groups. My analysis shows that participants morally navigate by using three dominant ideas: *relevance, access* and *risk.* In this case, I argue that these ideas materialize differently between "whites" and "non-whites". "Non-whites" could more easily connect the *relevance* of each marker of difference to their experiences of standing out in Sweden. In addition, "non-whites" had more *access* when speaking about ethnicity and race, partly seen by how easy-going the subject was in-between "non-whites". Also, "non-whites" had less *risk* of being accused of being prejudiced. Meanwhile, "whites" had less experience of standing out and instead made each marker of difference *relevant* to themselves through certain legitimizing ideas. Further on, "whites" perceived themselves to have less *access* to speak of these matters, partly due to running greater *risks* of being accused of being prejudiced. In short, "non-whites" guided their moral navigation through their perceived *access* whilst "whites" rather focused on the *risks*. Besides enforcing the importance of these ideas, I have also managed to show that my second-order distinction of "white" and "non-white" was important.

Keywords: *white, non-white, tension, marker of difference, morality, navigation, vignette, group interview, students, Sweden*

Popular Science Summary

Today in multicultural Sweden, conversations relating to ethnicity and race are often filled with tension and are most often avoided. In this study, I wished to discuss "the elephant in the room" by collecting thoughts and experiences from "white" and "non-white" people in Sweden regarding specific tension-filled scenarios. I was looking for the ideas that these people use to handle such scenarios; how do they separate right from wrong, or okay from not okay? Further on, I organized four group interviews where each session consisted of both "white" and "non-white" people. In each interview, I presented a paper that listed five scenarios. Each scenario concerned different multicultural themes, such as: appearances, language, ethnic background, saying the n-word and religious behavior. I then let the interviewees discuss these scenarios with each other whilst I merely acted as a moderator. The interviews were then transcribed, translated to English and then carefully read in order to find these ideas that people might use to decide right from wrong.

I have mainly collected information which tells us three things: 1. How the interviewees acted in the interviews; 2. The similarities in answers between "whites" and "non-whites", and; 3. The differences in answers between these groups. Firstly, I show that my use of the concepts "white" and "non-white" were a positive choice since these words could successfully be applied to my results. Secondly and most importantly, my analysis claims that "whites" and "non-whites" guide themselves through these sensitive matters through three ideas, I call these: *relevance, access* and *risks.* As such, depending on the scenario and depending on if the interviewee was "white" or "non-white", the meaning of each idea – and the relation between them – was different. "Non-white" interviewees had a more *relevant* connection to each scenario, mainly since they had experiences of standing out in terms of looks. In addition, "non-whites" had more *access¸* meaning that it was easier for a "non-white" person to speak about ethnicity with other people, especially with other "non-whites". Also, this *access* lowered their *risks,* meaning that it was harder for a "non-white" to be accused of being prejudiced or racist. Meanwhile, "white" interviewees had next to no experience of standing out in terms of looks, names or similar aspects. For these interviewees, matters regarding race or ethnicity were *relevant* since they were natural, unconscious or psychological. However, "whites" had less *access,* meaning that they did not see many opportunities to discuss ethnicity and race with others. Instead, "white" interviewees thought that discussions regarding ethnicity and race were rather *risky* and preferably avoided them. In short, "non-whites" guided themselves by using their *access,* whilst "whites" were more focused on perceived *risks.*

Contents

1   Background & Introduction

As a child of two immigrants, I always recognized that something in Sweden was wrong. From an early age, I noticed a tension when people spoke about ethnic or racial differences in this multicultural society. This tension is still noticed in meetings between people from different groups, mostly between "white" Swedes and "non-white" Swedes. For instance, the tension is commonly seen when someone ask or receive questions or claims regarding ethnic background, visible differences or similar aspects. Some people fear accusations of being prejudiced, whilst others fear being treated differently. Nevertheless, there is a common unclarity of how to speak of these matters in an acceptable manner. Conversations and discussions regarding ethnicity and race are generally avoided and have become the *elephant in the room* in Sweden. People tend to favor a color-blind approach to the differences amongst people. This tendency has left a gag on the views and experiences of individuals or groups, rather than diminishing the importance of these differences. I for one see these tensions and believe that we should not ignore them anymore. Indeed, seeing these differences without valuing people unequally is an important goal, and no one wishes to make mountain out of a molehill in these matters. However, I believe that we cannot confuse ignorance with our goal of equality. Therefore, I suggest that one investigate these matters and makes visible this "elephant in the room" in a step towards untangling the knots in this tension.

The relevance of exploring these tensions has thus sparked my interest of providing answers for an issue that neither my experiences nor past studies can satisfyingly explain. In this case, I wish to explore *how* and *why* people act and think in certain ways in moments of tension regarding ethnicity and race in multicultural Sweden. In this study, I decided to approach this tension by investigating how people decide right from wrong or possible from impossible when handling these moments. I decided to call this ability *moral navigation:* the *how's* and *why's* of deciding okay from not okay in moments of tension. Additionally, I wish to look for the dominant ideas when people navigate through tensions in multicultural Sweden. Besides investigating these tensions by looking at *moral navigation¸* I wish to investigate a second-order distinction that contains value in my experience, which is inspired by the popular usages of others. In this case, I wish to compare the experiences of those that are considered "Swedish" or "white" and those that are considered "foreign" or "non-white". The meaning of "white" and "non-white is unclear. Hence, without wanting to essentialize its meaning, I wish to explore the usefulness of this distinction when exploring moral navigation in these multicultural tensions.

1.1 Research Aim & Issue

Research question: *How can we understand "whites'" and "non-whites'" moral navigation through everyday interactions in multicultural Sweden?*

My *aim* is to reveal the dominant ideas that "whites" and "non-whites" use in their *moral navigation* in certain moments of tension. In addition, I will investigate whether the distinction of "white" and "non-white" has any value by comparing views and experiences from these groups. To guide interviewees towards the tension, I will present scenarios with examples of everyday interactions in Sweden. It is important to note that the material will be analyzed in accordance with a "bottom-up" model. Meaning, instead of applying theoretical concepts to the empirical material (a "top-down" model), I will provide my own theoretical explanation regarding the dominant ideas that help "whites" and "non-whites" morally navigate in multicultural Sweden. This way, my explanation is kept close to the material. Also, as will be further explained, this study will conduct focus group interviews where my questions will be discussed by participants. Therefore, in addition to the focus on moral navigation itself, I will present a smaller analysis on the *dynamic exchanges* in these sessions. Considering the different approaches of this study, my research question can be divided into the following sub-questions:

- *How can we understand the dynamic exchanges in these interviews?*
- *Which similarities does "white" and "non-white" moral navigation hold?*
- *How does "white" and "non-white" moral navigation differentiate?*

Summary & Importance

My analysis shows that the interviewees experiences can successfully be divided through my second-order distinction of "white" and "non-white". In this case, "whites" and "non-whites" morally navigate through three dominant ideas that I conceptualize being: *Relevance, Access* and *Risks.* Primarily, the results show that these ideas materialize differently between "whites" and "non-whites", which can also be noticed in the dynamics. In general, "non-whites" are more *relevantly* connected to ideas of ethnicity and race, which also gives them more *access* to speak of these matters and simultaneously make everyday interactions less *risky*. Meanwhile, "whites" are less *relevantly* connected to these ideas, which also limit their *access* to these interactions by increasing their *risks* of being accused of prejudice. The analysis itself will further explain the meaning of *relevance, access* and *risk* and elaborate on how these ideas materialize differently in "white" and "non-white" experiences.

Regarding the importance of this thesis, I hope that an exploration of this subject will increase our understanding and take us one step closer towards de-dramatizing these matters. Specifically, I contribute to past research by increasing our knowledge of "white" and "non-white" experiences in moments of tension in Sweden. Unlike other studies, I explore the "whites" and "non-whites" moral navigation by including participants from both these groups. In addition, I provide my own explanation of moral navigation by constructing the three dominant ideas of *relevance, access* and *risks.* In other words, the importance of this study lay in the empirical material that I have gathered and the theoretical insights that I have aspired to formulate. A more elaborate outline of past research and comments on how my study relates to these studies will be presented in chapter "2 Literature Review".

1.2 Delimitations & Outline

This study is limited by its focus on the complications when discussing ethnic and racial differences in Sweden. Consequently, this study might refer to, without focusing on, the themes of identity, ethnic groups, social exclusion, etc. However, I mainly focus on the prevailing dominant ideas amongst "whites" and "non-whites" which they use to morally navigate through moments of tension. In no way does this study aim to generalize or capture all the relevant themes that regard ethnicity, culture and race in Sweden. Neither does it try to essentialize any "white" or "non-white" experience. Instead, my ambition is to provide empirical material and a unique analysis that will increase insight to some of the contemporary complications in Sweden. In addition, this study was conducted with limitations in resources, such as time and participants. Therefore, it will mainly provide an extensive amount of material from a small group of students in Lund. As such, the results from this study will not claim to generalize the experiences of all people in Sweden. However, it will claim to provide fair presentation of how young students in Sweden morally navigate in tensions in this multicultural society.

After the current chapter of "Background & Introduction", there follows a chapter on past research called "Literature Review" whereof the former findings on "white" and "non-white" experiences in Sweden will be presented. In this chapter, I wish to outline the current popular debates within this subject that I wish to partake in and contribute to. In addition, past studies will support my use of the concepts "white" and "non-white" as a useful distinction. In the chapter that follows, called "Methodology", I will explain my choice of means to correctly answer my research question and contribute to past research. As such, I will explain why this

study choose to conduct focus group interviews with students in Lund and how I created questions through a "Vignette" method by focusing scenarios with tension. After "Methodology", I present a chapter named "Moral Navigation: Dynamics & Dominant Themes" which aims to explain the logic of the dominant ideas called *relevance, access* and *risks*. Mainly, this chapter explains the ideas that I then apply differently in the analysis of to the "white" and "non-white" experiences. The chapter which follows is the analysis itself which I decided to divide into "The Non-White Experience" and "The White Experience", since this study is mainly a comparison between these groups. This thesis is then finalized with a summary that gathers the most important findings of this study and a final discussion with some reflections on my analysis and my methodological choices.

2   Literature Review: From Macro to Micro

Intro

I was unsuccessful in finding other research which approached the study of "whites" and "non-whites" by specifically focusing on moments of tension. In addition, it was difficult to find other studies which focused on "moral navigation" or "moments of tension". However, I did find a variety of studies which described the tension in Sweden when speaking about ethnicity and race. Also, several studies investigated the experiences of "whites" and "non-whites", which many referred to as socially constructed racial categories. These studies mainly include "non-white" participants and focus on their experiences of "othering". In this chapter, I will present the studies which explain the ongoing tension and the experiences of "whites" and "non-whites" in Sweden. I will use the studies which focus on the tension to support my claim that there is an ongoing difficulty in Sweden. Also, I will include past studies on "whites" and "non-whites", which focuses on "racial" experiences in Sweden, to support my use of this distinction. In addition, I will explain how my study resembles and differentiate from these other studies by including "white" participants and by focusing on moments of tension.

2.1 A Colorblind Nation

In my review of past research, I discovered many studies where the historical changes in the discourse on race and visible differences in Sweden were emphasized. Until the first half of the 20th century, "race" seemed to have been an important idea in Sweden. Back then, Sweden hosted a world leading institution for the biology of race and eugenics (McEachrane 2018). However, since the middle of 1960's, the term "race" has been erased from societal and institutional spheres whereof ideas of multiculturality, antiracism and colorblindness has taken its place (Hübinette & Andersson 2012). Institutionally, "race" has even been removed as a basis of discrimination since 2009 (McEachrane, 2018) and disappeared both as a concept and a word in everyday language (Wigerfelt, A. Wigerfelt & Kiiskinen 2014). In addition, several studies recognize the contemporary inability, inexperience or unwillingness to speak about racial importance or experiences in Sweden (Lind 2012; Osanami Törngren 2018). The hegemonic idea of colorblindness has made people unwilling to acknowledge any importance to phenotypical markers (Osanami Törngren 2018, p. 4). To clarify, "phenotype" refer to the observable traits of a person. Instead, people commonly claim that the color of one's skin is

neither relevant nor crucial when determining an individual's value or characteristics (Törngren, Malm & Hübinette 2018).

A few studies have suggested why "race" is subsided today. Some claim that ideas such as democracy, equality, human rights, social justice and antiracism has already been achieved, which makes "race irrelevant and obsolete" (Hübinette & Lundström 2014, p. 431). In addition, any mentioning of "race" or "racial groups" are directly related to biology (Törngren, Malm & Hübinette 2018) or political right-wing groups (Schierup, Ålund & Neergaard, 2018). As such, references to phenotypical differences are avoided since Swedes fear to be misunderstood by others (Törngren, Malm & Hübinette 2018). Wyver (2015, p. 5) neatly explained the logic of how race is viewed in Sweden: "to see skin colour is to see race, and to see race is to believe in race, and to believe in race is racist". Thus, instead of speaking of "race", references to phenotypical differences have been replaced by referring to ethnicity or culture (Hübinette & Andersson 2012; Gokieli 2017), or by referring to people's "origin" (Wigerfelt, cited in Osanami Törngren 2018).

I have now shortly outlined the historical changes regarding the discourse of race in Sweden. Past research supports my claim that people are actively avoiding these matters due to ideas of colorblindness and a fear of being misunderstood. As I mentioned, people normally refer to visible differences by speaking of "ethnic belonging", "culture" or "origin". However, as these studies show, I have recognized certain limitations when using these replacements. As Runfors (2016) claims, these alternatives are not always visible to others. Thus, they cannot equally capture the experience that people in Sweden have of their phenotypically different appearances. Therefore – as Törngren, Malm & Hübinette writes (2018, p. 5) – I claim that "race as a visible category ascribed by others, helps us refer to these experiences held by others". However, "race" as a concept does not only gain relevance by the limitations created by the euphemisms mentioned above. Instead, the relevance of studying experiences of race is supported by a large body of former research, which I will present in the remaining parts of this chapter.

