Identity, Old(er) Age and Migrancy

A Social Constructionist Lens

Laura Machat-From

Linköping Studies in Arts and Science No. 716
Faculty of Arts and Sciences
Norrköping 2017

Linköping Studies in Arts and Science • No. 716

At the Faculty of Arts and Sciences at Linköping University, research and doctoral studies are carried out within broad problem areas. Research is organized in interdisciplinary research environments and doctoral studies, mainly in graduate schools. Jointly, they publish the series Linköping Studies in Arts and Science. This thesis comes from the Division Ageing and Social Change (formerly National Institute for the Study of Ageing and Later Life) at the Department of Social and Welfare Studies.

Distributed by:
Department of Social and Welfare Studies
Linköping University
SE-601 74 Norrköping

Laura Machat-From
Identity, Old(er) Age and Migrancy:
A Social Constructionist Lens

Edition 1:1
ISBN: 978-91-7685-515-7
ISSN 0282-9800

© Laura Machat-From, 2017

Printed in Sweden by: LiU-Tryck, Linköping

ABSTRACT

Identity research in relation to ethnicity and migration has tended to focus on younger people whilst identity research in relation to ageing and old(er) age has not focused on migrants. This inadvertent mutual neglect has led to a lack of identity research that examines the identity categories of old(er) age and migrancy together, a lacuna that this dissertation aims to redress. This dissertation departs from a social constructionist understanding of identity as situationally accomplished in the interplay between how one defines oneself (internally) and how others define one (externally). The questions raised by this perspective and addressed in this dissertation are: When (in what situations) and in relation to whom do old(er) age and migrancy (respectively) seem to become meaningful for identification? How do the identity categories of old(er) age and migrancy seem to be negotiated? The empirical material consists of in-depth interviews with 24 older migrants (13 men, 11 women) aged between 55 and 79 who have been living in Sweden for 18 to 61 years. Interviewees come from 12 different countries that vary in perceived cultural distance from Sweden. The findings suggest that identifications with old(er) age and migrancy seem to be dynamic and flexible rather than necessarily permanently meaningful, thus gaining meaning in specific situations and in relation to particular Others. External definitions furthermore do not always seem to match with internal ones. Regardless of how old(er) age and migrancy are constructed, they seem to be negotiable. This dissertation thus contributes to identity research by studying old(er) age and migrancy together and furthermore sheds light onto how the social constructionist lens allows us to see variability where stability otherwise would be presumed.

Keywords: identity, migrancy, old age, older migrants, social constructionism, ethnicity, ageing, identity categories, social positions, identity negotiation

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

All those years working on this dissertation have been so much more than just writing the text you are about to read. They have been filled with doctoral courses, seminars, conference visits and other scholarly activities, to name but a few. All of these have shaped me and helped me grow as a scholar and there are many people who have been a part of this process.

First of all I would like to thank all of the interviewees who took their time to meet with me and put up with all my questions. The one or two hours the interviews were supposed to take sometimes turned into three (or even more) and I am so glad and grateful that I got to hear all that you had to say. This dissertation could not have been written without your contributions. Thank you!

I am not quite sure how to even start thanking my main advisor, Sandra Torres, who has enthusiastically supported my work from the very start. I could always turn to you with any question I had about all aspects of academia. All those times that our conversations about this dissertation left me even more puzzled than before were the ones that turned out to be the most rewarding. You always challenged me to think bigger and often times seemingly made things more complicated (you know exactly what I mean!), but it is with the challenges that we grow. Thank you for everything! Lars Andersson, my secondary advisor, thank you for reading my manuscript drafts and offering insightful comments and good advice whenever I sought it. My thanks also go to Emilia Forssell who was my secondary advisor during the early days.

Ever since I started on this project, there have been many people at the National Institute for the Study of Ageing and Later Life (which recently changed its name to Division Ageing and Social Change) who in one way or another have influenced my academic work and learning experience. I would like to thank all of my present and former colleagues, both those who have moved on to other places and those who have joined us along the way (and of course the few of you who have been around all along). A very special thank you to my fellow PhD candidates, especially those of you who started at the same time. It was invaluable to have others beside me to share in the process of narrowing down the topics of our dissertations, taking numerous classes and navigating the academic world together. You made the experience so much more fun! I also want to thank the technical and administrative staff for all the help over the years.

An invaluable experience and undeniably fun part of the past years has been my work as editorial assistant and book review editor of the *International Journal of Ageing and Later Life* (IJAL). I want to thank founding editor Lars Andersson for trusting me to take on these roles (already way before you became my secondary advisor), giving me insight into all aspects of the peer-review process and teaching me about how editors think. Thanks also to Peter Öberg for keeping me on, even though I unfortunately had to relinquish my duties in favour

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

of (finally!) completing this dissertation. Thank you Joy Torgé for taking over and also for stepping in during my maternity leaves!

Another invaluable part of this line of work over the years has been the opportunity of participating in international conferences. I would like to thank the funders who made my conference visits possible: FORTE, *Helge Ax:son Johnsons Stiftelse*, *Knut och Alice Wallenbergs Jubileumsfond*, the *Nordic Gerontological Federation* and *Socialvårdsförbundets Samfunder*.

I would also like to thank those who took their time to read drafts of this dissertation along the way. At my 60% seminar, I received valuable comments from Gunhild Hammarström and Catrin Lundström that helped me clarify some of my arguments and also influenced the direction this work ultimately ended up taking. I especially want to thank both Jonas Stier and Suruchi Thapar-Björkert for their careful reading of my manuscript for the 90% seminar. I am very grateful for your constructive criticisms and especially for the enthusiasm with which both of you commented upon my work as it made it so much easier to keep marching on towards the finish line. I also want to thank Andreas Motel-Klingebiel for his reading both for the 90% seminar and once more just before this goes to print.

There are some people who encouraged my academic work and had a very positive influence already before I started working towards my PhD. I would like to thank Mary Hilson and Annika Lindskog at University College London and Flip Lindo at the University of Amsterdam. Flip, the kind words you said about my academic work at my graduation are still with me until this day.

It is also at this point I would like to thank my father. Your first reaction when I told you that I was going to do a PhD was that I should become a professor (no pressure!). Thank you for always encouraging and supporting my academic pursuits! Speaking of family, thank you Ulla and Christer, the best parents-in-law and grandparents one could wish for, for always taking such good care of us.

Last but most certainly not least, I would like to thank my husband and my children. Johan, thank you for always being there for me and for being my pillar, my best friend and a true partner. Cornelius and Penny, thank you for always making sure that I do not lose sight of what's really important in life. I love you more than you'll ever know.

Linköping, May 2017
Laura

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION.....	1
AIMS AND QUESTIONS.....	4
OUTLINE OF THE DISSERTATION.....	4
CHAPTER 2: SETTING THE STAGE	7
HOW IS OLD(ER) AGE UNDERSTOOD IN THIS STUDY?.....	7
Constructions of old(er) age and old(er) age identities.....	8
HOW IS MIGRANCY UNDERSTOOD IN THIS STUDY?.....	15
The construction of migrancy vis-à-vis Swedishness.....	17
OLDER MIGRANTS IN SWEDEN	25
Demographic background.....	26
The construction of the category of “elderly immigrants” in Sweden.....	29
CHAPTER 3: THEORETICAL FRAME	33
IDENTITY: A MUCH DEBATED CONCEPT	33
DEFINITIONS OF IDENTITY AND DISCIPLINARY DIFFERENCES	34
Disciplinary differences.....	35
Definitions.....	38
UNDERSTANDING IDENTITY CATEGORIES IN AN ESSENTIALIST, CIRCUMSTANTIALIST AND CONSTRUCTIONIST MANNER.....	43
A SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONIST APPROACH TO IDENTITY AND IDENTITY CATEGORIES	50
The basics of social constructionism	50
Construction sites	53
The structural level: Identity categories and power.....	55
The interactional level: The negotiation and accomplishment of identities.....	61
TYING UP LOOSE ENDS	68
CHAPTER 4: LITERATURE REVIEW	73
PREVIOUS RESEARCH ON IDENTITY AND OLDER MIGRANTS.....	74
Ethnicity, migration or both with old(er) age as a given	76
Ethnicity, migration or both with an interest in old(er) age in terms of time lived.....	80
Research on identity and older migrants with focus on other identity questions	83
Research on identity and older migrants with interest in ethnicity, migration or both AND ageing, old(er) age or both.....	84
The sampling of older migrants in previous research.....	88
WHAT ABOUT OLD(ER) AGE AND MIGRANCY?.....	90

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 5: METHODOLOGY.....	93
DESIGNING THE STUDY	93
Choosing the interview.....	93
Sampling strategy	96
CONDUCTING THE STUDY	102
Recruitment of interviewees.....	102
Sample description	106
Interview guide and interview procedure.....	107
ANALYSING THE EMPIRICAL MATERIAL.....	109
The process of analysis.....	109
THE QUALITY OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH.....	111
Language and translation	114
ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS.....	115
LIMITATIONS	116
CHAPTER 6: THE WHENS OF OLD(ER) AGE	119
WHEN DOES OLD(ER) AGE SEEM TO BECOME MEANINGFUL?	120
When do interviewees seem to self-define as old(er)?	120
When do interviewees seem to think that others define them as old(er)?.....	132
FLEETING IDENTIFICATIONS?.....	139
CHAPTER 7: NEGOTIATING OLD(ER) AGE	143
HOW DOES OLD(ER) AGE SEEM TO BE NEGOTIATED?.....	143
Seen as old(er)? Direct responses	146
Presenting oneself as not old(er) yet	148
Distinguishing between the inside and the outside	158
Presenting oneself as old(er) but different.....	165
SHIFTING ALONG A CONTINUUM?	172
CHAPTER 8: THE WHENS OF MIGRANCY	177
WHEN DOES MIGRANCY SEEM TO BECOME MEANINGFUL?	177
Around what markers does difference seem to be constructed?	178
How does migrancy seem to become relevant?	185
How pervasive does migrancy seem to be?	195
PERPETUAL REMINDERS?.....	198
CHAPTER 9: NEGOTIATING MIGRANCY	203
HOW DOES MIGRANCY SEEM TO BE NEGOTIATED?.....	203
Seen as an (im)migrant? Direct responses	206
Emphasising similarity to the native population	211
Emphasising difference from other (im)migrants.....	219
Limits to claiming a native identity.....	230
SIMILARITY AND DIFFERENCE: TWO SIDES OF THE SAME COIN?	236