2.2 Whiteness in Sweden

Several of the studies on experiences of "race" in Sweden have partly been released by Hübinette, a researcher that mainly has focused on the experiences of transnational adoptees in

Sweden (Hübinette & Tigervall 2009; Hübinette & Andersson 2012; Törngren, Malm & Hübinette 2018). To clarify, a "transnational adoptee" is a child that is born in one country and adopted by a family from another country. In these studies, transnational adoptees are shown to experience racism and standing out, even when having the same socioeconomic possibilities and preconditions as any "white Swede". This way, Hübinette et al. show that adoptees cannot be told to be discriminated for their differentiating ethnicity or culture, but only in terms of looks. The implications of these studies lie in how they contradict a common belief in Sweden, namely that "race" and "color" do not matter. Besides proving the limitations in the Swedish negligence of race, Hübinette proceeds by referring to "hegemonic whiteness" as the root of the problem. Specifically, he says: "In contemporary Sweden, hegemonic whiteness is, for us, upheld through a colour-blindness that constantly reinscribes whiteness as the normative, yet unmarked, position that, for example, effectively forecloses, silences and excludes experiences of everyday racism among non-white Swedes" (Hübinette & Lundström 2014, p. 426).

Other studies have equally tried to explain why "non-whites" are discriminated and why others pay attention to their visible differences. For instance, Miller (2017, p. 386) claims that the idea of nationality in Sweden is closely related to ideas of color, whereof one needs to be "white" in order to fully attain "Swedishness". Or as Lundström (2017, p. 84) mentioned: "whiteness remains at the core of Swedish national identity", even though she also recognized that color has less relevance than culture in Sweden. Importantly, these studies commonly refer to Sara Ahmed's (2007) ideas of how "whiteness" operates in societies when explaining the experiences of "non-whites". In these studies, "whiteness" is often explained as a "racial discourse" that allows those that can attain a "white identity" to benefit from this discourse (Leonardo, cited in Barker 2019, p. 136). In the Swedish context, past studies commonly claim that "white Swedes" refer to those that can benefit from whiteness and "pass as white" (Mulinary 2017). Normally, "white Swedes" refers to those which derive from the majority of the Swedish population and from Western and European countries (Hübinette & Räterlinck 2014, p. 503). Yet, other studies have emphasized that looks are not the only way of blending in. In general, "Swedishness" can be viewed as a ladder, whereof one may attain certain cultural and ethnic factors to be viewed as a "full Swede" (Lind 2012; Lundström 2017).

Mainly, these studies help us realize that "culture" or "ethnicity" are not the main ways to "pass as a Swede" in Sweden. Instead, visible differences, such as skin color or other physical markers, are crucial when wishing to be treated as a Swede (Törngren, Malm & Hübinette 2018, p. 10). In this case, one's phenotypical looks creates an entrance into "Swedishness" itself. The

result from this implicit connection between "Swedishness" and "whiteness" is that anyone that looks "non-Swedish" is thus considered "non-white" (Lind 2012, p. 86) and is thus automatically limited from fully becoming a Swede (Hubinette & Lundström 2014). Generally, the terms "non-Swede" and "non-white" often refer to people who originate from a non-western country (Lundström 2017, p. 80). Specifically, it is normally a reference to people that originate from Africa, Asia and Latin America (Hübinette & Räterlinck 2014).

However, these studies are not merely emphasizing people's differences in origins. Instead, studies show that these differences have negative implications for "non-white" individuals. Firstly, since the feeling of "belonging" is connected to having correct looks, integration becomes a fundamental difficulty for "non-whites" (Yngvesson 2015). In addition, being a "non-Swede" or "non-white" is often related to the negatively depicted and connotated idea of the "immigrant" (Lundström 2017). Furthermore, several studies show that "non-whites" commonly experience processes of "othering", "racialization" or "ethnicization", which further alienates them. "Othering" is explained as the general process whereof "otherness" is created through a "marker of difference" (Mulinari 2017). These markers can be connected to "ethnic difference" or "non-whiteness", such as: a foreign-sounding name, a veil, the inability to speak Swedish, dark skin color (Barker 2019, p. 137), whereof several of these markers have negative connotations. According to my interpretation, "otherness" can both be a process and something that one experiences. As a process, a person becomes "othered" when someone else highlights these differences. Also, a person might experience "otherness" when these differences are paid attention to. Racialization and ethnicization are forms of "othering" in interactions whereof phenotypical markers and culture are made important, by others, in a way that "non-whites" observe themselves as differentiated (Runfors 2016; Dahlstedt & Neergaard 2019). In Sweden, racialization comes in the form of questions and comments that point to the relevance of certain phenotypical markers (Eliassi 2015). Several studies have commented how "non-whites" commonly receive questions regarding national, regional, ethnic and racial origin (Hübinette & Tigervall 2009; Lind 2012; Runfors 2016). These questions can be formulated as: "Where do you really come from?" and "Do you speak English" which can challenge the individual's idea of themselves (Lind 2012, p. 90).

In this subheading, I have presented the underlying ideas in Swedish society that allow people to either have "white" or "non-white" experiences in Sweden. Also, I have tried to explain the implications of these socially constructed racial categories. Thus, I hoped to enforce the importance of including these categories, since I for one wish to explore the value of this

distinction. However, instead of mainly focusing on the views and experiences of "non-whites", I instead wish to include participants from both groups. Further, instead of focusing on processes of "othering", I wish to focus on "moral navigation" in "moments of tension". By including "white" interviewees, I contribute by presenting a variety of views, which is seldomly seen in this field. Also, I aim to make an empirical contribution, by presenting data on the tensions in everyday interactions. Finally, I wish to make a theoretical contribution by outlining the dominant ideas that "whites" and "non-whites" use to morally navigate in this multicultural society. Thus, I aim to contribute methodologically, empirically and theoretically to this field of study. Next, I explain the means by which I will use to collect this data.

3 Methodology: Methods & Processes

Intro

This chapter can be divided into two main parts, data collection and data analysis. In terms of data collection, I start by explaining why "focus group interviews" are the most suitable choice to answer my research question. Thereafter, I explain my use of a "Vignette" method, by means of which I create five scenarios through my personal experiences that each refer to their own marker of difference. Also, I explain why I chose to interview students in Lund and how these interviews were conducted. Furthermore, I present a small section that regards data analysis before finalizing with a discussion on some of the methodological issues of this study.

3.1 Focus Group Interviews

What method best answers my research question? In this case, I would argue that that my research question has a more "qualitative" than "quantitative" character, seen by how it is formulated. As a reminder, my research question asks: *How can we understand "whites'" and "non-whites'" moral navigation through everyday interactions in multicultural Sweden?* In this case, my use of "how" creates an "open-ended" question, which cannot be answered with "yes" or "no". According to Creswell (2014) this is a common qualitative attribute with research questions. Also, unlike quantitative studies, my question does not imply a search of measuring "moral navigation" or to describe the relationship between two variables. Instead, by writing "how", I imply that I search for complicated explanations which describe the processes of moral navigation. Hence, by default, my study receives a "qualitative" character.

In terms of method, I soon realized my limitations in answering the research questions through observations. It is indeed difficult to capture specific "moments of tension" or to know when and where there will be multicultural interactions, or to even know how people morally navigate. However, I still needed to collect data on the views and experiences of people and thus I discovered that interviews were a fitting method of gaining access to the thoughts and experiences of others (Kvale & Brinkmann 2014). Through interviews, I could manage to ask about specific issues and memories. Also, interviews allow people to freely motivate their thoughts and ideas. However, since I am investigating a sensitive topic, I wished to create an arena where people could easily discuss their thoughts with each other. This way, I chose to

conduct "focus group interviews" (Ahrne & Svensson 2015) as my method of collecting empirical data.

In an interview situation, it is always important to consider the dynamics between the interviewee and the interviewer. However, since I chose to include focus group interviews, the dynamic exchanges became even more important to consider. Therefore, as formerly mentioned, I decided to analyze the dynamic exchanges in these interview sessions and interpret how these exchanges effect interviewees views of moral navigation. As a theoretical tool, I discovered Kitzingers analysis of interactions in focus group interviews as being either "complementary" or "argumentative". Shortly explained, in complementary interactions, interviewees strive towards a consensus and agreement amongst each other (Kitzinger 1994). This consensus is created when interviewees explain their point by contributing to what has already been said by others. Meanwhile, argumentative interactions are noticed by their critical discussions whereof interviewees rather question than agree with others (Kitzinger 1994).

3.2 Selection of Participants

A "focus group interview" is mainly characterized by its focus on the similarities and differences between the interviewees and how these background variables might affect the dynamics (Bryman 2018). As I mentioned, the dynamics are important for my study since I wished for the interviewees to discuss the dominant ideas that "whites" and "non-whites" use in their moral navigation. The background of my participants is thus an important matter in order to answer my research question since I am looking for a collective perspective. Considering this, it becomes clear why my method is called a "focus group interview". However, since the background of my participants is important, I needed to pay attention to the similarities and differences between the participants; their "homogeneity" and "heterogeneity". In this case, my limitations in resources such as time and contacts highly affected my choice of participants.

As such, I decided that conducting interviews with students in Lund would be the most viable decision. Firstly, by choosing to include individuals that all live in the same city, including me, made it easier for me to plan for my group sessions. Secondly, I suspected that students in the international city of Lund would have good chances of having experiences with multicultural interactions. Of course, only including students was highly affected by which people I was able

to reach, seeing as I only know students in Lund. However, by only including students in Lund, the results of my material became more representative since I avoided to include individuals from several occupational groups. My most important requirement was that the interviewees were both interested and familiar with tensions in multicultural interactions in Sweden. In terms of familiarity, I only included Swedish speaking individuals that had resided in Sweden and that were experienced with the Swedish culture.

Since I had limited contacts in Lund, I decided to use all channels possible to find my participants. I reached out to people through social media, such as: Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat by creating a post and asking friends to share my request. Also, I put up posters, around noticeboards in Lund University's faculty buildings, where I described my study and listed my contact details (See: Appendix 1). Most of my participants independently reached out to me though these medias, which allowed me to assume that they were interested and familiar with the subject. In addition, I needed to include both "white" and "non-white" participants, in accordance with my research aim. Luckily enough, I was contacted by individuals from both categories. Until now, I have explained the variables which outline the "homogeneity" of my participants. However, some of the variables that I was unable to control consequently created the "heterogeneity" of the group. In this case, background variables such as: age, gender, political views, origins in Sweden, ethnic origin and subject of study were not controlled. In the following subheading I will explain the method that I used to outline my questionnaire.

3.3 Vignette

Intro

Hitherto, I have explained why I have chosen to conduct focus group interviews and how the dynamics in these will be analyzed. I have also explained why I decided to interview students residing in Lund. In this sub-heading, I explain how I used my personal experiences of being non-white in Sweden to formulate my questionnaire through a "Vignette". Shortly explained, a "Vignette" is a method where one formulates one or several scenarios that each refer to a specific situation with a common theme (Bryman 2018, p. 331). Each scenario is presented with a question that asks how an interviewee would do or think in each situation. By presenting a hypothetical scenario, the information demanded from interviewees became less personal, which made the "Vignette" a suitable way to investigate moments of tension (Bryman 2018, p.

331). In this study, I hoped that these scenarios would help me gain access to the views and experiences, regarding moral navigation, of these interviewees.

Personal Experiences

In this study, I argue that my experiences as a "non-white" individual in Sweden has given me insight to the tension of certain multicultural interactions in Sweden. Firstly, I am a descendent to immigrants that came from a non-western country. During my upbringing, my "foreign" appearance in Sweden allowed me to experience "standing out" and "belonging", inclusion and exclusion, in varies ways. Furthermore, these experiences act as a limitation as well as it breeds possibilities. My insight to more than one culture might prevent me from seeing the "full picture" of each culture. Concurrently, this insight has given me the ability to move in-between cultures and see a matter as a "Swede" and as a descendent to immigrants. In this matter, my experiences of standing out has made me aware of the "tension" that can follow from interactions in multicultural Sweden. As we could see in past studies (See: 2.2 Whiteness in Sweden), the sensitivity in this subject is often related to various "markers of difference". In this case, I was inspired by these markers which I decided to use when outlining the themes in the scenarios. I wished to include a variety of markers in order to explore multiculturality in Sweden broadly. Further on, except for including sensitive markers, I wished that each scenario would refer to an interaction with tension to truly represent a "moment of tension". In addition, this scenario needed to be "subtle" or part of a "gray-zone"-area to spark some discussion. As such I will now present five scenarios which regard the following "markers of difference": "phenotype", "language", "ethnic background", "cultural expressions" and "religion". The "moments of tension" in each scenario is inspired by my experiences, public discussions and former studies.

Scenario 1 – "Phenotype"

"Sam is hanging with a group of friends. One day, the group has a discussion regarding 'foreign' and 'Swedish' appearances. Two of Sam's friends have parents that have immigrated to Sweden. Khalid's parents come from Somalia and Markos parents come from Serbia. In this conversation, the group identifies that Marko has a 'Swedish' look. Simultaneously, they identify that Khalid has a 'foreign' or 'non-Swedish' look. Khalid seems to be okay with this classification. Marko, however, protests by claiming that what is 'Swedish' or 'foreign' is

unclear and may vary. Question: Was this a common and/or okay way to group individual's looks?"

In part, this scenario is inspired from my experiences of standing out in terms of looks. In addition, publications in papers such as "Aftonbladet" (2019) have discussed the nature of being a Swede and whether ethnic background can be decided based on looks. Also, as shown in past research, "non-whites" have relevant experiences of standing out in terms and looks (See: "2 Literature Review"). Past research has also broadly discussed the idea of "Swedishness" in terms of looks (Miller 2017). Conclusively, this scenario has a place in public discussions and everyday interactions. Mainly, the tension in this scenario can be seen through its moral discussion on phenotypical classifications.

Scenario 2 – "Language"

"Ali works as a substitute teacher at various elementary schools in a medium-sized town in southern Sweden. The people at the schools where Ali work usually appreciate his presence for how great he is with the kids. Ali's parents have immigrated from Sweden. However, Ali himself is born and raised in Sweden and hardly knows about anything else than the 'Swedish culture'. Sometimes when Ali works at schools, other teachers tell him how great his Swedish language skills are. Often, Ali feels ambiguous to what he thinks about this comment. He does not consider his language speaking skills particularly good. Ali reacts differently at varies points when hearing this comment. Sometimes he says 'thanks' and other times he merely smiles and nods his head. Question 1: Did Ali react in the wrong way? Question 2: Was it wrong of the teachers to comments Ali's Swedish language skills?"

This scenario was mainly inspired by my experience of working as substitute teacher in Sweden. However, the tension surrounding the importance of Swedish language skills have also gained some attention in the media (SVT 2020). In addition, as I mentioned in past research, studies have shown that "language" can become a marker which differentiate people in Sweden (Barker 2019). Yet, it is important to note that this scenario does not only regard language itself, but also the assumptions and beliefs that surround certain phenotypical looks and ethnic backgrounds. Partly, this scenario tried to enforce the tension surrounding the importance of Swedish language skills in Sweden. However, the main tension in this scenario is the conflict between the teacher's expectations and Ali's idea of himself.

Scenario 3 – "Ethnic Background"

"Sara has a classmate that she has studied with for a while. This classmate has a name and looks that Sara has always wondered the origin of. Sara and this classmate have a good work/study relation and share several opinions and interests. One day Sara feels extra curious and wonders if she can ask this person about her looks or name, does this person maybe have a different ethnic background? Sara is unsure regarding how she should formulate her question: she is only curious and does not mean to offend. She's thinking: Should one ask about the other person's background, "ethnic origin" or where this person's parents come from? Sara has a hard time deciding and finally decides to skip asking the question. She would rather let the whole thing be a 'non-issue'. *Ethnic differences are unimportant anyways*, she's thinking. Question 1: Did Sara do the right things by not asking about looks or names? Question 2: If Sara did ask the question, how should she have done?"

This scenario regards a common and important experience that many "non-whites" in Sweden have, whereof the marker of difference refers to both "names" and "looks". In this case, it concerns the curious remarks of others that implicitly might relate "non-whites" to a foreign geographical location. The legitimacy and implications, regarding questions of ethnic origin, is a recurrent discussion in public debates (SVT 2013; Dagens Arena 2015; Expressen 2018). Also, past research has shown the common occurrence of these questions (Runfors 2016), whereof some studies highlight how "non-whites" might react differently upon receiving these comments (Hübinette & Tigervall 2009). As seen, the tension lies in Sara's battle with her own curiosity, whilst she fears of being misunderstood due to an incorrect formulation of her question.

Scenario 4 – "Cultural Expressions"

"Alice sits with a group of friends and listens to a hip-hop song, some are singing along. Whilst the song is playing, Alice's white friend Henrik uses the n-word as a part of the song's lyrics. After the song stops a discussion is started regarding the use and meaning of the n-word. One of Alice other white friends, Jonas, tells them that saying the n-word is not okay and that only black people can say the word. He means that the use of the word is a way for certain exposed groups to reclaim power by using a word that has historically been used negatively against them, it is a form of resistance. Henrik protests and claims that saying the n-word should not be limited to certain groups and that freedom for all people to use it is a way to destroy the racist

connotations that have been connected to the word. He claims that the word does not have the same meaning in Sweden as it does in USA anyways. Furthermore, he was just singing along in a song, he claims. A third white friend, Kevin, joins the argumentation and claims that no one should be allowed to use the word, not even in a song, since the word always carries a racialized historical past. Kevin claims that the same limitations should be made for all words like 'blattar', 'babbar', or expressions like 'us and them' that should not be said by anyone and should be replaced by politically correct alternatives. Question: Was anyone thinking in the right way in this situation?"

In this case, I have often partaken in similar discussions with friends, where I have noticed the importance of being in the correct group when saying certain words. The example discusses a matter which has formerly gained attention in Sweden, mainly through the questions "Is it okay to refer to a chocolate-ball as a 'Negerboll'?" (Göteborgs-Posten 2019) or when celebrities say the n-word in social media (Aftonbladet 2020). However, the marker of difference does not refer to "n-word" itself. Instead, the marker refers to the exclusivity when uttering badly connotated words. Also, the tension in this scenario refers to words that are "negatively loaded"

Scenario 5 – "Religion"

"Rebecka is at a food festival in central Malmö with a group of friends. Suddenly Rebecka sees a friend, Homan, that she's gotten to know through a course that they've been taking together. She walks up to Homan to greet him. Rebecka sees that Homan is at the festival with another male person that is named Naser. She reaches her hand to greet, but Naser does not shake Rebecka's hand. Instead, Naser waves to her with a smile on his lips and says 'Hi!'. Rebecka becomes a bit confused but decides to draw back her hand and do the same as Naser without commenting the act. When Naser then greets Rebecka's other male friends he does so by shaking their hands. Rebecka feels even more confused but does not comment. Her friends do not comment the occurrence neither. A few days later she meets Homan and ask him about the situation at the festival. Homan tells Rebecka that Naser did not greet by shaking her hand since Naser is a religious Muslim. According to Naser's interpretation of the Quran he has not deserved to touch other women's hands except his wife's. Homan's explanation clarifies the situation, but Rebecka still feel unsure regarding what she thinks. Question: Did Rebecka, or any other character in this tale, react in a wrong way?"

This scenario was not inspired from my experiences, as the other examples were. However, discussions regarding the meaning and role of the Muslim communities are a common sight in public debates and various news articles. Specifically, the inspiration for this scenario was taken from an event in Sweden where a religious politician did not greet a woman journalist with his hand (Aftonbladet 2016). The tension is created through the disagreement between feminist values and the tolerance or appreciation that people commonly wish show minority cultures in Sweden. In addition, the specific marker of difference in this scenario is the alternative behavior that somehow threatens commonly held values in Sweden.

3.4 Conducting Interviews

Initially, I planned to conduct six focus group interviews with four participants in each interview. As such, I pictured two interviews with "whites", two interviews with "non-whites" and the remaining two interviews that mixed the members of the groups formerly mentioned. I pictured this design as ideal since it would help me see differences in the views and experiences of "whites" and "non-whites" when being separated. However, this design would also be limited, since the "white" interviewees would inevitably be affected by my presence. When trying to reach possible candidates, I instead ended up with four group interviews with four participants in all but one of the interviews. The groups did not have the initially planned division between "whites" and "non-whites". However, each interview managed to include an equal divide on "whites" and "non-whites" and in men and women. Most importantly, I followed Brymans (2018) advice in avoiding gathering any people that had personal relation to each other, which has the risk of having a negative impact on the dynamic exchanges. In terms of homogeneity, I managed to recruit students in Lund that had resided in Sweden for some time. Concurrently, the participants showed some variation in terms of background. The interviews included bachelor's students and master's students who either studied economics, engineering, medicine or social sciences. Also, the interviews only included individuals in the ages between 19 and 27. Whilst being in contact, I sent the interviewees additional information regarding the subject and a copy of the scenarios that they needed to read. The preparation of the interviewees was crucial in their ability of understanding and remembering the content of each scenario and knowing what to answer.

The interviews were held in group rooms that I had booked at Lund University. At these sessions, I offered Swedish "fika", consisting of chocolate balls, coffee and water. In prior to

the interviews, I asked interviewees to fill a form with details of their age, gender, the city where they resided and their occupation. This form clarified the aim of the study and noted that the details they shared would be treated confidentially (See: Appendix 2). Further on, I explained that they were the ones that should discuss and that I merely was a moderator. The interviewees were also informed that the session would be recorded and transcribed in order to ease my analytical process. Moreover, I explained that their identities would remain anonymous and that they would receive pseudonyms when quoted in my study. I also informed them that their participation was uncoerced and that answering questions was not mandatory. All these principles were aimed at being aligned with the suggestions regarding ethics as explained by the scientific council in Sweden (Vetenskapsrådet 2002).

During the interviews, I read each scenario before asking a question to remind them of the scenario they already had read. As suggested by Bryman (2018), I merely acted as a moderator by making sure that all participants could voice their opinion. This way, the interviews received an unstructured character rather than a semi-structured one. However, I asked questions when the conversations quieted down and made sure that the discussions remained close to the subject. I refrained from asking supplementing questions when the discussions went fluently. Instead, I wrote down anything of interest which I then saved for a moment when discussions would stop. After the third scenario, I offered the interviewees a minor break. Also, after the interviews, I asked for their thoughts and thanked them for participating. Most interviews took about 2.5 hours to complete and 2 hours to record.

3.5 Data Analysis

After the interviews, the recordings were transcribed and translated to English in word documents on my personal computer. The results added up to a total of 117 pages of transcribed material from all four focus group interviews. I then read these pages twice and highlighted the most important claims from each scenario in each interview. I then created a document where I collected these highlighted texts from each scenario in each interview. At this instance, I gave different colors to quotes from "whites" and "non-whites" which made the separation of their ideas easier. Next, I moved these quotes from "whites" and "non-whites" beneath different themed headlines that I had formulated, which I based on the repeated occurrences of certain ideas or experiences. The text beneath these headlines were then reworked into texts that were

easy to read. Finally, I kept those headlines and text that were the most common or interesting points from the interviews, which created a chapter of results.

It is important to mention that my study mainly has generated two types of data. Partly, I have generated data that refers to the interactions in the sessions and partly, I have generated data that refers to the experiences of the interviewees in their everyday lives. My primary data is mainly the second form, since it better connects to my research question. However, I will also present data from dynamics since the ideas of the interviewees had evolved during these sessions. Throughout my process of structuring my results beneath themed headlines, I was focused on finding ideas that saturated my empirical material. In connecting data with theory, I found pivotal points to *relevance, access* and *risks.* I then applied these ideas to my results to explain how "whites" and "non-whites" morally navigate through multicultural Sweden. Finally, I mainly included quotes that could act as illustrative points to the theoretical claims that I made in the analysis. However, some quotes were merely used to enforce my descriptions of what interviewees had claimed.

3.6 Methodological Discussion

Initially, I would like to comment on some of the implications when using a "Vignette" method. As mentioned in "1.1 Research Aim & Issue", this study aims at conducting a study with a "bottom-up" model where I formulate my own theory on moral navigation without specifically using any theoretical model. However, presenting the interviewees with the scenarios before the interviewees inevitably influenced the material in a way that partly creates a "top-down" model. In this case, participants were surely affected by my use of words and the actions of the actors in the scenarios. Additionally, by presenting scenarios to the interviewees as "moments of tension", it already enforces that the scenario is problematic. Nevertheless, these points do not imply that interviewees did not provide me with honest and independent answers. The perks of using a "Vignette" method lie in the concreteness of the question. However, the implications of presenting interviewees with scenarios means that the study will not solely be a "bottom-up" model. Instead, my study guides the interviewees to the tension through the scenarios (top-down) and then lets them freely discuss the scenarios (bottom-up). Here, I wish to highlight the value I placed in acting just as a moderator in these focus group interviews, since I wished to influence the interviewees as little as possible.

On another note, some of the methodological choices can possibly affect the study in varies ways. Firstly, I need to recognize that these "moments of tension" are part of a delicate subject. Therefore, asking interviewees to discuss these matters in group can be both positive and negative for this study. Firstly, discussing these matters in group might make interviewees afraid of being honest with their thoughts and experiences. In this case, I hoped that my choice of combining strangers might ease the tension of these discussions. Furthermore, "white" interviewees might withhold their ideas, in fear of how I or other "non-whites" might react. Also, "non-whites" might be equally affected by the presence of "white" interviewees. Either way, I hope that the "Vignette" method, with its questions regarding hypothetical scenarios, will make these discussions less tense and personal. Nevertheless, aside from the aforementioned risks, there are general limitations when conducting these interviews. In this case, I can never truly recreate the everyday interactions of these interviewees. Instead, I only can interpret the experiences that the interviewees chose to share with me in these sessions. Finally, as I shortly mentioned in "Delimitations", there are limits to my group that are worth commenting. In this case, my study mainly receives input from young students in Lund. This way, I exclude people of different of ages, from different cities or other occupations, which prevents me from making generalizable claims. At the same time, I am interviewing individuals that reside in a multicultural setting where they are constantly approached by different ideas. This way, my selection of participants creates limitations as well as possibilities.

4   Moral Navigation: Dynamics & Dominant Themes

Intro

This chapter start with subheading "4.1" where I analyze the dynamic exchanges of each interview. These exchanges are important since the physical meetings of these interviews affected the answers regarding their views and experiences of moral navigation. Thereafter, in "4.2", I present the dominant and pivotal ideas (*relevance, access, risks*) that people use when morally navigating through multicultural Sweden today. I then finalize "4.2" with an analysis of the results from the scenario "Cultural Expressions" to reinforce the importance of the idea *relevance.*

4.1 Dynamic Exchanges

Intro

The dynamics in this study are important through their direct or indirect contribution to moral navigation in multicultural Sweden. Mainly, this chapter aims to answer the question: *How can we understand the dynamic exchanges in these interviews?* Accordingly, this subheading firstly presents how the roles and claims of the interviewees seem to have varied depending on if they were "white" or "non-white". In this case, "non-white" interviewees had precedence when speaking about their experiences and sometimes found common ground with other "non-whites". Also, "white" interviewees sometimes claimed that they were not in the right group or did not have the right experience to make certain claims. The remaining parts of this subheading analyzes the dynamics of the interviews by using Kitzingers model regarding "complementary" and "argumentative" interactions.