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 10: BRINGING TOGETHER THE WHENS, WHOS AND HOWS OF OLD(ER) AGE AND MIGRANCY	241
THE IDENTITY CATEGORY OF OLD(ER) AGE: WHEN, WHO AND HOW?	241
Ways of speaking and overall identifications pertaining to old(er) age....	243
THE IDENTITY CATEGORY OF MIGRANCY: WHEN, WHO AND HOW?.....	249
Ways of speaking and overall identifications pertaining to migrancy	251
OLD(ER) AGE AND MIGRANCY: OVERALL IDENTIFICATIONS COMBINED.....	259
CHAPTER 11: BREAKING NEW PATHS?.....	263
IDENTITY, OLD(ER) AGE AND MIGRANCY	263
A SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONIST LENS.....	269
PATHWAYS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH	273
IDENTITY?... THE DEBATE CONTINUES	275
SWEDISH SUMMARY – SAMMANFATTNING PÅ SVENSKA.....	277
BIBLIOGRAPHY	287
APPENDIX I: INTERVIEW GUIDE.....	302
APPENDIX II: LETTER OF INFORMATION	305
APPENDIX III: FORM OF CONSENT	306

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Why write a dissertation on identity, old(er) age and migrancy?¹ Let me tell you about the path that has led me here. It includes (at least) three intertwined stories that all form a part of the journey. The first story starts with me as an undergraduate in London studying Swedish and social anthropology (for a European studies degree). One day I happened upon a Swedish newspaper article about young girls with immigrant background² in Sweden who were saying that they felt split between their parents' culture and Sweden. Despite being born in the country, there seemed to be something that made them not quite belong. I was intrigued and chose to write my undergraduate thesis on a related topic. As I was writing my thesis, several studies on youth of immigrant background in Sweden that I came across seemed to suggest that the second generation in one way or another were considered as different, despite having been born there (see e.g. Ålund 1997; Rojas 2001; Runfors 2003). This left me wondering how it could be that they did not seem to be included in the category of Swedishness. I went on to pursue a master's degree in migration and ethnic studies and the Swedish context continued to fascinate me, especially the question of who was considered to be a Swede, who was not, and upon what grounds this distinction seemed to be made. In other words, there is something about how migrancy and Swedishness seem to be constructed that captivates me until this day.

The second story starts when I just somehow had stumbled into a PhD programme in ageing and later life. There were two studies I came across early on that formed a part in my eventual choice of the topic of this dissertation. The first one was about how older people in Sweden seemed to be constructed as an Other in the media and in politics (Nilsson 2008), as a category that is set apart from the rest of the population. The second one argued that the category of "elderly immigrants" in Sweden had been constructed as a homogeneous group that supposedly poses an unusual challenge for the provision of care services due to their presumed special needs (Torres 2006, see Chapter 2). Both of these works inspired me to examine how "elderly immigrants" were talked about in social policy for older people (Machat 2010, see Chapter 2). There seemed to be many assumptions about older migrants as *different*, but it did not seem as though

¹ To explain very briefly and very simply, I speak of *old(er) age* rather than old (or older) age and (im)migrants rather than immigrants (or migrants) in order to draw attention to the social constructionist understanding used here. Migrancy may be understood as an identity category that is defined by difference from the native population resulting from migration. How the concepts of old(er) age and migrancy are to be understood in the present study (and why I use parentheses in various contexts) will be explained further in Chapter 2.

² The term "immigrant background" or alternatively "foreign background" in Sweden refers to people who either themselves have migrated (i.e. were born abroad) or whose parents both were born abroad. Thus it includes the so-called second generation and thereby also Swedish citizens.

they themselves had been asked about how similar or different they felt from the native Swedish population.

The third story continues from there and brings us to research on identity in relation to old(er) age. Given my previously established interest in questions of identity and migrancy, I started reading the literature on identity that had been written in the field of ageing and later life. What struck me was, firstly, that most of these works seemed to explore identity in old(er) age primarily through the study of native born populations of older people, especially of White middle class background (see e.g. Kaufman 1986; Hurd 1999). Little attention seemed to have been given older ethnic minority populations let alone older migrants in studies that specifically examined identity connected to old(er) age. As a consequence, neither ethnicity nor migrancy seem to have been incorporated in such identity research.³ The second thing I noticed was that given the interdisciplinary character of this field of research, several of the writings on identity seemed rather different than what I was used to, namely employing more psychological perspectives rather than social scientific ones (see e.g. Brandtstädter & Greve 1994; Whitbourne 1999 & 2002) (see Chapter 3 for more on identity). Such works seemed to firstly approach old(er) age as a separate life stage presumed to be *different* from preceding ones (see Erikson 1980), and secondly seemed to locate identity (as old or older) inside of the individual (rather than placing it in a social context). It left me wondering what one might find when examining identity in relation to old(er) age from a more social scientific perspective. Using a social constructionist lens seemed particularly promising.

Taken together, these three stories form the backdrop against which the topic of this dissertation can be understood. Firstly, then, there is something about how Swedishness and migrancy seem to be constructed that seems to make it difficult for individuals with migratory backgrounds to be considered Swedes (see Chapter 2). Being defined as different from the native population in turn is likely to have consequences for one's opportunities in life (see e.g. Cornell & Hartmann 2007 or Wimmer 2013, see Chapter 3). To add to this, most research on this topic seems to have focused on youth. Secondly, rather than studying older migrants in Sweden in their own right, they mostly seem to have been studied as presumptive recipients of care with special needs, constructing a negatively laden category in the process (see Torres 2006, see Chapter 2).

³ Some readers might object that there are several studies on various older ethnic minority populations. However, to clarify, only because a study is about a certain population, this is not to say that it is a study that explicitly examines questions of *identity*. To state the obvious, such confusion may have to do with the use of the term identity on the one hand (see Chapter 3) and with a conflation of populations of people and identity categories on the other. That is to say, to offer an example, a research project on identity among older people could examine whether or not they regard themselves as basically the same persons as they were when they were younger (such as e.g. Troll & McKean Skaff 1997) or examine the impact of changing roles or role loss with retirement (such as e.g. Mutran & Reitzes 1981). While these studies do examine questions of identity among older people, they examine personhood and role-loss rather than specifically whether or not (and if so, how) *old(er) age* seems to be meaningful for how the older people that are studied seem to think about themselves.

INTRODUCTION

Previous research does not seem to have asked older migrants themselves about how they would define themselves and how they think they are defined by others. Thirdly, research on questions of identity in old(er) age does not seem to have included older migrants and social constructionist approaches have been rare in this field. What all of this boils down to is that the inadvertent mutual neglect of identity research in ageing and later life focusing on non-migrants and identity research in migration and ethnic studies focusing on younger people has led to a lack of identity research that addresses the identity categories of old(er) age and migrancy together. This dissertation seeks to redress this lacuna. That old(er) age and migrancy have not been studied together will also be seen in the review of the small but growing literature on identity and older migrants (see Chapter 4).

What exactly is the topic of inquiry of this dissertation, then? As the title indicates, identity, old(er) age and migrancy are examined through a social constructionist lens. Among the various ways in which questions of identity may be approached, there are several that would seem to locate identities as old(er) and as (im)migrants inside of the individual (see Chapter 3). That is to say, they would presume that old(er) age and migrancy invariably are individual characteristics that are objectively definable through for instance chronological age or place of birth. The question to study then would be what it means to be old(er) or to be an (im)migrant, taking for granted that such definitions are meaningful for who one is or how one thinks about oneself. From a social constructionist perspective however, all of these assumptions are put into question. Rather than presuming that one by definition will think of oneself as old(er) just because one has passed a certain age, or as an (im)migrant because one has moved from one country to another, old(er) age and migrancy may become meaningful in some social situations rather than others. Instead of being stable, innate and inherent to the individual, old(er) age and migrancy are understood as emergent features of social situations. Old(er) age and migrancy may become meaningful for identification both in terms of how we (internally) think about ourselves and how we (externally) may be defined by others (cf. e.g. Jenkins 2008, see Chapter 3). The social constructionist perspective also entails that who may be considered old(er) or an (im)migrant is not universally definable through some objective measure, but that the criteria (as well as those presumed to belong) are constructed differently in different cultural, historical and social contexts (see Chapter 2). Finally, when identity categories are not understood as givens, this also means that they are potentially negotiable. Individuals may thus for instance be defined as old(er) or (im)migrants by others, but challenge and contest such definitions.

One of the things that make identity categories of particular interest to study is that there tend to be many assumptions and stereotypical notions in society in general pertaining to what those who are presumed to belong to a category are like. The meanings associated with different categories may have little to do with

how those who are being defined think about themselves. In the Swedish context where the current study takes place, both old(er) age and migrancy seem to be associated with vulnerabilities and tend to be negatively laden (see Chapter 2). This raises questions with regards to how individuals themselves seem to relate to these identity categories. Do they seem meaningful for how they think about themselves, or are they perhaps mostly made relevant by other people? One way to find out is to conduct interviews and simply ask them. This dissertation builds upon interviews with older migrants from a number of different countries of origin who have been living in Sweden for a long time (see Chapter 5), exploring questions of identity, old(er) age and migrancy. What then are the aims of this dissertation and what research questions does it address?

Aims and questions

Given that old(er) age and migrancy have not been studied in combination, the first overall aim of this dissertation is to contribute to identity research by way of empirically examining the identity categories of old(er) age and migrancy together. The study will do so by attempting to answer the following two research questions:

- When (in what situations) and in relation to whom do old(er) age and migrancy (respectively) seem to become meaningful for identification?
- How do the identity categories of old(er) age and migrancy seem to be negotiated?

A second aim is to explore what the use of a social constructionist lens may be able to contribute to our understanding of identity and the negotiation of identity categories.