Whites & Non-Whites

As previously mentioned, I did not have the fortune of controlling the variables when dividing these four interviews between "white" and "non-white" participants. However, when planning the interviews, the background variables of the participants reached a successful variation. Close to all interviews were equally divided between "white" and "non-white" interviewees, which noticeably seemed to affect the conversations. Generally, "non-whites" often shared their common experiences of receiving questions regarding heritage or being mistaken for an immigrant, often in an amusing manner. One example of "non-whites" finding common ground

was in group 2 where two "non-whites" expressed their experience of being stopped at airports where Priscilla said: "…I agree, I am like always stopped for random checks haha" and Stefan claimed: "Mhm, yeah, that's a thing that one receives haha".

Similarly, "white" interviewees expressed their commonality of being inexperienced in the subject of ethnicity or in their avoidance of certain risks. An example of "whites" avoiding risks could generally be seen in the discussions of "Cultural Expressions", where "whites" had less to say regarding the utterance of the n-word. When Tony and Madison in group 4 were asked about their preferences for the word, Tony initially did not answer, and Madison said: "I'm going to lean back so that you guys can discuss haha". Another example was when I asked group 2 how one should ask questions about ethnic background, whereof Justin said: "I'll say pass on that question, I have so much anxiety *light laughter*" and Fanny smiled and concurred with: "Yeah, I feel the same". In a few cases, "white" and "non-white" interviewees surprisingly had a dialogue regarding ways to avoid risks in different interactions. "Whites" sometimes asked how one should ask or behave, as when Linnea in group 3 highlighted the risks of being misunderstood when asking others about ethnic origin. She said: "I'm thinking in case someone would take offence, how should one behave in that situation?". Many times, "non-whites" either answered by explaining why other "non-whites" might take offence, or how they themselves act when other "non-whites" take offence. In addition, "non-whites" often related their experience to the scenarios and explained how they would prefer to hear questions or claims of ethnicity.

As a result, I concluded that the simultaneous presence of "white and "non-white" made an impact on the answers they provided and that certain roles where attained. "Non-whites" were often allowed precedence in voicing their experience or opinions of how one should speak about ethnicity. Meanwhile, "whites" often referred to their inexperience and of being in the wrong group. As such, being "white" or "non-white" had made a clear difference in the discussions that interviewees had. However, as I noted in "3.5 Methodological Discussion", it was difficult to know how much the presence of the non-whites affected the whites and vice versa, since I was unable to divide the interviews in "white", "non-white" and a mix of the former groups. In addition, it was difficult to know how much impact my presence had on the interviewees. Therefore, I am unable to make any comparisons, but can only analyze the observed dynamics and roles within each interview.

Argumentative or Complementary

During these interviews, I aimed at determining whether the dynamics could be interpreted as either "complementary" or "argumentative". I concluded that group 1 and 3 were *complementary* in the way the conversations generally strived towards a consensus. In these groups, interviewees often made claims as to add the information recently shared by others. Also, these interviewees rarely contradicted each other openly, even when their separate claims obviously seemed to contradict one another. Sometimes I, as the interviewer, even needed to ask interviewees to motivate their claims, or ask the remaining interviewees if they agreed with the claim that was recently made, so as to create some discussions. Also, interviewees in these groups sometimes even openly admitted when being convinced by someone else's point, as to having changed their opinion. As such, the *complementary* nature of these interviews was seen by their strive towards a consensus or middle ground instead of challenging each other's differences. Because of this, I interpreted that the interviewees in these groups sought an environment that was free of conflict or might have had difficulty in expressing their true views amongst strangers. Simultaneously, I recognize that group 1 and 3 might have consisted of individuals that had similar values and were easily persuaded. For example, the participants in group 3 often proclaimed that they were "agreeing quite well" and that they were "quite alike".

Further on, in comparison to the interviews 1 and 3, the interviews of 2 and 4 had a more *argumentative* climate, judging by their consistent critique of the basis in each other's claims. The interviewees commonly contradicted each other and commented when someone made remarks that they did not agree with. Unlike in interviews 1 and 3, interviewees in these groups often asked each other questions which rarely gave me, as the interviewer, any room or need to ask for elaboration. The result created interesting discussions that went beyond the initial themes. Meanwhile, I as the interviewer sometimes refrained from asking additional questions, since it would interrupt the flow of the conversations. Interestingly, both interview 2 and 4 started in a "complementary" manner, in which interviewees often added points to the claims made by others. Yet, after some time had passed, these interviewees lessened their references to each other's claims and instead started to refer to their own experiences to legitimize their claims. As such, they started to contradict each other, which gave these interviews their noticeable "argumentative" character. In retrospect, I interpret that even though these interviewees started in a respectful manner – as one would expect conversations between strangers to be held – they slowly transformed into arguments when participants became

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comfortable or lost their patience when making their points across. However, the way these interviews became argumentative differentiated. Interviewees in group 2 let their fellow participants finish speaking and openly proclaimed when they reached a moment of "agree to disagree". Meanwhile, discussions in group 4 featured interruptions and using each other as personal examples which cause some discussions to lead to frustration. Unlike the "complementary" cases, I doubt that interviewees in the "argumentative" interviews held back any views or arguments. However, these argumentative discussions might instead have led to interviewees asserting some ideas, for the sake of argument, that they personally do not fully believe in.

4.2 The Dominant Themes of Navigation: Morality, Ideas & Membership

Intro

This subheading mainly answers my sub-question: "*Which similarities does "white" and "non-white" moral navigation hold?".* This study mixes the results and analysis, meaning this subheading will start by explaining which material that I choose to include from my sessions. Thereafter, I present the overarching narrative of how "white" and "non-white" students in Lund morally navigate in these markers of difference, concerning tense interactions in multicultural Sweden. In a nutshell, this narrative says: "whites" and "non-whites" morally navigate, through moments of tension in multicultural Sweden, by using ideas of *relevance, access* and *risks.* Depending on how the *relevance* of these markers of difference are made clear to you – partly based on whether you are "white" or "non-white" – will decide the things that you can say or do (your *access*) and what things you cannot say or do (your *risks*). I interpret these three ideas as the "dominant themes" within these markers of difference in Sweden.

Translating Markers

Regarding the results, the interviewees in my sessions helped to prove that my second-order concepts of "white" and "non-white" has value in Sweden. Indeed, my experiment shows that this distinction has importance in their personal lives when it comes to these markers of difference. However, the difference between "whites" and "non-whites" seemed to depend on the marker of difference. Differences in views and experiences were most noticeable in the

scenarios: "phenotype", "language" and "ethnic background". Meanwhile, "cultural expressions" and "religion" showed less difference between the groups. Nonetheless, whether speaking of similarities or differences, I mainly theorize my material through the dominant ideas of *relevance, access* and *risks.* However, I primarily found inspiration to these themes through all scenarios except the one called "religion". Therefore, this chapter will mainly use results from "phenotype", "language" and "ethnic background" to coin the definitions of these ideas. The chapter is then finalized with a subheading where I show the importance of *relevance* in the results from "cultural expressions". In chapter "5.0" I analyze the difference in how "whites" and "non-whites" apply the ideas of *relevance, access* and *risks* in the markers of difference called "phenotype", "language" and "ethnic background".

Relevance, Access & Risks

In this study, I decided to present a model as a clear way to explain how "white" and "non-white" people navigate through multicultural Sweden. To clarify, my reason for dividing between "white" and "non-white" are three: Firstly, I used my experience of how others label their experiences and created the second-order concept of "white" and "non-white". Secondly, past research enforced the relevance of differentiating between "white" and "non-white" experiences in Sweden. Thirdly, my results confirmed that there is substance in using these concepts, shown by how the interviewees' experiences fitted to my distinction. The interviewees themselves rarely mentioned "white" or "non-white" to address questions of ethnicity or race in Sweden. As such, it is not my intent to essentialize any social or biological essence or difference between people. Further on, the model outlines two important things: the dominant ideas in multicultural Sweden that whites and non-whites use (*Relevance*, *Access* & *Risks*) and the relationship between these ideas as indicated by the arrows. The model is to be read as following:

1. Depending on if you are "white" or "non-white" in Sweden, the *relevance* of certain markers of difference in multicultural Sweden might differ. **2**. The *relevance* decide what things you can say and do (your *access*) and the things you cannot say or do (your *risks*). **3**. Interviewees interpretation of how *relevance* creates their *access* and *risks* decides how they morally navigate in multicultural Sweden.

Model 1: *Moral Navigation in Multicultural Sweden*
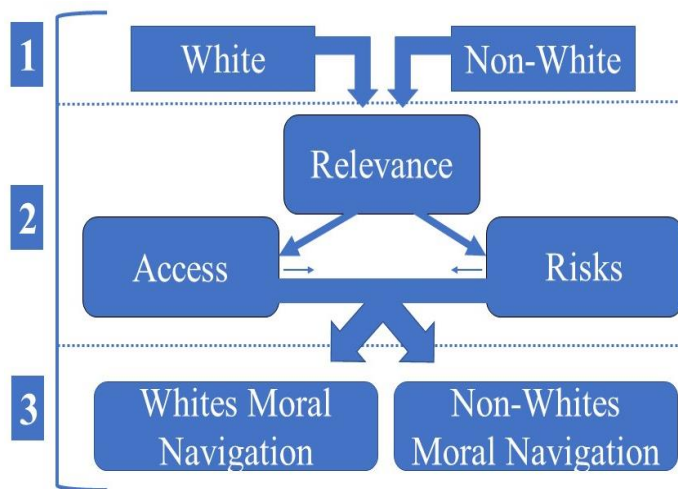
This outline is only a simplified explanation of how I have interpreted "whites" and "non-whites" moral navigation in multicultural Sweden. Before analyzing my empirical material through the above model, I shall explain how each of the three themes (*Risks*, *Access & Risks*) operate and relate to each other. To clarify, the definitions of *relevance, access & risks*, together with the description of how these ideas co-relate, are created by me. Firstly, *relevance* can also be referred to as "importance". It encompasses the importance that each scenario, with its "marker of difference", had in the lives of these interviewees. More closely, it relates to the common discourse of "whom is concerned" by a marker of difference. In addition, these "markers" could be relevant in different ways for different people. For example, when I read the scenario called "ethnic background" the interviewees either reacted by: recognizing that it relates to their self-identity, claim that they have personal experiences or views on the subject, or perceive the subject as being important in this time and age. Furthermore, the *relevance* of a question seemed to be either self-proclaimed or appointed to by others. However, I noticed that *relevance* had its implicit boundaries. For example, any interviewee could not self-proclaim to be affected by the n-word. Some interviewees mentioned that they themselves were not part of the correct group or did not have the corresponding appearance. Likewise, some "non-whites" mentioned that they were identified by Swedes as "immigrants", which these "non-whites" did not self-identify with. I shall not further discuss the construction of *relevance,* since I am more interested in how it relates to *access* and *risks.* However, this idea of *relevance* is not unheard of and can be related to other theoretical studies, such as: ideas regarding identities (Brubaker 2013), hegemonic discourses (Laclau & Mouffe 1985) or "interpellation" (Althusser 2014).

Once an individual's *relevance* to these markers of difference was established, then interviewees successfully discussed their *access* and *risks* when interacting in multicultural Swedish society. Shortly explained, *access* was the actions and ideas that the interviewees claimed, either explicitly or implicitly, that they could do. *Access* can be interchanged with "entrance", whereof it often became a question of "Who gets to enter?". In turn, this established who could rightfully speak about certain matters, ask certain questions or say certain words. For example, the *access* of "non-whites" in "ethnic background" was obvious and therefore these interviewees claimed that they could unproblematically speak about their experiences of ethnicity with other "non-whites". As such, they claimed to have *access* to this context. Likewise, in the scenario called "phenotype", "white" interviewees gained access to discuss visible differences by claiming that it was "natural" or "inevitable". As with *relevance, access* has been theorized before in, explicitly seen in "A theory of Access" (Ribot & Peluso 2003) which focuses on structures of politics and legality. Also, Bourdieu discusses an individual's *access* to the symbolic and cultural "capital" of certain "fields" (Bourdieu 1998).

Finally, in my interpretation of the material, I noticed that *risks* were closely related to ideas of *access*. If one did not have access, then one took risks when speaking about ethnicity. This close relationship between access and risk can partly be seen by the interviewees placing emphasis on *relevance*. One needed to be relevantly connected to the marker, by having the correct physical appearance or to be member of a legitimate group, in order to avoid risks. For example, when "white" interviewees renounced their right to decide how the n-word was to be used, they denied themselves *access*. In this case, it was implicitly noticeable that "white" interviewees would take a risk if they would claim to have this access. Also, risks were often connected to certain formulations and context. In some cases, interviewees reminded each other of the risks in certain formulation. Tony, a "white" interviewee in group 4 once claimed: "Look, can't you just ask, 'what kind of ethnic background do you have?'". Whereof Henry said: "Yeah, well, that's a bit blunt" and Madison claimed: "Yeah, a little too blunt". The clear presence of risks may be explained by the delicacy when discussing markers of differences in Sweden. Mainly, the risks seemed to lay in being accused of having an illegitimate motive, such as being racist, or to create an awkward or "socially unsmooth" situation for either of the concerned parties. Further on, theories regarding "risks" have been formulated before whereof much research focuses on its impact on society (Giddens 1999; Beck 1992).

As I previously mentioned, "white" and "non-white" moral navigation was based on their interpretation of how the three dominant themes (*relevance*, *access* and *risks*) interrelated and

attained to them being "white" and "non-white". Ultimately, these interpretations led to a "white" and "non-white" *experience* of moral navigation through multicultural Sweden. This "experience" will be presented and analyzed in "5.1 The Non-White Experience" and "5.2 The White Experience". In case of any unclarities regarding the content of the scenarios, I suggest that the reader reads "3.3 Vignette" again. Also, the simplified model of how "whites" and "non-whites" morally navigates, which is related to the dominant themes, can be re-visited when needed (See: Model 1, p. 28). However, before presenting the distinct "white" and "non-white" experiences of moral navigation, I wish to outline the importance of *relevance* by referring to the interviewees implicit and explicit emphasis that one needs to have the correct physical looks or to be a member of the correct group to have *access* to certain matters.

Membership Requirement

The "white" and "non-white" interpretation of how the scenarios related differently to them is emphasized in "phenotype", "language" and "ethnic background". However, interviewees' common view, regarding the importance of being a member of the correct group, was emphasized in "cultural expressions", in which interviewees discussed the rules for saying the n-word. In this case, most interviewees agreed that having a certain physical look or ethnic background made it more acceptable for a person to use certain negatively loaded words as an act of resistance by "taking back words", or as a tool for solidarity between those with similar background. Generally, certain words gained a different meaning when the members of the correct group said it, unlike when members of the incorrect groups said it. As Sebastian recognized regarding black people saying the n-word: "I mean, it's not a hateful word when it comes from their tongue". Furthermore, the act of resistance and "taking back words" was recognized as a common phenomenon. Several interviewees claimed that some groups were also resisting the use of certain words, such as saying the "Z-word" instead of using "zigenare", which is a demeaning reference to Romani people in Sweden. Also, other communities were taking back words such as "gay" or "bitch", as Priscilla said:

- *"I think it's rather fair to take back a word, because many are doing that with words right now. Like 'slut' or 'bitch', these words have been used abusively before, but if you (looking at Stefan) or anyone else had called me a bitch then it wouldn't be that nice. But if me and my friends are like 'you're such a bitch' then it might be something positive for us"*

In the case of black people, participants claimed that the historical events of slavery legitimated their use the n-word and allowed them to decide on the meaning and use of the word. Further on, several interviewees recognized that "non-black" people using the word increased the risk for them being accused of using it negatively. The *risks* for "non-black" people lay in them not being *relevantly* related to the word through physical appearance. Additionally, all interviewees, including one "black" participant, asserted that they did not ever use the word in their everyday language. Some "white" interviewees even asserted that they did not know how to contribute to the discussion since they did not relate to the through any personal experiences. As discussed above, one's *access* to use certain words could be legitimized by being a member of the correct group. In this case, negatively loaded words could change meaning to be an act of solidarity or resistance when being used by those that gained *relevance.* As such, the n-word was a clear example of an expression whereof *relevance*, in the form of having "correct appearance", was the only way to attain *access* to use the word without taking any *risks*. However, *access* did not mean that one necessarily used the n-word, which could be seen when one black participant that was, implicitly by others, appointed as a legitimate candidate to use this word but refrained from his *access.*

Furthermore, some groups discussed whether it was legitimate for "non-black" people to tell other non-black people off when saying the n-word. For example, Stefan had experiences of "non-black" people telling him off when he had said the n-word:

- *"Several of my, how do I say, 'non-black friends' have confronted me when I sing along in the lyrics and say 'hey, you can't say that' and like: why do you have the right to express yourself on what I can or cannot say in that way?"*

Still, some "non-black" interviewees claimed that they indeed would openly protest when a "white" person said the word, but not more than react if a "black" person said it. One interviewee claimed that due to the large number of people that took offence by the word, it legitimized him to tell off others. Another interviewee claimed that she did not want to contribute to a negative social structure in society and therefore choose to tell off others. Some remaining interviewees argued that the act of telling others off was strange and somehow illegitimate if one is not a part of the concerned group. Also, several interviewees recognized the risks when people react in the place of others. Partly, they recognized that a person might take offence for things that members of the group itself might not care about. Also, several participants admitted that there probably was a variation of positions that people within a group might hold regarding whether an act or a word was okay, and that many recognized the

difficulty for outsiders to know what position that specific members of a group hold. Furthermore, interviewees recognized that one might even wrongly assume the size of the group that takes offence as being a greater group than it in fact is. In this discussion, we notice that the idea of *relevance* might connect to resistance. In this case, the following idea was contested: if one is not a member of the *relevant* group that uses the word, is one then allowed *access* to act resistantly towards others that use the word? The importance of being part of the *relevant* group was emphasized in the discussion regarding the risks of acting out resistantly in the place of others. In this matter, being part of the correct group would remove the risks of wrongly "creating a problem out of nothing" since one would correctly be able to determine whether something is a problem.

Thus far, I have outlined and explained the three dominant themes regarding moral navigation in multicultural Sweden, partly by providing a model of how the themes interrelate and breed the "white" and "non-white" moral navigation. Further on, I have exemplified the importance of *relevance, access* and *risks,* by using the material collected from "cultural expressions". Additional examples of how *relevance* was important could be seen in the dynamic exchange where "non-whites" received precedence when speaking of certain matters, whilst "whites" sometimes expressed their inexperience (See: "Whites & Non-Whites" in "4.1 Dynamic Exchanges"). In the next chapter, I interpret the "Non-White" and the "White" experience of moral navigation in three markers of difference ("phenotype", "language", "ethnic background") through my three dominant ideas (*relevance, access, risks*).

5   Differences in Navigation: Whites & Non-Whites

Intro

This chapter answers the final sub-question: *How does "white" and "non-white" moral navigation differentiate?* Firstly, I present "5.1 the Non-White Experience" and then the "5.2 the White Experience". This chapter is then finalized in a subheading called "5.3 Conclusion" where I summarize my results and analysis and compare these to the past research that I presented in "Literature Review" to show that I am in a dialogue with ongoing research and ideas. As such, by the end of this chapter, I hope to provide a full answer to my research question which asks: *How can we understand "whites'" and "non-whites'" moral navigation through everyday interactions in multicultural Sweden?* In addition, the concepts of "white" and "non-white" will no longer be written with quotation mark, since they become a recurring and integrated part in the remains of this thesis.

5.1 The Non-White Experience

Intro

Beneath this subheading, I outline the non-white experiences of moral navigation in relation to the scenarios: "phenotype", "language" and "ethnic background". In this outline, I explain how *relevance, access* and *risks* relate to non-whites in each of these markers of difference. Initially, through the results from "phenotype", I explain that the non-whites had common experiences of standing out. These experiences made their visible differences seem important, which further made them into *ethnic ambassadors* in Sweden. Thereafter, the results from "language" will explain how non-whites successfully outlined the risks when someone voiced certain assumptions, by using their experiences of standing out. Lastly, I further explain how "ethnic background" is relevant for non-whites, whilst also outlining how actions relating to "ethnic background" create access for non-whites and risks for whites.

Ethnic Ambassadors

Firstly, the main tool for the non-white experience when navigating through multicultural Sweden is through the *relevance* that questions of ethnicity, culture and visible looks provide them daily. At its roots, this seems to regard the sheer experience of standing out and not being part of the norm regarding ethnic looks and traits. As such, these experiences also influence

how this group view risks and access when navigating through multicultural Sweden. However, claiming that having non-conforming phenotypical traits immediately influence the experience and thus the navigational skills of this group is an insufficient argument. Thus, I firstly need to show that this group recognizes themselves as having these traits. Secondly, I need to show how these traits make themselves reminded by enforcing their relevance in the day-to-day lives of non-whites. Lastly, I need to show how this *relevance* inflict the ways that this group evaluate *risks* and *access*.

I begin by outlining the position of the non-white in the context of Sweden, as provided by these participants. In "phenotype", the participants were asked to value whether the classifications of Swedish and non-Swedish, in terms of looks, were okay and common. In this case, those considered non-white often referred to themselves as having "foreign" or "non-Swedish" looks because of their skin complexion, certain traits and their foreign ethnic background. As Faye mentioned:

- *"When I grew up, many have used this classification where people that have lighter skin complexion have been classified as Swedes. And me amongst others, or others that might come from countries where skin complexion differentiate more, have simply been classified as having non-Swedish looks."*

Non-white interviewees commonly claimed that "foreignness" was easy to spot, often using their own experience of standing out in terms of ethnicity in Sweden as an example. In some cases, interviewees even mentioned feeling like representatives for certain cultures, or as I like to call it, "ethnic ambassadors", whereof non-whites were expected to answer to certain expectations or stereotypes. For example, one interviewee named Stefan, who had origins in Israel, was expected to hold certain political views: "As soon as people receive information that I am from Israel, the first question that perhaps 8/10 ask me is 'what do you think about the Israel-Palestine conflict?'". That same interviewee claimed that others seldomly believed his claims of having roots in a European country, since he mainly met the requirement for looking middle eastern. Christian mentioned that he was often referred to as "Swedish-Asian", unlike the F.O.B-Asians (i.e. "Fresh off the boat"): "But then it's mostly about how one dresses and stuff like that I think, or…yeah it does, we look the same genetically". In addition, a third interviewee that had parents from Latin-America claimed that she sometimes was expected to have the ability to speak another language even though she did not.

Furthermore, non-whites' experiences regarding the relevance of their visible looks was not only constituted by experience from Sweden, but also from abroad. For example, three interviewees shared their experiences of unsuccessfully becoming representatives for Swedish cultures on trips abroad. All three had travelled to countries outside of Europe in the company of friends that had the stereotypical Swedish look, often referred to by interviewees as "blonde and blue eyes". Whilst being abroad, when others asked them about their origin these interviewees were rarely believed when answering "Sweden" since they did not fit the stereotypical idea of Swedish looks. Faye had the following experience from travelling:

-   *"There were always those people that asked, 'Where are you guys from?' and then my friend said 'yeah Sweden' and then they looked and where like 'Sweden?' and then I'd always receive the question 'Are you sure?' and I was like 'yeah'. I mean, I know where I come from."*

However, unlike when being abroad, non-white interviewees mentioned that white Swedes usually accepted that they had a background from Sweden if they claimed so, even if they simultaneously were assumed to have a foreign ethnic past. Sebastian said: "I'm not the one that is usually classified as having the typical Swedish appearance. But here in Sweden, people usually buy that 'I'm Swedish, I'm born and raised in Sweden', people buy it and have no issues with it". Moreover, interviewees not only had experiences standing out, but most of them also had experience blending in. Whilst interviewees often related the experience of "standing out" as being part of a school or a group that included people with quite homogenous Swedish looks, "blending in" was related to having the experience of being part of groups of friends that shared the quality of having a foreign ethnic background. Some even mentioned that they had groups of friends with mixed ethnic background during their upbringing where speaking of ethnicity and ethnic differences was common and easy-going. As such, we can see that *relevance* can be manifested both through the experience of standing out, whereof visible differences and ethnic origin manifest their importance in Sweden and abroad, and by giving *access* to solidarity within certain groups. However, the backside of this access affirms the improbability of blending in with the homogenous Swedish population in terms of looks and background.

Interestingly, it is important to note that the interviewees did not refer to the aforementioned experiences of "standing out", whether in Sweden or abroad, as something negative. Although, some found the experience of being doubted abroad as peculiar or strange, they nevertheless remained understanding that others had stereotypical expectations of Swedish looks. However, only a few non-whites interviewees cared to explain why people made ethnic classifications. One interviewee mentioned that the act of classification was pure instinct, whilst another

claimed that the classification was only an initial descriptive act before getting to know each other. Tony mentioned: "To only point out that I don't look like the general population in Sweden…I feel like that's a bit obvious, it 'begs the question' so to speak. Yeah, I simply don't look that way". At several stages of the interviews, non-white interviewees emphasized the idea of them standing out as obvious and somewhat naturalized. I interpreted that this group showed an awareness that they embodied a certain foreignness and expectations which they carried through their looks. Therefore, having a "foreign look" and background was considered natural and acceptable. As Nasih from group 4 mentioned: "A person does not even choose one's ethnic origins, so how can it be bad?". Thus, I interpreted that non-whites recognized their visible looks and background as not only common, but also understandable.

However, even though standing out was generally accepted amongst non-whites, there seemed to be borders for how this *relevance* could be manifested through language. As such, non-white interviewees emphasized that making classifications based on looks and supposed ethnicity was okay if they were used without valuing people differently. For instance, Priscilla mentioned: "There's difference between all of us sitting here, but that does not mean that I need to value you any different". In addition, whilst non-whites accepted that they might not look Swedish, they were less tolerant toward someone claiming that they did not behave correctly or did not belong in Sweden, which was earned through the experience of growing up in Sweden. As such, both "whites" and "non-whites" emphasized that a distinction needed to be made when determining whether someone is "Swedish" whereof a separation of "Swedish behavior" from "Swedish looks" was called for. "Non-whites" especially emphasized that people, in conversations regarding "Swedishness", needed to clarify what sense of "Swedish" they were referring to. In addition, entering a conversation of "Swedishness" in certain cities or with members of certain groups increased the *risk* of "non-whites" being accused of not being integrated. As Henry in mentioned: "If Lars, 72 years old from Sjöbo tells me that I am not Swedish, I would be uncertain if Lars meant my looks or me as a person". In this case, "Lars, 72 years old" refers to an elderly man that is an ethnic Swede in a smaller community in Sweden called "Sjöbo". As such, both age, ethnicity and geographical location might be related to ideas of risk.