Outline of the dissertation

This dissertation consists of eleven chapters. *Chapter 1* introduces the subject of the dissertation, explains why it may be of interest to pursue and spells out its aims and research questions. *Chapter 2* sets the stage by describing how old(er) age and migrancy are understood in this study. It includes sections on how old(er) age and migrancy seem to be constructed and addresses what the reader may need to know about the context of the study, such as what one might be able to say about older migrants in Sweden and the construction of the category of “elderly immigrants”. *Chapter 3* discusses the dissertation’s theoretical frame, explaining how identity, identity categories and related concepts (such as categorisation) are understood. This includes a discussion of what a social constructionist approach entails for the study of identity and identity categories. *Chapter 4* reviews the literature on identity and older migrants through an old(er) age and migrancy lens. It explores the extent to which previous research has examined old(er) age and migrancy in relation to identity and what kinds of samples previous studies have included. *Chapter 5* presents the dissertation’s

INTRODUCTION

methodology, addressing questions such as how the study was designed and conducted. It explains the process of analysis and also considers questions of quality assurance, ethical considerations and addresses some of the limitations of the study. In the four chapters that follow, the empirical findings are presented taking the research questions as a starting point. *Chapter 6* examines when old(er) age seems to become meaningful for identification, whilst *Chapter 7* explores how the identity category of old(er) age seems to be negotiated. *Chapter 8* focuses on when migrancy seems to become meaningful for identification, whilst *Chapter 9* explores the negotiation of the identity category of migrancy. *Chapter 10* brings together the findings pertaining to the questions of when, who and how for both old(er) age and migrancy. In doing so, it addresses questions that go beyond the scope of the preceding individual empirical chapters. This includes an examination of how interviewees speak of old(er) people and various identities pertaining to migrancy, as well as an examination of overall identifications with old(er) age and migrancy both separately and in combination. *Chapter 11*, the dissertation's final chapter, revisits the overall aims of the dissertation and attempts to tease out what it is we have learned with regards to identity, old(er) age and migrancy and wherein the contribution of the social constructionist lens seems to lie. It also addresses potential pathways for future research and rounds off with some final reflections.

CHAPTER 2: SETTING THE STAGE

The purpose of this chapter is to set the stage for the chapters to come by way of explaining what is meant when speaking of old(er) age and migrancy, how old(er) age and migrancy seem to be constructed, and discussing older migrants as a population and as a category. In doing so, this chapter provides contextual information that renders the empirical findings intelligible not least to readers unfamiliar with debates in social gerontology or with the country of Sweden in a migratory context. Firstly, the question of how old(er) age is to be understood in the context of this study will be addressed. This is followed by a discussion of constructions of old(er) age and old(er) age identities in a Western context. Thereafter, how migrancy is to be understood is explained. This in turn is followed by a discussion of how migrancy seems to be constructed vis-à-vis Swedishness. We will then turn to the population that this dissertation studies, namely older migrants. The demographic context of this population in Sweden will be presented, followed by a presentation of the (aforementioned) construction of the category of “elderly immigrants” in Sweden.

How is old(er) age understood in this study?

First of all, why is it that I write of *old(er) age*, rather than simply old age or older age? The main reason is that old(er) age in the context of the present study is understood as a social construct rather than a given. As will be explained further in the discussion of the dissertation’s theoretical frame (Chapter 3), old(er) age is not regarded as the innate property of individuals of a certain chronological age, but rather as situationally accomplished in the interplay between internal and external definitions. This means that old(er) age can and will potentially be both internally and externally defined, that is to say, potentially form a part of one’s own self-definition and potentially be ascribed by others. This can however vary both between individuals and between different situations. The social construction of old(er) age also means that the category does not have a singular permanent meaning, but rather can be constructed in multiple ways: from this perspective, old(er) age cannot universally be defined as starting at a certain chronological age. To add to this, since the meanings of old(er) age are constructed socially to the effect that what some regard as old may be regarded as older by others, speaking of old(er) age instead covers both understandings.

Approaching old(er) age as a socially constructed category means, among other things, that one neither takes for granted that older people constitute a distinct category of the population, nor that anybody automatically would regard themselves as old(er) due to some apparently objectively identifiable criteria. It also means that whenever old(er) people are constructed as a distinct category, criteria for who is considered to belong to the category and the characteristics

and/or meanings of assumed membership will depend on social context. In the following, I shall first briefly address how old(er) age seems to be constructed differently in different cultural contexts and how the category of old(er) age historically came into being in a Western context. As social contexts always are subject to change, constructs are also continuously reconstructed. It seems necessary for this reason to also consider some of the social changes taking place over recent decades, both in terms of population ageing and in terms of the debate in gerontological research concerning identity in old(er) age. This includes constructions of old(er) age on the level of the individual (such as the mask of ageing metaphor) and constructions that divide the older population into different groups (such as young-old and old-old or third agers and fourth agers). The potential link between individual definitions and images of old(er) age in society will finally be discussed briefly at the end. This wide range of perspectives seems necessary to properly contextualise the present work since the dialectic approach that considers both internal and external definitions means that all of these aspects potentially inform both when and in relation to whom the identity category of old(er) age may become meaningful and how individuals themselves may negotiate the identity category of old(er) age. Let it be noted that while I use the term *old(er) age* to refer to my own work and when putting forward arguments pertaining to the identity category of old(er) age, when discussing the work of others, it seems necessary at times to use the same terminology that they use (namely the more conventional *old age*) whenever doing otherwise would seem misleading or misrepresentative of their arguments.

Constructions of old(er) age and old(er) age identities

To support the argument that old(er) age is socially constructed rather than objectively given, let us start by briefly considering cultural variations. In the seminal work of Simmons (1945), *The Role of the Aged in Primitive Society*, the range of cultural variation in the place and status of older people in different tribal societies all over the world is demonstrated. Hazan (1994) similarly draws upon anthropological studies of old(er) age to suggest that there is an immense variety in the status that older people are accorded in different societies. Considering how old age has been constructed in different historical times, religions and cultures, Johnson (2005) concludes that what emerges is “an understanding of the impact of social, economic, intellectual, political and cultural change on the places older people are ascribed within kinship systems, local communities and nation-states” (p. 570). In other words, how we understand old(er) age is not objectively given but shaped by people themselves, differently depending on context, and may therefore usefully be understood as socially constructed. It has also been argued that gerontological research itself, in the process of making old age and older people the subject of study, has played its part in the construction of old age (Green 1993; Katz 1996).

What about contemporary constructions of old(er) age in the Western world? Putting contemporary Western constructions of old(er) age in historical perspective, Phillipson (1998) argues that the idea of older people as a separate group in society in the Western world emerged towards the end of the nineteenth century (also see Hareven 1995), which Fry (2007) has described as “the invention of old age” (p. 21). Primarily taking the context of the United Kingdom as a point of departure, Phillipson (1998) suggests that older people around that time were differentiated as a particular group when it came for instance to provision for sickness. It was also then that old age started to be regarded as a problem in politics: “From the first two decades of the twentieth century, then, older people emerged as a group differentiated in terms of the nature of their poverty as well as their marginal status in relation to regular work” (p. 109). Becoming an older person then meant entering a life phase in which poverty and marginalisation were common, which Phillipson suggests was a crucial contribution to the framework from which old age was constructed. The emerging images were split between older people as a problem on the one hand and as deserving on the other hand due to their earlier contributions. From the 1940s, Phillipson suggests that a reconstruction of old age took place: through the institutionalisation of the welfare state, public pensions were implemented, which then also led to the construction of retirement as a distinctive and valuable part of life. Unlike earlier pensions, these new pensions were enough to live on and were not only available for a selected few. While transition to retirement originally was associated with loss (of e.g. work-friends and a productive role), the emergence of the idea of active retirement during the 1960s and 1970s in turn contributed to a more positive image of old age. During the 1990s, however, Phillipson suggests that not least due to economic crises we have become “less sure” of how to justify retirement, which previously had come to be accepted as “a fair exchange for past work and services” (p. 120). Finally, Phillipson concludes that perhaps “the redefinition of old age could never quite escape the idea of the old as a ‘burden’” (p. 120). In other words, old(er) age has been constructed not only as a separate life phase (connected to retirement), but also with multiple meanings attached to it.

Various forms of social change are likely to impact upon both how old(er) age is constructed as a category and who is considered to be old(er). One of the demographic trends in recent decades which is likely to influence the construction of old(er) age is that of population ageing. Population ageing has come to be regarded as a challenge to the welfare state (not least in Sweden) both because of increasing costs for health services and because the increase of the share of people beyond working age is thought to pose a challenge for the financing of pensions (see e.g. Bengtsson & Scott 2011). Media reporting on the topic has been described as drawing up images of an “apocalyptic demography”, as suggested in the work of Lundgren and Ljuslinder (2011) for example.

Examining Swedish media images of population ageing, they suggest not only that the increase of the population of older people is depicted negatively as a threat and an obstacle to future (economic) growth, but also that older people are Othered in the way they are talked about (also see e.g. Fealy et al. 2012 for a study of Irish newspapers). Nilsson (2008) similarly suggests that Swedish public discourses (as found in daily newspapers, a pensioners' organisation and a policy document) discursively construct old age as an Other against the norm of middle age, constructing older people as "our others" (in Swedish: *våra äldre*). It seems likely that media constructions of old(er) age may influence how people generally regard the category of old(er) people, regardless of their own age.

The category of old(er) age continues to be redefined and reconstructed and will keep on doing so. Much of the social gerontological debate on identity in old(er) age since the 1990s has surrounded the supposed shift from modern to postmodern times and the impact that this is presumed to have had on older people's identities. The basic argument is that identities previously (i.e. in modernity) were defined through the individual's relation to production, while they now (i.e. in postmodernity) are defined by our relation to consumption (see e.g. Estes, Biggs & Phillipson 2003; Phillipson & Biggs 1998). As Nikander (2009) suggests, critics and commentators have noted however that "much of the postmodern thesis about identity thrives in theory but fitting its claims to the everyday lived 'reality' of people is rarely attempted" (p. 876). In the words of Gilleard, the argument nevertheless is that

Modernity had structured the identities of old people, exchanging their role in the productive processes for a guaranteed but limited security in old age. Late or post-modernity, whilst dislocating and diffusing these earlier collective social identities, offers older people the opportunity to engage more comprehensively with the project of identity.
(Gilleard 1996:495)

This conceptualisation of identity in post-modernity, as described by Gilleard and others, frames identity as a project of the self (echoing Giddens 1991), where "identities are expressed, revised and represented through consumption" (Gilleard & Higgs 2000:28). Some have claimed that "later life can now be seen in terms of lifestyle and identity rather than being primarily a reflection of previous occupation" (Higgs & Gilleard 2006:219). While identity (collectively) previously was ascribed by the state, the argument suggests that it now (in a second modernity) is a matter of individual choice, making identity construction a central aspect of growing older. The argument also suggests that the move from modernity to postmodernity has led to the blurring of the life course, a concept which however also can be understood as socially constructed (see e.g. Hareven 1995; Holstein & Gubrium 2000; cf. e.g. Biggs 1999):

Less emphasis than in the past [is] placed upon age-specific role transitions and scheduled identity development. Postmodern change, it is argued, will lead to some blurring of what appeared previously to be relatively clearly marked stages and the experiences and characteristic behaviour which were associated with those stages.