As has been shown, non-whites recognized their "foreign traits" both in Sweden and abroad, both publicly and amongst friends, as well as during their upbringing and in daily interactions. Foreignness was somehow natural, and non-whites only saw risks if others referred to them as less valued or not having "Swedish behavior". Although not necessarily seen as negative, this

group still recognized the interactions that reminded them of their non-conforming phenotypical traits, which then reminded them of the importance of their ethnic look and background. However, this is not to say that the non-white interviewees considered their visible difference as their most important trait in every context. Nonetheless, visible attributes were considered a both obvious and a defining attribute whereof their looks and background, within the subject of ethnicity, was showed to be *relevant*. The results show that non-whites recognize that, when questions of foreignness become relevant, they become important figures that carry experience, views and knowledge in regard to ethnicity. Even though most felt accepted in Sweden, they were aware that others carried expectations and assumptions of the origins and experiences that they, as non-whites, might carry. As such, they become ethnic ambassadors.

Borders for Assumptions

After the discussions relating to "phenotype", where the relevance of visible difference and ethnic background was manifested in varies ways to non-whites, we moved on to a more general discussion regarding assumptions in the scenario named "language". As a reminder, "language" regarded "Ali", a young substitute teacher that was complimented for how he spoke Swedish, which revealed that others wrongly assumed him of having an "immigrant background", when he in fact had his upbringing in Sweden. This scenario led to a broader discussion regarding *risks* and the borders for voicing certain assumptions. Generally, the white and non-white interviewees agreed upon the risks and borders. However, I claim that the risks had different implications for the non-whites due to the *relevance* that visible differences have for them. In this case, whilst whites needed to avoid risks as to not being misunderstood, non-whites needed others to avoid risks so that they themselves would not be excluded from "Swedishness". As such, I will now firstly outline the risks that whites and non-whites related to different assumptions and then shortly explain how these risks are manifested in the non-white experience.

Firstly, most interviewees emphasized that Ali was wrongly assumed of having a different background than he had. Many emphasized that it was insufficient to make assumptions of background solely based on looks and most interviewees considered the comment as either inappropriate, socially unsmooth or amusing, but also potentially being used as a part of social games to downplay Ali's skills, as Sebastian said: "I think it's definitely wrong to go straight for his language skills, feels like a 'half-wrong' assumption to make, I would say".

Consequently, all interviewees asserted the importance of evolving one's relationship with a person before deciding to comment or compliment the visible looks or ethnic background of someone. Preferably, if an individual has a foreign background, they need to share the details of their origins themselves, according to the interviewees. Receiving certain information prior to making a comment was preferable to avoid being accused of having a negative motive or being socially unsmooth.

Whilst white interviewees used these precautionary ideas to avoid risks, non-white interviewees seemed to empathize more with Ali's position. As Sebastian said: "I can really see myself in Ali since my parents aren't from Sweden neither, but I am born and raised in Sweden and Swedish was not the first language we spoke at home". Even if most non-interviewees claimed to never have received a comment on their Swedish, most recognized that it was mostly non-whites that were assumed of having foreign background in Sweden, as Priscilla claimed:

- *"This is only a compliment that people with foreign looks receive. No one would ever approach someone from a western country and say 'wow, damn your Swedish is good' and only assume that this person is from another country, because they probably look a little Swedish."*

Only two non-white interviewees claimed to have received compliments on their Swedish. Johan claimed that the comment was okay since he, in prior to the comment, had mentioned that he had immigrated to Sweden when he was 16. However, Nasih claimed that he was less pleased by the comment since he grew up in Sweden and therefore considered the comment to be inappropriate. Another interviewee claimed to have been mistaken for being an international student, which he thought was understandable since it happened in Lund where many international students reside. Generally, non-white interviewees recognized that the teachers probably had good intentions, but that the comment primarily revealed the low expectations that the teachers had of Ali, since they became surprised of his language skills, based on his supposed middle eastern looks.

Consequently, even though only a few non-whites had experienced receiving comments on their Swedish language skills, many could empathize with Ali wrongly receiving an assumption regarding his background. Therefore, it seems that non-white interviewees implicitly asserted the *relevance* of this scenario to their own experiences. In addition, I argue that the *relevance* of the scenario created a different meaning of *risks* for the non-whites. In this case, the discussion regarding "complimenting one's Swedish" seemed to be similar to the idea of "commenting on someone's visible difference", as seen in the above discussions regarding

"phenotype". We could already notice in relation to "phenotype" that non-white interviewees were not estranged to receiving comments that made assumptions based on their looks. Also, we are reminded that these comments were naturalized and acceptable, if they did not risk challenging non-whites reach for "Swedishness". In a similar manner, it seems that non-whites interpreted the compliment on Swedish language skills – that Ali in the scenario "language" received – as risking to challenge non-whites right to "Swedishness". In this case, by complementing on someone's language skills, one reveals that one assumes the other of being foreign-born. In addition, this assumption opposes the other's self-perceived idea of gaining "Swedishness" by being born or having their upbringing in Sweden. In a general remark, we might claim that assumptions referring to visible looks, which referred to ethnic origins and skills, can be acceptable if the comment did not imply that the non-whites were any less Swedish. As such, we see that non-whites claimed *relevance* to the scenario of "language" by their experience of receiving comments regarding their ethnic background, whereof the *risks* lay in any comment that threatened to exclude them from "Swedishness".

Risks with Ethnic Origins

So far, I have explained how ideas of visible difference and ethnic background is relevant in the daily lives of non-whites. Also, I have explained how this relevance is naturalized, unless it borders towards some of the risks of excluding non-whites from "Swedishness". Now, I will analyze the non-white experience of moral navigation through the results from "ethnic background", which is the scenario that asked whether and how one should ask about ethnic origin. As such, I will now explain how their experiences of receiving questions help to formulate their views regarding the *risks* in terms of context and formulation.

At some point, all non-white interviewees mentioned having experience in Sweden of being asked about their ethnic background. Similarly to the white interviewees, non-whites also identified "ethnicity" as a delicate subject in Sweden and emphasized the importance to consider both context and formulation of questions when speaking of these matters. Unlike white interviewees, this group leaned towards personal experience to motivate their ideas of risks and access regarding how one should speak of ethnicity. Thus, as in "language", non-whites' moral navigation and ideas of risk relates to the *relevance* that this marker of difference has in their lives. For starters, non-whites considered the context and one's the relation to the one that asks as important factors when determining risks. For instance, non-whites commonly

mentioned that questions regarding ethnic background should be avoided to be asked when no relation had been established. Consequently, it seemed rather negative if questions of ethnic background were asked by strangers. Also, asking these questions in a professional context, as in a job interview or meeting, was also risky if the question did not seem to relate to the job itself. Mainly, non-whites claimed that questions regarding ethnic background should be received from friends or people that one had interacted with for some time. This extensively lowered the risks. Nasih provided an illustrative quote as to why: "…you can't be placed in a negative category since you've already been placed in the friendship box". However, in case one did decide to directly ask about ethnic background, then some formulations were to be avoided. In this case, "Where do you *actually* come from?" or "What are your *ethnic* origins?" were risky since the word "actually" was interpreted as excluding, whilst the word "ethnic" was interpreted as too specific. As such, these words were interpreted as a way for others to essentialize the foreignness that non-whites supposedly carried. Even here, Nasih provided an interesting quote: "You need to be a little smart. You can ask about where her parents come from, but maybe avoid the word 'ethnic' haha. After all, it is a negatively loaded word". As shown, it was preferable to approach the manner safely and indirectly by asking about the origin of someone's name or parents.

Interestingly, whilst outlining the current risks with questions of ethnicity, several non-white interviewees emphasized that the subject has become dramatized in Sweden. In addition, non-white interviewees never admitted to personally caring for the risks above. As Christian mentioned: "There are only a small group that is offended by receiving that question. Since they aren't that many, I'm thinking that the question shouldn't be such a big thing". At the same time, various non-whites recognized a number of reasons why someone would take offence. The main reasons of which included: being tired of the repeating occurrence, unwillingness to feel differently treated than white Swedes, avoidance of ethnicity being one's defining trait, being afraid of being held accountable for a certain culture or being related to a group with a negative reputation. Furthermore, a couple of non-whites also emphasized that "white Swedes" were the ones that dramatized and found the most risks in this subject. At the same time, the same interviewees recognized that white Swedes ran greater risks when engaging in conversations of ethnicity. Therefore, white Swedes needed to take precautions, regarding formulation and context, to avoid being accused of having a negative motive. Either way, several non-whites emphasized that asking questions in a correct manner was preferable from avoiding the question or over-thinking one's formulation. In fact, all non-whites except one

considered people being curious or interested in the ethnic background of others as both legitimate and welcomed.

Once that most non-white interviewees had established that questions regarding ethnic background were unproblematic, I moved on to ask: "how should one then ask about origin?" and was met with an additional issue of asking questions of origin. In this case, all non-white interviewees, except for one, had a general difficulty when answering the question of "Where do you come from?". These interviewees thought that the question was easier to answer in their hometown in Sweden, where they knew that others wanted to know about their ethnic background. However, whilst studying and residing in Lund, it was unclear whether others wanted to know about their hometown or ethnic origins. As Sebastian mentioned: "I would really not have asked 'where are you from?', because I know that it's a very unclear question since I myself don't know how to answer it 9 out of 10 times". The same difficulty arose when they were in any other city than their hometown. Some non-whites emphasized that speaking of neither their hometown nor their ethnic background was an issue. Still, they expressed that they often became unsure about what information that others sought. As Christian mentioned: "It's like, what exactly do you want to know?". Interestingly, some non-whites claimed to handle their uncertainty by providing a different, or a "wrong", answer as opposed to what the person expected. Some interviewees mentioned giving an "incorrect" answer to provoke others, to amuse themselves or to break the ice. As one non-white interviewee claimed: "I usually receive this question many times and sometimes I think it's fun to get a reaction from people when they don't quite receive the answer they wanted". Furthermore, these examples show how the relevance of ethnicity is materialized in the experiences of non-whites. In the end, non-whites' relevant experiences with questions of ethnicity gave them insight to various risks when engaging in conversations regarding ethnic background but next no explicitly safe ways to approach questions of ethnicity.

An Unproblematic Subject

Hitherto, I have explained how the *relevance* of questions regarding ethnic background in the lives of non-white has guided their moral navigation in determining *risks*. Beneath this final subheading, I explain how the relevance of these questions also has given them *access* into discussing ethnicity, with others that also have a foreign ethnic background, without taking any of the above-mentioned risks.

Several non-whites asserted that ethnicity was a more easy-going, and less delicate, subject for themselves and generally amongst people with a foreign ethnic background. Sebastian had claimed: "I do believe that the social acceptance is greater for me to ask. I mean, for me that has a foreign look generally has an easier time asking a question to others about their ethnic background". As to why, several interviewees claimed that the experience of often receiving questions regarding ethnic background also made the question easier to ask. Nasih claimed: "It might be that I am so used to receive the 'where do you come from' that it might also be why I have a very dedramatized attitude towards this question." Two other interviewees claimed that sharing the commonality of having a foreign ethnic background is partly what makes the question easier. Additionally, interviewees both explicitly and inexplicitly claimed that the risk for them to be accused of having a negative motive, for example being racist, was noticeably reduced. Tony even claimed that the risk of accusing someone with a foreign background asking questions about ethnicity for being "racist" was reduced since that motive would somehow be "self-defeating". In addition, two others mentioned that questions about ethnic background from someone that themselves had a foreign ethnic background often was expected to be a strive towards communion or a way to share experiences and views.

So far, I have outlined why non-whites consider questions of ethnicity as dedramatized amongst themselves. However, non-white interviewees also mentioned their methods when engaging in conversations of ethnicity. In this case, some mentioned that they were ready to ask others about ethnic background quite early, or even directly ask by saying "Where do you come from?". Two interviewees even mentioned that they had asked strangers about ethnic background whereof these people had taken offence. As a reaction, Christian mentioned: "But people taking offence is very, very rare, but it has happened. With most other people it leads to a pleasant conversation". A few non-white interviewees also mentioned that they might speak about their own ethnicity as an invitation to conversation or to give compliments about another person's looks. Additionally, others claimed that they might use their knowledge of other cultures to ask or guess on the ethnic background of others based on names or looks.

5.2 The White Experience

Intro

The content beneath this subheading outlines the white experience of morally navigating through "phenotype", "language" and "ethnic background". As such, I will explain how *relevance, access* and *risks* relate to whites in each of these markers of difference. Initially, in relation to results from "phenotype", I will explain how white interviewees have been naturalized as Swedes with next to no experiences of standing out. Since the white interviewees had no *relevantly* related experiences of standing out, as the non-whites had, I explain how they instead use the relevance of certain "legitimizing ideas" to gain *access* and simultaneously avoid *risks*. In this case, these ideas give whites access to engage in these markers of difference by referring to the inevitably visible differences of non-white people and by explaining how people can be differentiated without being valued differently. In addition, white interviewees use legitimizing ideas to explain how assumptions can be made without being explicitly expressed in "language", but also how curiosity is a legitimized occurrence in "ethnic background". Mainly, whites connected ideas of *risk* to being accused of racism.

Blonde & Blue Eyes

In this part, I aim to outline the white interviewees experiences with their phenotypical looks. Firstly, I explain how their unwillingness to refer to phenotypical looks show that their "Swedishness" is already assumed. Thereafter, I present the results that shows that white interviewees have low experiences of standing out, in terms of phenotypical looks, partly through their inexperience of daily receiving questions and claims regarding their ethnic background. The results show that looks are a less relevant trait in the daily lives of these white interviewees, than it seems to be in the lives of the non-white interviewees. As such, this means that white interviewees cannot lean towards having the relevant looks or experiences, when engaging in conversations of these markers of difference, and therefore must turn to other resources to gain access.

Firstly, most white interviewees agreed that foreign looks were easy spot and differentiate from "Swedishness". However, whites also asserted as Carl did: "I think it's definitely common…then there's the question if it's okay" regarding the classifications of "Swedish" and "non-Swedish". Claiming that there was "a question whether the classification was okay"

seemed to be a way for many to implicitly assert that conversations regarding phenotypical classifications were unwanted. However, some interviewees even emphasized the inevitability of making these distinctions, as this illustrative quote from Justin that said: "It's something that I try to refrain from doing myself, while I probably still doing it unconsciously all the time, absolutely". As such, it seems that even if phenotypical classifications were recognized, they had an unwanted presence in the public discourse.