(Featherstone & Hepworth 1991:372)

Stages in the life course have become blurred (or, one could argue, the life course is constructed differently today). To add to this, “postmodern perspectives of age and aging identity” in recent years, in the words of Powell and Gilbert (2009), have been “underpinned by discourses of ‘better lifestyles’ and increased leisure opportunities for older people due to healthier lifestyles and increased use of biotechnologies to facilitate the longevity of human experiences” (p. 1; also see Murphy & Longino 1997). This shift has also been described as one that moves away from structural dominance to greater individual agency (e.g. Gilleard 1996), where the individual is responsible for the making of his or her own identity (cf. Giddens 1991, discussed e.g. by Turner 1994:111). One aspect of this entails a greater emphasis on the body and the individual’s responsibility to stay fit and healthy (see e.g. Gilleard & Higgs 2000; also see Murphy & Longino 1997 on postmodern identity and ageing), while another aspect is thought to entail an element of risk and uncertainty (see e.g. Phillipson & Biggs 1998). In other words, what the argument suggests is that when it comes to questions of identity, older people are faced with quite different challenges today than they were in the past. While the present dissertation approaches identity in old(er) age from a different angle (namely exploring the whens, whos and hows of old[er] age as an identity category, rather than identity as a project; see Chapter 3), these debates form part of the overall social context within which the study takes place. Images of old(er) age in society are likely to inform how old(er) age is constructed, which in turn may play into the whens, whos and hows of the identity category of old(er) age.

What more has this postmodernist framework suggested with regards to the construction of old(er) age on the individual level? The “mask of ageing” metaphor (or construct) integrates the postmodernist notions of individual responsibilities and a focus on the body. It is described by Hepworth (2004) as “culturally constructed in contemporary western society” (p. 125). The basic idea of the mask of ageing is that old age is a mask that conceals a true, youthful inner self. This essential, stable and young inner self is trapped inside of and in conflict with its older, steadily ageing body, which presents a cage from which one cannot escape.⁴ This is placed in the context of the blurred postmodern life course,

⁴ The related metaphor of the “masquerade” can be seen as an inversion of the original mask of ageing: the inner self is changing and maturing and uses the mask as a protective device in an ageist society (see e.g. Biggs 1997, 2003, 2004a & 2004b; also see Woodward 1991).

focusing on embodiment and the “unavoidable biological aspects of existence”, “inevitably involving birth, growth, maturation and death” (Featherstone & Hepworth 1989:147). The mask, then, draws attention to the “possibility” of a distance or tension between inner experience and external appearance (Featherstone & Hepworth 1991:382). This image has been described as appropriate for those who are seen as older today, but perhaps not for future generations since there seem to be signs that “images and expectations are gradually beginning to change” (p. 383). In a later writing, Hepworth (2004) claims that the mask of ageing never was intended as an “essentialist dualistic separation of body from self”, but rather was “theorised as a reflection on problematic aspects of the concept of embodied selfhood as celebrated in contemporary postmodern consumer culture” (p. 133). Rather than one universal mask, he suggests that there can be a multiplicity of masks: a youthful mask with an older self in a younger body, or a playful mask, where “an older person manipulates masks in a performance of both youth and old age” (p. 133). As a consequence, Hepworth suggests that some may regard their ageing body as a true reflection of their inner selves, while others may see it as a disguise that either is chosen or in fact imposed. Either way, he suggests that the changing body will continue to set limits to one’s performance. The mask of ageing metaphor is of interest to the current study insofar as it draws attention to the potential mismatch between the identities one claims for oneself (as old[er] or not old[er]) and the identities others assign one (as old[er] or not old[er]) in different situations. Others may categorise one as an older person even if one does not regard oneself as such, or vice versa. The empirical chapters examining the identity category of old(er) age (Chapters 6 & 7) will shed further light on this process.

With regards to the construction of old(er) age and the category of older people, on the group level, there have been further constructions that distinguish between different groups of older people. Some distinctions are based on chronology whilst others tie in with the postmodernist notions of lifestyle previously discussed. These constructs merit a brief discussion here since they seem relevant to how older people, including older migrants, may relate to the identity category of old(er) age. The first distinction to come about was that between the “young-old” and “old-old”, introduced by Neugarten (1974) in the United States. She described the “young-old” as those aged between 55 and 75 and as “relatively healthy, relatively affluent and relatively free from traditional responsibilities of work and family and who are increasingly well educated and politically active” (p. 187). The “old-old” then are described mainly as aged 75 and over. This demarcation between groups appears primarily chronological but seems to some extent also be linked to certain other characteristics. Others have since added the category of the “oldest old” to “denote those aged 85 years and older” (Suzman, Willis & Manton 1992:3).

A construct less tied to chronological age is that of the “third age” and its counterpart the “fourth age”, accredited to Laslett (1987). There has been some debate as to how the third age most appropriately should be understood. Gilleard and Higgs (2009) suggest that the third age should not be considered as a new stage of life (as they claim Laslett did), not as an identity linked to a particular birth cohort, and not as being associated only with the well-off elderly. Instead, they argue it is better viewed in a “cultural sense”, revealed through lifestyles within a historically formed cultural field associated with mass culture and mass affluence. Such lifestyles, they suggest, are realised through “a consciousness that sought to separate itself from the mentality of an earlier generation” (p. 35), namely a distancing from earlier generations of older people. In a later work, Higgs and Gilleard (2015) consider the relation between the third and the fourth age and the role of the former in constructing the latter:

The third age, we have argued, contributes to the social imaginary of the fourth age, advanced as ‘real’ old age. By advocating diverse lifestyles, a timeless self, an endless journey through life, the third age helps paint a darker picture of ‘old age’, contributes a darker narrative and exaggerates the gap between the fit and the frail; it does not mean to but, in a world of unintended consequences, it does, just as the institutional securing of later life in first modernity created the conditions for its subsequent fracturing.
(Higgs & Gilleard 2015:19)

The fourth age is then constructed as what Higgs and Gilleard describe as the new “deep” or “real” old age, “a collectively imagined terminal destination in life” (p. 14). In other words, it appears as though the distinction between the third and fourth age then seems to redefine (“real”) old age as something that only is relevant to those who are physically frail and dependent (associated with the fourth age), where those who are active, fit and healthy (associated with the third age) appear to extend middle age.

When conceptualised as a new life stage, namely between active working life and eventual frailty and death, the third age also has been constructed in terms of a “Golden Age”. It is then a time in life where one may be fit and healthy, comparatively affluent and with much time on one’s hand, able to do all the things one could not do when still working (see e.g. Ylänne-McEwen 2000). This construct of the third age as a golden age has also been linked to the “baby boomers”, the comparatively larger cohort of older people born especially after World War II (although the exact definition differs between countries: in Sweden they are known as *fyrtilisterna*, those born in the 1940s). They are described as a new generation of older people who are not only large in numbers but (among other things) also more active and more demanding than previous ones. Biggs and colleagues (2007) suggest that United Kingdom baby boomers identify more

with succeeding generations than preceding ones, making them more “youthful” in outlook but “mature” in attitude.

Have such distinctions (between young-old and old-old, the third and fourth age, the baby boomer generation) primarily emerged from scholarly writings, or is it something that people relate to in everyday life as well? Some previous studies seem to suggest that some older people themselves also may distinguish between those who are active, fit and healthy and those who are no longer able to be as active (see e.g. Roth et al. 2012), albeit not using the same labels as scholars have tended to do. At the same time, as Wilson (2009) points out, these new third age identities are dependent on adequate income. She suggests that we should study old age from a postmodernist stance and “revision old age by looking at the actual experiences of those who are aging, uncluttered by the grand narratives of modernity” (p. 77). To add to this,

The popular concept of the Fourth Age as being the last stage before death is both essentialising and inaccurate when identity is considered from the point of view of older people themselves. They may choose to be ‘not old’ as outlined above or they may accept a range of essentialised identities produced by modernist theory (all based on empirical research), such as disengaged, active, masked or dependent. For some people, these identities may feel inescapable because they are unable to resist physiological aging or ageist discourses. They have had an old age identity thrust upon them rather than chosen it.

(Wilson 2009:74-75)

It is precisely the point of the present study to examine old(er) age identities from the point of view of people who themselves may self-define as old(er) or be regarded as such by others. Previous empirical research has indeed suggested that people who chronologically are older not necessarily consider themselves as old (see e.g. Hurd 1999; Jones 2006; MacRae 1990; Weiss & Lang 2012). Whether the interviewees in the present study refer to the constructs discussed here, and if so, how, will be seen in the empirical chapters on old(er) age (Chapters 6 & 7).

To return to the question of the relation between how old(er) age and the category of older people seem to be constructed and how older people themselves seem to handle the identity category of old(er) age, let us consider the following:

When images of old age are perceived to be negative then it is not surprising that older people may not wish to be identified as ‘old’ or, as suggested above,⁵ may reluctantly enter into collaborative performance with others, during which they present themselves as old according to the conventional stereotypes. Old age thus

⁵ Referring to the metaphor of the mask of ageing.

becomes the performance of ageist stereotype and thereby perpetuates negative images of later life.