However, regarding "Swedishness", white interviewees considered it, as non-whites did, as a two-folded issue: consisting of attaining the correct looks and the correct behavior. Regarding Swedish looks itself, white interviewees successfully identified its content as Madison mentioned: "If one only goes for looks it becomes like you said *looks at Henry*, it's blonde and blue eyes, I mean the ethnic". Similarly to the non-whites, white interviewees also emphasized that a person's behavior weighed more than looks when considering "Swedishness". In part, this direction of attention towards behavior was noticeable when white interviewees were asked about Swedish looks. For instance, Madison claimed: "In its entirety I believe that one shouldn't identify someone until you've heard them speak". Thus, in addition to the unwillingness of using phenotypical classifications, the emphasis of "Swedishness" was to be placed on the behavioral part.

Interestingly, the white interviewees rarely referred to their own phenotypical looks as being "Swedish". Neither did the interviewees identify themselves as standing out in regards of ethnic looks or background in Sweden, which was common amongst non-whites. Consequently, I mainly interpreted this general absence of references to their own visible looks in two ways: Partly, this unwillingness showed that references to phenotypical looks was not only undesirable, it was a risky and unwanted use of "Swedishness". Partly, white interviewees seemed to implicitly emphasize their "Swedishness" by not asserting their looks nor referring to any foreign characteristics. By not asserting their looks, it seemed that white interviewees were aware of others already assuming their "Swedishness", in terms of behavior, due to their conforming phenotypical appearances. Thus, even if none of the white interviewees fully reached the ideal of having both blue eyes and blonde hair, the phenotypical "Swedishness" of the white interviewees was somehow taken-for-granted by all interviewees. In addition, it is important to mention that the white interviewees did not have any other seemingly non-western features, in terms of name or accent, that could give other interviewees indication of any foreign background. Nonetheless, we see how white interviewees successfully reinforced themselves as Swedish in these interviews.

Furthermore, because of their conforming phenotypical looks, the white interviewees seemed to have few everyday experiences regarding that others might expect or contemplate the possibility for them to have foreign origin. However, some white interviewees shared moments of standing out or acquiring the role of "ethnic ambassadors" for Sweden. For example, due to his looks, Tony mentioned that he often became the representative for Swedish culture when exchange students wanted to meet Swedish people or learn about culture. In addition, two other interviewees mentioned being identified as Swedish, when being abroad, since they often fitted the stereotypical look of being Swedish. As Madison claimed when asked whether she had experiences of the distinction "Swedish" or "non-Swedish" in everyday life:

- *"I mean, here in Sweden I don't experience it since I have Swedish appearance, quotation marks hehe, but when I'm abroad there's naturally people that approach me and say 'Ah, you're Swedish!'. So, I have the appearance that basically is Swedish".*

Moreover, white interviewees inexperience of standing out in Sweden was also noticeable in the scenario "language" and "ethnic background". In the case of "language", whites did not mention having any experiences of openly being met with having "foreign qualities" or alike. As such, they were not assumed to have poor language skills or to be any less Swedish than they felt themselves being. When discussing "ethnic background", white interviewees had not met the uncertainty or curiosity of others regarding their potentially differing ethnic background or names. A few whites acknowledge that they more often asked questions of ethnic background than they were being asked. As Justin said: "Sure, I am definitely on the other side in this question, I haven't received that question as much as I've asked it, absolutely".

As such, in the context of Sweden, white interviewees obviously seemed to embody a certain conformity regarding looks where "phenotype" became a less important trait regarding their daily self-identification. Interestingly, whites subsiding differences between "Swedish" and "non-Swedish" looks and focusing on behavior in terms of "Swedishness" gave the impressions that phenotype mattered less in everyday occurrences. However, the results showed that the whites' experiences of having conforming phenotypical appearances lowered the necessity for them to assert the legitimacy of being a "Swede". In comparison with the non-white experiences, the white interviewees were not *relevantly* connected to experiences of standing out, which included: being identified as foreign or receiving questions and assumptions. As such, white interviewees only had experiences of becoming "ethnic ambassadors" when travelling abroad, which only applied to shorter vacations. Further on, these experiences had consequences for the navigation of this group. As with the non-whites, white interviewees'

navigation around *access* and *risks,* in these markers of difference, depend on how they enforce the relevance of the scenarios. In this case, white interviewees relied on certain "legitimizing ideas", instead of leaning to have the correct appearance and experience as non-whites did.

Legitimizing Ideas

If not referring to their non-conforming phenotypical appearances and experiences of standing out as means for relevance, how do white interviewees enforce the relevance of the markers of difference for themselves? Here, I will show how interviewees grant themselves *access* to speak about phenotypical differences and classifications by using ideas of what is "natural" to legitimize their conduct.

As such, my results showed a great interest among white interviewees of using layman psychological theories and ideas of natural human traits when navigating their surroundings in terms of phenotypical traits. Many expressed that the act of classifying people phenotypically was either natural, since we are "psychologically wired" in varies ways, or that we "naturally" view others as part of one's "ingroup" or "outgroup". As Lars said: "Don't people overall enjoy putting things in boxes and classifying everything in life […] and aren't there psychological theories saying that people do exactly the same and place other people based on all sorts of interests?". Additionally, several whites accentuated that this process occurred subconsciously. Or, as Tony mentioned: "I suppose it's like a cognitive divide that people have when one sees other people". He also mentioned that he might classify some people daily in terms of "immigrant" or "second-generation immigrant" through appearances. As such, we can see that the *relevance* of classifying people is enforced by these legitimizing ideas of what is human by nature. In addition, these ideas gave white interviewees *access* to make references to phenotypical classifications and differences.

Whilst these white interviewees asserted their *relevance* and *access*, they also recognized the *risks* of making references to phenotypical differences. In this case, some white interviewees expressed feeling uncomfortable or insecure of openly using these classifications. For instance, Justin claimed that he would prefer to hear people with foreign background to speak about ethnicity since it felt more wrong if an ethnic Swede spoke about this subject. Also, Linnea said: "Maybe I'm not to say, as a white person…regarding what is good or bad, I don't belong to those that are being classified in the same way". In addition, most white interviewees implicitly recognized that the subject of ethnicity was generally considered to be risky. In the

end, it was rather unclear how often white interviewees engaged in conversations regarding phenotypical appearances and classifications with others. Either way, as shown, white interviewees easily referred to these numerous ideas of "natural" and "subconscious" process to gain access by legitimizing their discussions of phenotypical classifications.

The Borders of Nature

Furthermore, when the whites outlined these legitimizing ideas, they often emphasized the importance to know the borders of these ideas. In this case, mixing the act of classification with determining someone's value was to be avoided. Unlike when making phenotypical classifications, granting someone value could be controlled. The same accounted for making "assumptions" regarding others. The assumptions could not be controlled, but the act of expressing these ideas were to be restricted. Thus, I will now outline whites' navigation of risks regarding classifications and then explain the separation of assumptions and the act of voicing these ideas.

Firstly, it is important to note that both whites and non-whites agreed that phenotypically classifications were okay if one did not value others differently. For non-whites, the importance of this idea lay in their need of not being valued any less than "white Swedes". However, I argue that for white interviewees, the idea of separating classifications and value was important as to avoid making any *risks* by simultaneously having *access* to classify others phenotypically. Thus, for whites, the concept of "value", meaning to place people in a hierarchized formation based on "worth", was easily separated from act of simply making distinctions among people. Besides being possible to separate, it was also acceptable to do so, as Lars mentions: "It should be okay to classify, or not to classify, as long as one does not put any greater weight in it…like, better or worse". Thus, the key for avoiding risks lay in successfully making a phenotypical classification, without the need to differentiate values or to act upon these differences.

As mentioned, a similarly important distinction was made in relation to the scenario "language" whereof the separation of assumptions and voicing of these assumptions was not only possible, but important. However, before outlining this separation, I need to explain why whites saw the need for separating assumptions and actions. In this case, as in the case of classifications, the creation of "assumptions" was also surrounded by ideas of what was natural. Some mentioned that stereotypes were inevitably enforced during one's upbringing or created by an oversimplified conclusion by our brains. Either way, the point that was made by several white

interviewees was that assumptions were unstoppable and natural and not to be viewed as negative by default. Instead, voicing certain assumptions were especially wrong when the assumption did not fit the non-whites perception of themselves: as in the scenario "language" where Ali was assumed to have worse language skills than he had. However, most white interviewees also recognized their limitations in knowing the background and self-identification of others, which made the *risks* rather obvious. Thus, through the risks of creating a socially unsmooth situation, white interviewees emphasized the need to restrict their sharing of certain assumptions that regarded the ethnic background of others. As Madison claimed: "Of course, we all make assumptions, but one does not need to express all the assumptions one is making". Preferably, white interviewees commonly concluded that some preparation was to be made before making certain comments by either collecting more information or letting the non-white person mention their supposed ethnic background. Avoiding expressing one's assumptions, by almost treating assumptions as non-existing, is thus another way for whites to navigate away from risks by seeking another socially smooth approach.

A Curious Person

Hitherto, I have outlined how the whites low experiences of standing out in Swedish society meant that they could not rely on their experiences of ethnicity or having "foreign looks" to navigate their *risks* and *access* in these markers of difference. Instead, white interviewees relied on legitimizing ideas regarding what is "natural" to successfully make phenotypical classification and assumptions. However, whites considered it important not to value people any differently, no matter the classification. Also, white interviewees were precautionary by withholding their assumptions regarding the ethnic background of others and thus not taking any risks. Finally, I will discuss the results from "ethnic background". In this case, questions about ethnicity were legitimized through a naturalized idea of curiosity. Also, I will outline the risks when whites are being inconsiderate with their formulation, the context or the scheme whereof white interviewees risked being accused of racism.

The results from "ethnic background" showed similarities with the results from "phenotype" and "language". In a sense, whites felt the need to reinforce that "classifications" and "assumptions" were not of any issue themselves. However, once that whites engaged in conversation where "classification" and "assumptions" were related to ideas of ethnicity, then they needed to be cautious. The same process applied to the results from "ethnic background".

In this case, when asking others about questions of ethnic origin, interviewees considered it preferable to present oneself as a "curious" and "interested" character. As Lars mentioned: "Try to be curious but as little confrontational as possible". Generally, as with "classifications" and "assumptions", the idea of "curiosity" and "interest" was somehow naturalized. Curiosity was seldomly described by interviewees as either good or bad: it was a natural and welcomed process. According to one interviewee named Justin, curiosity towards objects that differ was even expected: "People will always react to things that stick out, things that don't conform to the majority". In addition. one white interviewee claimed that it was desirable to learn new things about the other cultures, whilst another claimed that any attempt to erase differences between people was highly undesirable. Hence, we see that a variation of explanations may be provided that positively connotates interactions regarding ethnic and phenotypical differences. As with "classification" and "assumptions", the various explanations in "ethnic background" show the legitimizing ideas that are used to *access* conversations of ethnicity. However, even with these legitimizing explanations, the risks always seemed to be impeding for whites. Fanny said: "There's nothing necessarily wrong to be curious and all that but there is always a risk to upset others" and Justin, who truly recognized the risks when asking about ethnic origin:

- *"I truly resonate with this scenario [....] to be curious, wanting to know about names and ethnic background. I cannot bring myself to say that it's judgmental and racist to be curious, but I really recognize this and in most situations I would also have landed in not asking, because I am a coward haha, I'm terrified that it will land wrongly. Social awkwardness, again, so afraid of it."*

Now that we have seen how white interviewees legitimize curiosity, we also need to know how they balance these ideas with the risks. Firstly, both whites and non-whites recognized "ethnicity" as a delicate and risky subject. Unlike non-whites, whites seemed keener on avoiding certain risks. In general, these interviewees seemed to be unsure of what context and formulations that they needed to adhere to avoid these risks. For instance, Linnea who said: "One could sometimes be uncertain of what is considered offensive, there's a lot of discussion on what can and cannot be reckoned as racism". Linnea also interestingly mentioned her fear of equally being viewed as racist by withholding questions of ethnicity. As such, even if being curious was a welcomed feature, not knowing the risks seemed to increase one's chance of avoiding questions of ethnic background.

Even with the uncertainty regarding risks, white interviewees had several "rules of thumb" on how to avoid *risks* and simultaneously gain *access*. In this case, the importance lay in the correct contexts, formulations and schemes that showed similarities with how non-whites explained it. Firstly, whites asserted that questions of ethnic background from strangers, or generally asking people in public, was not a reasonable or safe context. Instead, asking a person that you had spent time with, or someone that you consider a friend, immediately lowered the risks when asking about ethnicity. Therefore, some claimed that that the idea of "curiosity" was easier to enforce amongst friends. Once in a safe context, white interviewees meant that conversations about ethnicity could be a means of learning new things. Also, these conversations could be used to develop a relation with someone by deepening one's knowledge about a person's background. For whites, the importance of a "safe context" seemed to lay in the insurance that the person with the "ethnic background" would not take offence. Therefore, the importance in developing one's relation, before asking questions about ethnicity, lay in being cautious by avoiding any negative accusations. As I formerly mentioned, the risks lay in being accused or suspected of being prejudiced, racist, or being misunderstood.