(Featherstone & Hepworth 2005:358)

Featherstone and Hepworth here draw attention to the link between societal images of old(er) age and their potential influence on how older people themselves may relate to the category. Discussing anti-ageing discourses and old age identities, Marshall (2015) suggests there are conflicting images of ageing: a negative image of impending physical decline and dependency, best fought with self-care and planning for the future, and a positive image of “those ‘geezers’ as health-conscious, fit, sexy and adventurous consumers, who take good care of themselves and control a significant proportion of disposable income” (p. 210). Marshall questions the ways and extent to which various images of ageing influence how older people themselves think of their identities, suggesting that we cannot assume that “new, ‘positive’ ageing identities are produced simply through duping the masses” (p. 215). Examining the identity category of old(er) age through a framework that considers both how individuals seem to define themselves (internally) and how they seem to think that others define them (externally) (see Chapter 3 for more) allows one to further explore the relation between images on the one hand and individual claims on the other.

In what ways is all that has been discussed here relevant for the present study? The contemporary constructions of old(er) age and old(er) age identities discussed here help frame the context within which the older migrants studied here are likely to negotiate the identity category of old(er) age. The fact that the writings cited here indeed are not based specifically on older migrants make it all the more interesting: do the constructs discussed here seem to be a part of how older migrants construct and negotiate the identity category of old(er) age? The examination of the whens, whos and hows of the identity category of old(er) age will shed light onto this question. Old(er) age, then, is understood as a construct, the meanings and relevance of which are not objectively given but may vary between different situations (and, for that matter, between different cultural, social and historical contexts). How this plays out for the older migrants included in this study will be seen in Chapters 6 and 7.

How is migrancy understood in this study?

Put simply, migrancy refers to the identity category that is defined against the national majority or native population, through what it is *not* – in the case of Sweden, through non-Swedishness – which then can have consequences for the distribution of resources and life chances (cf. Cornell & Hartmann 2007; Wimmer 2013). This difference seems to be constructed around markers such as place of birth, citizenship, perceived blood-ties, culture and language, as well as physical appearance in the case of Sweden (see e.g. Mattsson 2005).

Understanding identity as accomplished in a dialectic between internal and external definition (see Chapter 3), migrancy can and will potentially be both externally and internally defined, although this can vary both between individuals and between different situations. Unlike ethnic minority status, migrancy is ascribed as a consequence of migration, sometimes not until later adulthood, provided one migrates later in life. A crucial difference is that in the case of ethnic minority status one is from the beginning socialised into a society with certain power structures, while in the case of migrancy one often (but certainly not always) will have been part of the majority in one's country of origin, potentially (again, certainly not always) changing positions in the process of migration.

Furthermore, migrancy is not the result of ethnicity per se but of being regarded as *different* from the national majority or native population (cf. Torres 2010). That is to say, migrancy is not about being part of a particular group or a particular culture, but about being seen as not belonging to the native population, regardless of where (or to what group) one is presumed to belong instead. Put simply, one could say that ethnicity primarily is about groupness, belonging to a particular ethnic group with a shared culture and language, perceived metaphorical blood ties and perceived shared origins (cf. e.g. Eriksen 1993). In contrast, migrancy refers to the categorisation as different from the national majority due to migration, where one's ethnicity (as *different*) forms part of the cause (and migrancy the consequence). Studying migrancy then is not about particular cultural contents but rather about the production of difference from the native population (which, in turn, may lead to the production of new hybrid "immigrant" cultures, but that is another story).

Through a social constructionist lens, migrancy is *not* understood as an identity category that is the inherent property of individuals due to some apparently objective criteria. That is to say that it may become meaningful in some (social) situations but perhaps not in others. It also means that migrancy is likely to be constructed differently in different contexts. In some societies, migrants themselves (or at least their children) may come to be seen as a part of the native population over time. In others, migrancy may be constructed in such a way that it persists also over multiple generations. As migrancy tends to be defined as the opposite of nativeness, as something separate, the boundaries surrounding it may thus persist regardless of time spent in the country (and indeed be transmitted to the second generation). This is not to say that how certain groups are perceived in society does not change over time. As boundaries may shift and boundary markers are constructed (rather than objectively given), conceptions of who is a native and who is an (im)migrant can also change. How migrancy seems to be constructed in contemporary Sweden will be discussed next.

First however let me clarify why I at times use the term *(im)migrant* rather than just immigrant or migrant. There are several reasons. One pertains to social

construction, just as with old(er) age, that seeks to avoid reification. Another reason is that the term immigrant in the Swedish context (as will be discussed shortly) seems to be negatively laden and to a certain extent also seems to be associated with some groups of people more than others. Migrancy however is here regarded as an identity category that is potentially meaningful for any migrant regardless of country of origin. Migrancy in terms of difference from the native population may in other words be associated with identities as immigrant, as foreigner, as belonging to a different ethnic group, or perhaps (in the case of Sweden) as non-Swede. Writing of identities as (im)migrants is thought to cover these multiple meanings. As with old(er) age, I however use the more conventional term *immigrant* when discussing the work of others so as to not misconstrue or misrepresent their arguments.

The construction of migrancy vis-à-vis Swedishness

As has been suggested, migrancy is here understood as socially constructed against what it is not, namely against nativeness. Approaching migrancy as a socially constructed identity category means that its construction is bound to a specific context both in time and in space. In the case of Sweden, the construction of migrancy is bound up with constructions of *Swedishness*. This section seeks to capture the complex relations between Swedishness (i.e. constructions pertaining to who seems to be considered Swedish) and migrancy (i.e. constructions pertaining to who seems to be regarded as non-Swedish). Swedishness and migrancy may ultimately be regarded as two sides of the same coin, as each seems to be constructed in relation to the other and the two seem to be constructed as mutually exclusive. How the older migrants in this study relate to the identity category of migrancy potentially has as much to do with how Swedishness is constructed as it is about constructions of migrancy.

In the present attempt to capture the complex relation between Swedishness and migrancy, in the following, I will start with a very brief history of migration and how it seems to have influenced Swedish self-perceptions. Some of the central elements of the self-image of Sweden as a nation will thereafter be addressed, including the role of multiculturalism within this frame. Social change in terms of changes in policy, welfare state and self-image also play into changing constructions of Swedishness and migrancy. Against this backdrop, the very constructions of Swedishness (and who is considered a Swede) and migrancy (and who is considered an [im)migrant) will then further be discussed. All of these constructions serve as contextualisation of the present study and are of interest as they potentially inform how the older migrants included in this study negotiate the identity category of migrancy. They will furthermore render the findings more easily intelligible, especially to readers who are unfamiliar with the Swedish context.

Let me start with a very brief historical contextualisation of migration to Sweden. It is a common perception that Sweden for the longest time has had a homogeneous population. Unlike the United States or Australia, Sweden is not historically a country of immigration, and unlike the United Kingdom or the Netherlands, it was not one of the colonial powers. Immigrants in past centuries were few and assimilated into the population, such as Germans during the Middle Ages and Walloons during the 17th century (Daun 1992; also see Svanberg & Tydén 2005). The country slowly evolved from a country of emigration to one of immigration after World War II. During the war, the country opened its doors to war refugees, of which some came to stay. During the 1950s, labour migrants came from the neighbouring Nordic countries as well as from Yugoslavia, Greece and Turkey. Labour migration ceased after 1970 as immigration became more regulated and the need for labour had decreased. During the 1970s, immigration was dominated by family reunifications and asylum seekers. Nordic immigrant groups continued to be the largest until the mid-1970s. Since the 1980s, immigrants have mostly been refugees in need of protection, mainly from non-European countries (see e.g. Svanberg & Tydén 2005). In recent decades, Sweden has welcomed larger numbers of refugees in relation to its size than any other country in Europe (see e.g. Eurostat 2016) or the North Atlantic region (cf. Schierup & Ålund 2011). Today, the percentage of the total foreign-born population amounts to close to 18 (SCB 2017) and 23 per cent of the total population has a foreign background (SCB 2017).⁶

This brief history provides a backdrop for the constructions of Swedishness and migrancy, which includes an image of Swedes as homogeneous and (im)migrants as different and as a separate category. Daun (1992) suggests that the image of homogeneity persists “because the native-born population is so homogeneous. There is one language, one religion and a common history” (p. 8), despite immigration and the long-term presence of indigenous minorities.⁷ The idea of homogeneity seems to be central to constructions of Swedishness: McEachrane and Faye (2001, drawing upon Mattsson 2001) suggest that “the classification Swedes/immigrants takes its starting point in the idea of Swedish homogeneity and the absolute difference of migrancy” (p. 10).⁸ The idea of homogeneity is also reflected in scholarly writings on Swedes and Swedishness that emerged especially during the 1980s and 1990s. Sweden seems to have tended to regard itself as a modern country with no particular culture (see e.g.

⁶ “Foreign background” in Swedish statistics is defined as being born abroad or having two parents who were born abroad. Until 2003, individuals with one parent who was born abroad were included in this category. See www.scb.se.

⁷ Sweden has three official indigenous minorities: the Sámi people, the Finns of the Tornedal and the Roma. Their languages, namely Sámi, Meänkieli and Romany Chib, have official minority status in Sweden, as do Finnish and Yiddish. The term minority language is only used for indigenous minorities in Sweden (i.e. not immigrated ones).

⁸ All translations from Swedish to English in this dissertation have been done by the author. See section on Language and translation in Chapter 5.

Arnstberg 1989; also cf. Arnstberg 2005 & Daun 2011). Daun (1998a) suggests that it is contact with immigrants that has made Swedes more aware of their own culture: everything Swedish otherwise seems to have been regarded as normal and taken for granted, whereas culture has been something attributed to *others* (e.g. Ehn 1993). Ehn (1993) furthermore suggests that immigrants “Swedify”⁹ Sweden by presenting a contrasting example and spurring cultural competition, leading Swedes to reflect on what is Swedish and how Swedishness may manifest itself, including an increased interest in Swedish cultural heritage.

It has been suggested that Swedish national identity has been bound up with a sense of modernity, taking pride in being part of an elite group of nations focused on advancements in various fields: technology, design, science, social planning, development, environmental protection, and equality (see e.g. Johansson 2001). “We have regarded ourselves as the enlightenment’s favourite child, which other states have had to compete with” (Johansson 2001:8). To this one may add the self-image of the country as a world leader also in terms of standard of living, democracy, equality, a modern, sensible and rational society with education for all, good communications, hygiene, high life expectancy and so on (see e.g. Frykman 1993). The construction of the welfare state as the people’s home after World War II, taking care of its citizens from the cradle to the grave, forms a key part in this progressive project that aims at equality for all of its citizens (not only in terms of gender but also aiming at eroding class differences). Three main features of the Swedish welfare state (as suggested by Dahlstedt and Neergaard 2015) are, firstly, the long dominance of the Social Democratic Party. Secondly, gender politics in the form of state feminism focusing on gender equality in areas such as the labour market, political representation, and welfare service provisions with parental leave, social insurance, child-care and elder care. Thirdly, international migration and ethnic relations, where Sweden has had a relatively encompassing regime of inclusionary multiculturalism combined with the highest proportion of foreign-born population in Europe (Dahlstedt & Neergaard 2015:250). As Ålund and Schierup (1991) write, multiculturalism became an important element of welfare state politics:

Sweden’s multicultural immigrant policy is known throughout Europe for its consistent rejection of a ‘guest worker’ strategy for labour import, its ambitious quest to create social equality among ethnic groups, its respect for immigrant culture, and its emphasis on providing immigrants and ethnic minorities with resources with which to exercise political influence. An emphasis on international solidarity forms the basis of an ambitious programme to accept and integrate refugees. In the official oratory of Swedish multiculturalism, welfare ideology

⁹ Terms such as to Swedify, Swedified and Swedification are here used as free translations of the Swedish *att försvenska*, *försvenskat* and *försvenskning*, meaning “to make or become Swedish”, “the condition of having been made or become Swedish” and “the process of being made or becoming Swedish”, respectively.

CHAPTER 2

objectives centred on 'equality' (*jämlikhet*) occupy a central position. Other policy objectives include 'freedom of choice' (*valfrihet*) and 'partnership' (*samverkan*). (Ålund & Schierup 1991:2)

In other words, the ambition has been to extend the people's home ideal also to those who come to Sweden in need of protection. One of the paradoxes of multiculturalism identified by Ålund and Schierup stems from the top-down approach of such policies, presuming that "the general public would accept multicultural aims" (p. 3). While they describe a "broad and stable consensus on the importance of multicultural rights and of an anti-racist morality" as "probably unique to Sweden", already in 1991 Ålund and Schierup suggested there were emerging "critical disjunctures between ideology and practice" (p. 3).

These disjunctures are also reflected in the country's response to growing tendencies towards racism. That is to say, the progressive self-image has meant that racism seems to have been perceived as something that occurs in other countries, not Sweden (see e.g. Pred 2000). Sweden made itself into "the world's most radical proponent for antiracism, at the same time constructing itself as a colour-blind country, and thereby almost overnight transforming racism into a non-Swedish issue" (Hübinette & Lundström 2014:429). This is why Pred (2000) discusses racism under the epithet of *Even in Sweden*, as a presumed surprise occurrence difficult to come to terms with:

The situated social practices, power relations, and discourses of cultural racism are seldom labeled as such in Sweden. Cultural racism is itself generally culturally reworked by those of "full Swedish" descent. What is here termed cultural racism must be labeled as something else. Must be called "hostility towards foreigners", "hostility towards immigrants", "xenophobia", "uncertainty in the face of a strange culture", or given some other name that partially detoxifies or defuses, that makes less poisonous or explosive. Must be cleansed of any association with "real" or "classical" racism by way of baptismal magic, by – abracadabra, hocus-pocus, simsalabim – altering its status through conferring a(nother) name upon it. Must be renamed so as to prove less threatening to images of self and nation, so as to avoid excessive destabilization of widely held elements of national identity. For the very thought – not to mention evidence – of any variety of racism in their own midst frequently proves contradictory and extremely difficult to accept for that majority of Swedes who have long viewed themselves as the most egalitarian of egalitarians, as quite deeply committed either to Social Democratic notions of solidarity and social justice or to liberal humanitarianism. (Pred 2000:83)

For the longest time, both racism and other race related issues in other words seem to have been regarded as irrelevant to Sweden and impossible to reconcile with the nation's self-image as previously described. All of this, namely the self-image as a progressive nation, its difficulty in reconciling this with racist occurrences, and indeed the presence of racisms, seems relevant to how the

identity category of migrancy seems to be constructed. This construction in turn may play into how individuals themselves may negotiate the identity category of migrancy.

Picking up the debate again twenty years later, Schierup and Ålund (2011) still describe Sweden as long having been known internationally as “the model of a tolerant, egalitarian, multicultural welfare state” (p. 45) that extends substantial citizenship, welfare and labour rights to all within its borders, including immigrants. However, it seems as though neoliberal reforms have begun to undermine the welfare state and policies on migration have started to become more restrictive (see e.g. Sainsbury 2006; Schierup & Ålund 2011), leading to an erosion of what has been known as Swedish exceptionalism:

In spite of extended processes of urban segregation, social exclusion and labour market discrimination, until recently Sweden continued to be seen, from an international perspective, as the model of a tolerant and egalitarian multicultural welfare society, a kind of exceptionalist model for others to follow. (...) Sweden is probably also the country in the North Atlantic region which has, until recently, demonstrated the largest degree of openness towards asylum seekers. (Schierup & Ålund 2011:47)

In other words, asking whether the end of Swedish exceptionalism has been reached, the authors suggest that this model image no longer can be maintained. Nevertheless, as will be seen in the following, how Swedishness and migrancy seem to be constructed today still very much seems to be informed by the ideals described thus far. Changes in social context such as the proclaimed dawn of the end of Swedish exceptionalism however may be likely to also have an impact on future constructions of migrancy and Swedishness.

But how do Swedishness and migrancy seem to be constructed today, then? The literature on Swedes and Swedishness paints a clear picture with recurring themes that are thought to characterise Swedes. In *Svensk mentalitet (Swedish mentality)*, Daun (1998a) sets out to describe the Swedish modal personality, referring not to the average person but to a personality type that is perceived to be most common and most typical. He concedes that there is much variation but suggests that commonalities can be found on a higher level of abstraction, where certain features seem to distinguish Swedes from people from other nations in a comparative perspective. This modal personality type is then described as shy, quiet, practical, conflict-avoiding, diplomatic, nature-loving, humble and reserved (Daun 1998a). These and similar characteristics also appear in other writings on Swedishness (see e.g. Arnstberg 2005 & 2010; Herlitz 2012). Against this image, it is easy to see why some of the interviewees in this study suggest that they stand out as non-Swedish when being chatty and outgoing, or in turn describe themselves as enjoying solitude when claiming not to be different (see Chapters 8 & 9 on migrancy).

Constructions of both Swedishness and migrancy in Sweden seem to include ideas of what a typical Swede is supposed to be like and in turn demarcate who is and who is not included within the category of Swedes. Daun (1998a) addresses the question of how Swedes seem to conceptualise who is Swedish and who is not. He suggests that many Swedes see those people as immigrants who have come from other continents, mostly if they have black hair and/or darker skin. He suggests that Westerners however generally are not included. Nevertheless, according to Daun, the older generation also seems to view Finns, Yugoslavs and others as immigrants. Daun suggests that not everybody who has Swedish citizenship or lives in the country is considered to be Swedish: rather, there seems to be an underlying assumption that a Swede has a blood tie, is born of Swedish parents and does not differ in physical appearance from “what is to be expected”, with a Swedish name and last name, speaking Swedish without an accent:

Who is a Swede? By formal definition, all Swedish citizens are Swedes – but not emically. The folk conception of a Swede has a blood component, however biologically false it may be, and the same is true for conceptions in some other countries.
(Daun 1998b:38)

As a consequence, Daun claims that it is almost impossible for most people to regard somebody of Asian or African physical appearance as Swedish, or somebody who speaks with an accent, even if grammatically correct. In another work, Daun (1998a) suggests that those who are defined as immigrants in Sweden see the label as an adequate description at first, but not anymore once they discover that it continues to be used regardless of time of stay.

What Daun (1998b) refers to as a (biologically false) blood component and physical appearance, others have since come to discuss in terms of Whiteness. While Sweden has tended to regard itself as standing outside of colonialism due to an absence of a colonial history, some scholars have come to suggest that Sweden nevertheless has been shaped by the history of colonialism. Linking the history of colonialism to modernity, McEachrane and Faye (2001) suggest that postcolonialism very much concerns the country of Sweden as well:

‘Whiteness’ and ‘race’ are relevant categories also for understanding today’s Sweden. Among scientists there are very few who still believe that ‘race’ is a scientifically meaningful category. Nevertheless, the category continues to play a role for how we regard ourselves and others. We still live in a world where being, say, ‘White’ or ‘Black’ is associated with qualities that can be traced back to the 19th century’s heyday of eugenics. Today we also speak of a new racism, ethnic racism or cultural racism, to describe a racism that aims not towards ‘races’ but ethnic groups and cultures. Today, Greeks, Finns or Muslims can be exposed to ‘racism’ without being defined as ‘races’.
(McEachrane & Faye 2001:12)

For a long time, the concept of “race” seems to generally have been treated as irrelevant to Sweden, to such an extent that – as Hübinette and Lundström (2014) observe – translations of textbooks from English to Swedish have either replaced the word “race” with ethnicity or have included a commentary stating that race is not relevant in Sweden (cf. Pred 2000 cited earlier).