So far, we have explained the importance of context, whereof conversations of ethnicity were preferably made in private with friends rather than with strangers in public. In addition, the importance of formulation was also prevalent whilst asking about ethnic background. As we previously could see notice, having problems with questions that included words such as "actually" and "ethnic" was a problem shared by non-whites. However, unlike non-whites, white interviewees did not seem to prefer the general formulation of "Where do you come from?". Instead, whites preferred to indirectly ask about ethnic background, either by asking about someone's name or the origin of that someone's parents. Some even mentioned that one should explicitly avoid questions about skin complexion or other phenotypical differences. However, this careful approach was not favored by all, as shown by the presence of one white interviewee that openly contradicted any careful or indirect approaches and claimed to be able to accept socially awkward situations or conflict. Still, the careful approach seemed to be dominant among white interviewees. However, as previously mentioned, unlike non-whites, risks for whites were more evident and they were keener to avoid these. Interestingly, these risks were often spoken of in relation to situations where the conversations of ethnicity took place between whites and non-whites, making the rules and risks between whites as less obvious.

5.3 Conclusion

This study is mainly in a dialogue with the past research on race that has been conducted in Sweden. As such, my analysis of the white and non-white moral navigation in multicultural Sweden affirms, contradicts and complements some of the previous findings in various ways. In short, my analysis tells that non-whites use their experiences of standing out to make the markers of difference ("phenotype", "language", "ethnic background") *relevant* for them. This relevance made it clear for non-whites which *risks* that whites need to adhere to not be called racist when engaging in conversations regarding looks and background. Also, whilst these *risks* concerned whites more than non-whites, the latter also had more *access* to speak about matters of ethnicity. On a further note, instead of using their experiences of standing out, whites use legitimizing ideas of what is "natural" to make these scenarios *relevant*. In this case, these ideas helped whites with *access* to create classifications and make assumptions, but also to ask questions of ethnic background to others. Concurrently, white interviewees often observed the *risks* of being misunderstood as too impeding. Therefore, white interviewees preferred not to voice their classifications or assumptions, nor to ask others about ethnic background. Furthermore, this subheading mainly explains how the findings of past research's, regarding "whiteness" and "colorblindness" in Sweden, might support my analysis. In addition, I will also show how my analysis complements part research by explaining how non-whites view access and how whites balance risks with access.

As a start, previous research emphasized that experiences of race and origin were relevantly different, in various ways, between whites and non-whites in everyday interactions (Yngvesson 2015; Runfors 2016). Several of the previous studies emphasized two important ideas as to why: partly, "Swedishness" was told to be closely related to "whiteness" (Hubinette & Räterlinck; Lundström 2017) and partly, the discourses of ethnicity and race were told to be dominated by a certain "colorblindness" (Osanami Törngren 2018; Barker 2019), which made discussions of looks and origin difficult in Sweden. As such, former research often emphasized that one needed to be white to be integrated or to "pass" as a Swede in Sweden (Törngren, Malm, Hübinette 2018). Consequently, the demands for integration meant that non-whites were objected to varies forms of "othering" (Dahlstedt & Neergaard 2019), "racialization" or "ethnicization" (Barker 2019) whilst whites blended in more easily.

Firstly, my analysis supports that there are differences between whites and non-whites in Sweden. In this case, the dominance of "whiteness" is supported in my analysis where non-white asserted the *relevance* of their looks in Sweden. Indeed, non-whites' various experiences with "standing out", partly by receiving questions of ethnic background, are sure to be different varieties of "othering" and "racialization". Also, by becoming "ethnic ambassadors", meaning to become representatives of foreignness, non-whites also showed experiences of "ethnicization". Consequently, the relevance of having a non-conforming phenotypical appearance, for non-whites in my study, confirmed the close relationship between whiteness and Swedishness in Sweden. In the case of white interviewees, the close relationship of whiteness and Swedishness was noticed when the "Swedishness" of these interviewees was somehow taken for granted. Unlike non-whites, whites did not assert their experiences of standing out in everyday interactions. In a way, this inexperience showed that their phenotypically conforming looks helped white interviewees to integrate or "pass" as Swedes in Sweden.

Furthermore, I found that previous research has showed limitations in exploring the navigations of non-whites in Sweden. Mainly, past research tended to focus on how the non-white experiences of "whiteness" excluded them in a racial or ethnic sense. Besides affirming that non-whites are indeed excluded or made visible in various ways, this study also tried to emphasize the opposite, namely how the relevance of standing out helped non-whites to gain *access*. In this case, their access simplified interactions regarding markers of difference and non-whites could easily assert the importance of phenotypical classifications and to ask questions about ethnic background without taking risks. As such, this study tried to complement previous research by lending some insight to the strategies of non-whites in a nation where integration partly means to attain "whiteness".

Moving along, my study had little if any way of explaining why interviewees saw risks in conversations regarding phenotypical looks, assumptions and ethnic background. However, past studies that enforced the prevalent "hegemonic colorblindness", as some call it (Hübinette & Lundström 2014, p. 426), can explain why interviewees saw risks in these conversations. In this case, white interviewees clearly stated that expressing classifications or assumptions, or asking questions referring to looks or background, were undesirable and risky. However, this hegemony of colorblindness could be noticed when even non-whites admitted the prevailing risks in these interactions. As such, my analysis regarding "risks" supports the claim that conversations regarding ethnicity and race are avoided in Sweden amongst both whites and

non-whites. On another note, unlike few other studies, my study included the views of white interviewees to analyze how whites morally navigate in multicultural Sweden. As a result, my analysis shows some insight to the legitimizing ideas and strategies that whites use within interactions in multicultural society.

As I have shown, my study supports the previous findings which claim that white and non-whites have different experiences of moral navigation. Partly, my study supports the claim the there is a prevailing discourse whereof whiteness and being Swedish are intimately connected in Sweden. Also, the delicacy of these subjects supports the idea of "hegemonic whiteness", something that is evident by the many risks that the interviewees saw. Partly, my study affirmed the findings of past research. However, past research also helped this study explain how *relevance, access* and *risks* are connected to each other. Nevertheless, the greatest contribution of this study is its insight to the strategies of access for whites and non-whites. In addition, this study shows value by granting insight into various contemporary interactions with moments of tension in Sweden.

6   Summary & Discussion

Summary

I have analyzed the moral navigation of "white" and "non-white" students in Lund in three scenarios with their own markers of difference called "phenotype", "language" and "ethnic background". However, in prior to the navigation itself, I partly showed that non-whites were allowed precedence in the dynamic exchanges of these focus group interviews. Afterwards, my analysis was conducted by applying, what I interpreted as, three important themes: *relevance, access* and *risks*. As such, these were the ideas that interviewees used to morally navigate through multicultural Sweden. I began by explaining that *relevance* referred to how interviewees related a marker of difference to themselves. Further on, this relevance led to a specific navigation in terms of *access* and *risks*, which determined what could and could not be done and said. The remaining parts of the analysis tried to reinforce the importance of these ideas, but also explain how they related to each other. I firstly tried to enforce the importance of *relevance* by explaining the emphasis of interviewees on having the correct looks and being member of the correct group in certain interactions.

For the non-whites, the markers of difference became relevant through their experiences of standing out. In "phenotype", non-whites showed to have had embodied foreignness in a way that has made them into "ethnic ambassadors". However, "standing out" and representing foreignness was acceptable, as long as they were not excluded by others questioning their "Swedishness". Further on, non-whites relevant experiences of standing out navigated how they morally viewed both risks and access in "language" and "ethnic background". As such, non-whites recognized the risks of voicing certain assumptions regarding Swedish language skills, as related to the scenario "language". In this case, any comment that might wrongfully question a non-white's "Swedishness" seemed to be unappreciated. Finally, non-whites recognized the ongoing risks when engaging in conversations regarding ethnic background in Sweden and claimed that context and formulation of one's question was important to consider. At the same time, the risks of engaging in conversations about ethnic background was less obvious in-between non-whites, as they had access to freely engage in these conversations with each other. In a sense, non-white navigation was highly guided by the *access* they perceived themselves to have.

Meanwhile, white interviewees could not use their experiences of "standing out" to assert the relevance of these scenarios, since they were often taken-for-granted Swedes in Sweden. Instead, in "phenotype", "language" and "ethnic background", white interviewees used legitimizing ideas of what is "natural" to decide their *access* and *risks*. In this case, whites asserted that making phenotypical classifications was acceptable, if these groups were not valued any differently. In relation to "language", assumptions of ethnicity were claimed to be natural, but did not need to be expressed. Finally, curiosity for another's ethnic background was welcomed while avoiding words like "ethnic" and rather asking friends than strangers was preferred. However, asking about ethnic background was an unfavored act in general, since whites saw the risks of appearing prejudice. Conclusively, white interviewees navigated through multicultural society by leaning towards *risks* rather than focusing on their access.

The importance of my study can partly be seen by its contribution to past studies. Firstly, I confirmed that the second-order distinction of "white" and "non-white" has a relevant presence in the experiences of my interviewees. This way, I support further investigations of this distinction in the context of Sweden, which partly transcends our everyday notions of ethnic belonging and origins. Secondly, I make a theoretical contribution by coining the three dominant ideas of *relevance, access* and *risks.* These ideas help us visualize how "whites" and "non-whites" morally navigate through Sweden and thus expose the "elephant in the room" in Sweden. Finally, through my empirical contributions, I present information on tense interactions concerning a sensitive subject, in order to open the discussion on these matters.

Final Discussion

This study tried to provide insights by approaching questions of ethnicity, race and multiculturality by looking at the moral navigation of whites and non-whites in moments of tension. In retrospect, the findings from the many discussions regarding moments of tension were eye-opening. Also, conducting a bottom-up study, by trying to provide my own analysis of navigation in multicultural society, was an interesting approach to make. However, it was difficult to know, prior to the interviews, how the scenarios themselves would be discussed. I hoped that interviewees would venture deeper in each scenario and somehow find the connection between the scenarios. In some cases, the discussions in different scenarios were connected in a clear way, as in: "phenotype", "language" and "ethnic background". Yet, I did not expect that discussions in relation to "cultural expressions" and "religion" would be difficult

to relate to the three aforementioned scenarios. As such, deciding on certain themes (*relevance, access, risks*), that relevantly connected the results was a challenge and demanded that results from "religion" to be excluded.

Furthermore, in this study I tried to investigate the similarities between ideas of multiculturality by using several markers of difference. As shown, my interpretations regarding the similarities between scenarios show that *relevance, access* and *risks* are the dominant themes in the discourses of multiculturality. In future studies, I would try to clarify the scope of my study by emphasizing its limitations. Suggestively, future research could explore the borders of "okay" and "not okay" by presenting several scenarios which all refer to a single marker of difference, such as "phenotype". Either way, it is important to note that my analysis did not aim to generalize any "white" or "non-white" experiences in Sweden, nor to capture all the important interactions in multicultural society. Instead, this analysis is a mere suggestion of how one can interpret white and non-whites moral navigation. As such, this study mainly acts as a "snapshot" that show how students in Lund, in the early 21st century, view some of the discussions and interactions in multicultural Swedish society.

The ambition of this study was also to present the differences in the moral navigation between whites and non-whites. Although I could not physically divide whites and non-whites into different interviews, I nevertheless managed to provide an interpretation of the differences between these groups. However, this study only managed to analyze the interactions between whites and non-whites or in-between non-whites. Therefore, no part of the analysis regards how whites interact with each other. As such, the results from this study might benefit from further investigations regarding the moral navigation in-between whites. This research could be conducted by asking whites how they speak about ethnicity with other whites. However, one could also divide the interviews between whites and non-whites and compare the results.

As a final point, this study decided to continue the traditions of investigating the socially constructed ideas of race as a presupposition. In addition, this study investigated whiteness by include white interviewees. As such, I hope that future research focuses on these approaches to investigate race and ethnicity in Sweden. Past research has provided explanations for the unwillingness of having these conversations in Sweden. However, both past studies and my study show that cases of ethnicization and racialization are highly relevant in today's Sweden. Thus, the key of understanding these issues cannot be to bury them under ground. Instead, we must dare to investigate these delicate subjects in order to unravel how they are constructed and how they complicate the daily interactions of Swedes.

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8   Appendices

Appendix 1:

Studie om hur man navigerar i vardagen i det mångkulturella Sverige!

I dagens mångkulturella Sverige finns det många sätt och tänka och tycka i frågor om ursprung och skillnader mellan människor. Globalisering, immigration, identitetspolitik, etc, påverkar hur vi ser på rätt och fel. I vissa fall är det mindre självklart hur man navigerar sig själv inom vissa ämnen och situationer. Vad känns lätt och vad känns svårt? Hur hanterar vi oklara situationer och ord i vardagen?

Studie: Detta är en sociologisk master-studie där jag samlar erfarenheter och åsikter om hur man talar och tänker om "gråzon(s)-ämnen" som har med etnicitet och kultur att göra. Jag vill samla individer från Malmö/Lund-området till grupp-intervjuer, under dessa träffar utgår vi från ett antal scenarion där vi fördomsfritt diskuterar och delar med oss. Målet är att förstå vad som gör vissa frågor komplicerade!

Låter detta intressant? Delta i min studie! Ingen kunskap eller erfarenhet är för liten!

Kontakta mig genom (senast 31/3):
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Ringa/sms: 0704355971
Eller, Facebook.

Med vänliga hälsningar

Shahab Mirbabaei

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Appendix 2:

Blankett med info

Info: Detta är en studie som undersöker hur individer navigerar mellan det som är okej och inte okej i vardagliga situationer och möten som relaterar till etnicitet och kultur i dagens mångkulturella Sverige. Målet är att undersöka gränsen mellan okej/inte okej och att finna likheter och skillnader mellan individers erfarenheter och åsikter i olika frågor. Informationen ni ger nedan, samt under intervjuns gång, behandlas konfidentiellt och används för att skapa en uppfattning om deltagarna i denna studie. Innan intervjun påbörjas ska ni även få relevant information om studien och meddelas om era rättigheter.

1. Ålder:

_____

2. Kön:

_____

3. Bostadsort:

_____

4. Sysselsättning:

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