Taking critical Whiteness studies as a starting point, Mattsson (2005) suggests that ideas of Swedishness are intrinsically linked to ideas of “the White Western”, also rooted in discourses on colonialism and modernity. This has a dimension that is clearly based on physical appearance: “genuine Whiteness” in the form of blue eyes and blonde hair. According to Mattsson, what is Swedish is furthermore constructed (by those who identify with it) as the norm and immigrants are constructed as a problem and a threat. This means, among other things, that those who can claim a position of Swedishness have the exclusive possibility of expressing themselves in certain ways and gaining access to contexts which seem to be closed to others. They can position themselves by way of speaking in terms such as “we Swedes...”, or “in Sweden we...” (Mattsson 2005:148). Such positions of Swedishness however seem to be defined as a contrast to those who are constructed as *different*, namely *immigrants*. Mattsson suggests that those who are not included in the conception of a Swede continue to be regarded as immigrants regardless of how long they have been living in Sweden. She describes the boundaries of Swedishness as variable, at times referring to place of birth, citizenship, blood-ties, culture and language, or physical appearance (Mattsson 2005).¹⁰ Hübinette and Lundström (2014) go on to introduce the concept of hegemonic whiteness to the current Swedish context and suggest:

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. (...) Being white constitutes the central core and the master signifier of Swedishness, and thus of being Swedish. This means that a Swede is a white person and a non-white person is therefore not, and cannot *fully* become a Swede.
(Hübinette & Lundström 2014:426, emphasis in original)

According to this construction of Swedes as White and non-Whites as unable to become Swedish, a boundary based upon physical appearance is drawn. Approaching identity categories as socially constructed means that all of these

¹⁰ For more on the variable boundaries of Swedishness, see e.g. Lundström (2007), who has studied how race, class and gender intersect in narratives of Swedish national belonging among a group of young women of Latin American descent living in Sweden. Also see Koobak and Thapar-Björkert (2012) for more on the role of language, visibility and invisibility in definitions of “non-Swedishness”. This piece is based upon the authors’ own experiences as foreign-born researchers in Sweden.

boundary markers are regarded as potentially negotiable (rather than objectively given and stable). It is also likely that several of them may be relevant to the whens, whos and hows of the identity category of migrancy, but all do not by definition need to be relevant at all times.

Several scholars have suggested that Swedishness and the category of immigrant are constructed as mutually exclusive: “Swedishness and Otherness become a simple dichotomy” (O’Dell 1998:33). Correspondingly, Tesfahuney (1998) suggests that the very general category of immigrant is constructed as a negation of everything Swedish, reifying identities and ironing out differences. In the process, he suggests, immigrants are discursively disempowered and made into the Other. “Identities and differences thus become constructed as immutable qualities of societies and individuals, instead of mutable, processual and context dependent aspects that these are” (Tefahuney 1998:116). In a similar vein, discussing the use of the word immigrant, Peralta (2005) concludes that “by way of using terminology that separates people, ‘the Others’ are marked as different, as special cases, like a problem; and by placing them in separate categories, they are kept on the outside and isolated from society as a whole” (p. 201). The idea of isolation and living outside of society, often termed *outsiderness* (in Swedish: *utanförskap*), very much seems to be present in debates on immigration and integration in Sweden.

The category of *immigrant* in the Swedish context has also been described in the following manner:

Others would even claim that through immigration policy and the debate surrounding immigration, a special immigrant identity has been formed into which all non-Swedes involuntarily are categorised, like a paddock impossible to escape. Even children adopted from foreign countries – who have grown up in a Swedish environment and thereby are Swedes in a cultural and ethnic sense – are forced into this categorisation, or process of being labelled if you like, into an ‘immigrant identity’. So it is not just about racist police controlling their passports, but about always being treated as a foreigner, always discriminated on the labour market and eventually ending up in immigrant-related lines of work as translators, teachers of their native languages, etc.
(Svanberg & Tydén 2005:383)

In other words, the category of immigrant in the Swedish context can be understood to be very pervasive and ascribed independent of time since migration, reason for migration or indeed place of birth, since the second generation seems to be categorised in the same way. As Torres puts it,

According to Svanberg and Tydén and other researchers, non-Swedish(ness) and immigrant(ness) have become the criteria for defining what is foreign, culturally different, less-developed, more traditional and less-modern. ‘Immigrantness’ has

thereby replaced the biologically-based racist ideology of the nineteenth century Europe.
(Torres 2006:1350)

What Torres here calls “immigrantness” and what Svanberg and Tydén describe as an “immigrant identity” are both included in the concept of migrancy as understood in this dissertation. However, as was suggested when discussing the use of the term *(im)migrant*, migrancy in the present dissertation is understood as a broader concept insofar as it is not presumed to be reserved only for those who may be constructed as diametrically opposed to the idea(l) of a native Swede. That is to say, migrancy is here considered to be a potentially meaningful identity category for a migrant born in Norway as much as for a migrant born in Iran. The interplay of internal and external definitions as well as the processes of negotiation may however be expected to vary, depending on how identities are constructed in the popular imagination in everyday life. This will become clear in the empirical chapters on migrancy (Chapters 8 & 9).

How is all of this relevant to the present study? The social construction of Swedishness on the one hand and migrancy on the other hand, as described here, is the product of particular circumstances and bound to a particular social, cultural and historical context. The constructions described here are likely to inform how older migrants living in Sweden today themselves relate to the identity category of migrancy, and how it might be ascribed to them by others. At the same time, just as the categories used to describe those perceived as different and foreign change over time, so do the criteria for presumed membership. The writings discussed here do not specifically consider older migrants, but seem to suggest that migrancy may persist over time (regardless of how long one has been living in Sweden) insofar as the second generation seems to be encompassed by the same categorisation as their parents. How the older migrants included in the present study relate to the identity category of migrancy, coming from a range of different countries and having lived in Sweden for a rather long time (see Chapter 5), will be seen in the empirical chapters on migrancy (namely Chapters 8 & 9). How identity and identity categories are to be understood in the present dissertation will be the subject of the next chapter presenting the theoretical frame (Chapter 3), but first let us examine what may be said about the general population studied here, namely older migrants.

Older migrants in Sweden

The constructions of old(er) age and migrancy as described in the preceding sections can be read as contextualisations of these identity categories that are likely to render the interviewees’ accounts more intelligible to readers unfamiliar with debates within social gerontology or with the country of Sweden. Two more contextualisations seem necessary: the demographic background of older

migrants in Sweden today and how the very category of “elderly immigrants” seems to have been constructed in gerontological policy, research and practice in Sweden (cf. Torres 2015a). First however let us briefly consider this broad category of people, older migrants, beyond the specific context of Sweden. Discussing older migrants in a European context, Warnes and colleagues (2004) observe that

‘Older migrants’ (...) have especially diverse characteristics. They include some of the most deprived and socially excluded, and some of the most affluent and accomplished, but all to a greater or lesser extent are disadvantaged through an interaction between social policies and their ‘otherness’ by living in a foreign country.
(Warnes et al. 2004:307)

While all older migrants by definition share the experience of having migrated at some point during their lives, they may be said to constitute an immensely diverse population with a multiplicity of life experiences. One important difference pertains to when migration takes place: early or late in life. Warnes and colleagues (2004) distinguish between older European international labour migrants, older non-European international labour migrants, family-oriented international retirement migrants, and amenity-seeking international retirement migrants. The first two types migrated at an earlier age whereas the latter two types migrate after retirement. Dwyer and Papadimitriou (2006) later added refugees or older forced migrants to this typology. There appears to be a wide agreement among researchers that rather little is known about older migrants (see e.g. Torres 2006; Warnes & Williams 2006; Warnes et al. 2004). Writing about the Swedish context, Bradby and Torres (2016) suggest that “despite assumptions of homogeneous vulnerability, there are, in fact, no studies that have looked into older immigrants’ actual backgrounds in terms of ethnicity, class, and education level and neither has there been enough inquiry into the present situation of this group” (p. 304). These assumptions about the category will be discussed further shortly, first however let us consider the demographics.

Demographic background

What do we “know” about the category of older migrants in Sweden, demographically speaking? Just as demographic projections in several European countries suggest an impending increase in the numbers of older first-generation migrants (see White 2006), which in part seems to explain the problem-orientation of research within the care sector (cf. e.g. Torres 2006), this is also true for Sweden, as one can see that there are larger groups of foreign-born¹¹

¹¹ It should perhaps be noted that ethnicity is not recorded in Swedish statistics, but only country of birth and country of citizenship. This makes it impossible to say for instance how many Kurds (regardless of age) reside in the country, which marks quite a contrast to countries such as the United Kingdom or the United States where data

people approaching retirement age (see e.g. SCB 2017). The total population of Sweden in 2016 amounted to 9 995 153. The percentage of the population aged 65 and older amounted to close to 20 per cent (while around 31 per cent were 55 and older). Among those above the age of 65, close to 13 per cent were foreign-born (while the corresponding figure for those above the age of 55 amounts to nearly 15 per cent) (SCB 2017).¹² According to SCB (2012), the number of foreign-born persons above the age 65 passed the 200 000 mark in 2010, having doubled since 1990 and is expected to double once more within the next 20 years. In other words, those who statistically are included in the category of older migrants are expected to increase immensely in total numbers in the coming decades, and are also expected to constitute a larger share of the whole population of older people in the future.

The composition of different countries and regions of origin for the population of older migrants in Sweden as a whole will also be of interest. This is the case not least in relation to the sample selection (as will be discussed in Chapter 5) and in relation to the images of (im)migrants that people in Swedish society in general seem to have, which the older migrants in this study are likely to have to deal with when negotiating the identity category of migrancy (as will be seen in Chapters 8 & 9). In 2016, nearly half of the population (42 per cent) of older migrants was born in the other Nordic countries, with Finland accounting for 30 per cent of the total foreign-born population above the age of 65. Of the remainder, 26 per cent were born in non-Nordic EU countries and another 12 per cent in other European countries (especially the former republic of Yugoslavia). The remaining 20 per cent were born in Asia (12 per cent), South America (3 per cent), Africa (3 per cent), and North America and Oceania (2 per cent) (SCB 2017). As has been noted (see SCB 2012), the demographics of countries of origin within the older population does not quite reflect that of the Swedish foreign-born population as a whole. Those born in the Nordic and EU countries are overrepresented while those from other continents are underrepresented (SCB 2012), which means that the composition also is likely to change in the future.¹³

A recent publication from Statistics Sweden, *Integration – utrikes födda i pensionsåldern* (*Integration – foreign born persons of retirement age*) (SCB 2012), provides the first comprehensive overview of its kind. Using a range of statistical

on ethnic or racial backgrounds is readily available. This is why country of birth rather than ethnicity (or citizenship) is referred to in the present description of the demographic context.

¹² Based on data obtained from Statistics Sweden (SCB 2017). Total numbers: 1 143 840 aged 55-64, 1 976 857 aged 65+. Foreign-born population: 210 019 aged 55-64, 251 778 aged 65+.

¹³ That the composition will change already in the near future can be seen when considering the countries of birth for those who are aged above the age of 55 today (rather than 65). Accordingly, drawing the line at 55, the corresponding percentages are as follows: Nordic countries 33% (with Finland accounting for 25% of the total), non-Nordic EU countries 22%, other European countries 16%, Asia 19%, South America 4%, Africa 4%, and North America and Oceania 2% (SCB 2017).

sources,¹⁴ the report presents data on demographics, working life, pension income, family relations, health, leisure activities and living arrangements for foreign-born retirement aged persons (aged 65 and older) in 2010, as compared to the native born population of the same age. In terms of time since migration (or how long they have been living in Sweden), according to the report, the largest share of the foreign-born population aged above 65 has been living in Sweden for a very a long time: 85 per cent have been living in Sweden for 20 years or more.¹⁵ This is the case especially for those born in the Nordic countries (for whom the percentage amounts to 94), the EU (90 per cent) and South America (85 per cent), but even among those from Asia and Africa, more than half have been living in Sweden for at least 20 years (at 53 per cent and 56 per cent, respectively) (SCB 2012). What is more, the majority migrated before the age of 34 (31 per cent were aged 0-24, 30 per cent 25-34), meaning that they will have spent their working years in Sweden (SCB 2012). In other words, most older migrants will have been living in Sweden for a very long time and will have spent most of their adult lives in the country. Finally, according to SCB (2012), most of the older foreign-born population are living in urban areas (with 43 per cent in the country's three largest cities and their suburbs, and another 26 per cent in other larger cities) (SCB 2012).

The report on integration (SCB 2012) also contains some interesting data on family relations among older migrants. According to the report, 40 per cent of those who are married have a Swedish-born partner. This is more common among women than men (45 per cent as compared to 36 per cent). The prevalence is also greater for those who migrated young, with a majority of both women and men having Swedish-born partners if they migrated before the age of twenty-five. Four out of five of the remaining 60 per cent have partners who were born in the same country as themselves. This is interesting insofar as intermarriage may be expected to have some bearing on one's own general ethnic or cultural orientations. Last but not least, it may be of general interest to note that there seems to be no significant difference between the Swedish born and foreign-born populations with regards to the percentages of the population that are single or cohabiting, with only very minor differences in divorce rates (which are slightly higher among the foreign-born) (SCB 2012).¹⁶

¹⁴ Sources include Statistics Sweden's registers of the total population, the Living Conditions Survey (ULF/SILC), the National Board of Health's register of social services interventions with older persons and persons with disability.

¹⁵ It should perhaps be noted that the overall composition of the population of older migrants was slightly different in the year upon which the report is based, namely 2010 as compared to 2016. The percentages for 2010 thus are as follows: Nordic countries 46% (with Finland accounting for 31% of the total), non-Nordic EU countries 27%, other European countries 13%, Asia 8%, South America 2%, Africa 2%, and North America and Oceania 2% (SCB 2012).

¹⁶ This report from the year 2012 is to my knowledge currently the only source of data available on topics such as time since migration, age at migration and intermarriage for this specific population. Figures for more recent years can therefore unfortunately not be provided at this point.

The construction of the category of “elderly immigrants” in Sweden

While the demographic background information gives us some idea of how the population of foreign-born older people in Sweden is composed, it does not tell us much about how the category of “elderly immigrants” seems to have been constructed in Sweden. The construction of this category adds to the previous contextualisations of old(er) age and migrancy as identity categories, as the population studied here, namely older migrants, potentially may need to negotiate not only old(er) age and migrancy, but also the category of “elderly immigrant”.

Ronström (2002; also see 1996) was the first to argue that the category of “elderly immigrant” has been constructed by civil servants and researchers in Sweden as a social category that is perceived as problematic. According to Ronström, research and inquiries into the situation of older migrants have been problem-oriented, focusing to a large extent on social problems and looking for solutions. Older migrants have been depicted as having bad health, low income, with poor living conditions and short life expectancy, speaking little or no Swedish and living “outside” of society (Ronström 2002:131). As a result, the category of “elderly immigrant” has come to be associated with social problems. Indeed,

It seems that old immigrants themselves have played only a very small part in the production and dissemination of the concept of ‘older immigrants’. Instead, it seems as though the concept as well as the ongoing ethnification of old age/aging of ethnicity in Sweden as a whole primarily result from the efforts of Swedish officials and researchers. From this perspective, you could view a large part of the resulting ‘multicultural Sweden’ and ‘the ethnics’ in Sweden, not only as an answer to a growing diversity due to immigration of new foreigners, but also as an arrangement of the ruling elite, to make it possible to uphold its ruling function in society.

(Ronström 2002:136)

The underlying idea is a social constructionist one that draws attention to the unequal distribution of power, namely the “ruling elite” as compared to “elderly immigrants”. Torres (2006) later reviewed and evaluated existing research on older migrants in Sweden. She found that those concerned with elderly care and policy have constructed the social category of “elderly immigrant” as homogeneous and problematic, approaching those included in the category as presumptive recipients of care who will pose an unusual challenge to the provision of care services. As a consequence, she argues that research on “elderly immigrants” in Sweden has inadvertently reproduced commonly held stereotypes, contributing to an overall picture of a homogenous group where what is thought to be true for some has been taken to be true for all, as generalisations have been made on the basis of studies that have included a

limited number of groups. As a consequence, “elderly immigrants’ continue to be equated with the minority late-in-life immigrants with non-European backgrounds who have not yet managed to adapt successfully to their new surroundings” (Torres 2006:1351-1352). This can be contrasted to the demographic data presented earlier which shows that most older migrants in Sweden in fact have been living in the country for a very long time, most are married to Swedes, and they furthermore mostly come from other European countries.

In a later study of the construction of the category of “elderly immigrants” in Sweden, I myself (Machat 2010) explored how this category of people is portrayed in social policy for older people, examining a Swedish social policy document known as SENIOR 2005.¹⁷ I identified two incompatible ways of speaking about “elderly immigrants”: one that emphasises the diversity and heterogeneity of all individuals included in the category, and one where they are treated as a homogeneous group with special needs. On the one hand, statistics on population size, age, and countries of origin are used to show the diversity of those included in the category. Placing the individual at the centre, it is argued that individual circumstances are not to be explained by ethnicity or culture (which are described as flexible and changeable). Instead, the individuality of life experiences is emphasised. At the same time, outsidersness (in Swedish: *utanförskap*) is presumed to be central in many older immigrants’ lives, assuming experiences of a lack of acceptance and lack of participation in society, with limited possibilities. The explicit message is that “elderly immigrants” are not to be regarded as a homogeneous problematic group. On the other hand, however, when not explicitly discussing questions of ethnicity or migratory backgrounds, “elderly immigrants” are frequently mentioned in connection with problems and risks: having poorer (physical) health than native-born Swedes, being at particular risk of poor mental health, lacking involvement in society, with vulnerable life courses, low economic resources and language difficulties. In other words, “elderly immigrants” are nevertheless treated as a homogeneous problematic group. The competing images of diverse heterogeneous individuals and a homogeneous, problematic group with special needs thus stand in contrast to one another where “elderly immigrants” ultimately are set apart from the rest of the national community of older people and defined by what they are not, namely ethnic Swedes (Machat 2010). This means that the negative images and tendencies towards homogenisation described by other scholars also can be found in social policy.

To add to this, Torres later writes:

¹⁷ SENIOR 2005 (SOU 2003:91) is the final report of a parliamentary investigation into how social policy for older people can be developed to be sustainable in the long run. It is not a binding policy document but formed an important basis for the government’s decision-making.

I suggest that gerontological research, policy and practice could be regarded as construction sites where ethnicity's importance is addressed. It is within these old age-relevant sites that constructions about ethnicity's relevance are shaped and assumptions about ethnicity are made.
(Torres 2015a:946)

Torres here draws attention to the potential role of research, policy and practice in the construction of identities. The construction of identities at different sites, which will be discussed further in Chapter 3, pertains not only to individuals being defined in everyday life, but also to categories being constructed at a structural level.

Against what background can we best understand the construction of the category of "elderly immigrants"? Torres suggests that the social construction of the social category of "elderly immigrant" by elderly-care planners and providers in Sweden would not have been possible if the category of "immigrant" had not already been established as a specific social category (Torres 2006:1350), as was discussed in the previous section on the identity category of migrancy. Ten years on, Torres (2016) finds that there has been a steady growth in Swedish research on older migrants in the elderly care sector, which she suggests could be explained through

the fascination with 'difference' that is characteristic of the way in which Sweden regards its immigrant population. (...) At the very core of this country's immigrant policy is the idea that immigrants are fundamentally different from Swedes and have 'special needs' that ought to be addressed by the welfare state. The fact that the debates on older immigrants in Sweden have focused on their 'Otherness' is therefore understandable.
(Torres 2016:21)

In other words, much research on older migrants in the elderly care sector has seemed to presume not only special needs but also fundamental difference from the native population. Bradby and Torres (2016) further suggest, in line with the earlier argument put forward by Ronström (2002), that

the debate on older immigrants in Sweden has not been about who these older people are (i.e., where they come from, their current conditions, and what they need), but rather about what Sweden (and specifically Swedish elder care) can do for them. (...) We do not, in fact, know whether older immigrants have the 'special needs' they have been assumed to have, nor do we know how many of them place particular demands on the welfare state.
(Bradby & Torres 2016:305)

The present study differs from previous research on older migrants in Sweden not least by virtue of *not* approaching them with a problem focus and *not* studying them as presumptive recipients of care, but instead studying them in their own

CHAPTER 2

right as theoretically profuse sources of information pertaining to the identity categories of old(er) age and migrancy. It is interested more in who they claim to be and how they think others regard them (or, to be precise, the whens, whos and hows of the identity categories of old[er] age and migrancy) and less in what it is that Sweden can do for them. This dissertation then studies the identity categories of old(er) age and migrancy from the perspective of older migrants themselves, which allows us to see when and in relation to whom they may regard themselves as different or may be regarded as such by others, and how migrancy in turn seems to be negotiated. Perhaps these identity categories may be seen as meaningful by other people more than by the older migrants themselves? The following chapter will shed further light onto how identity, identity categories and related concepts are to be understood in the present work.

CHAPTER 3: THEORETICAL FRAME

While the preceding chapters have sought to explain what this dissertation is about and within what context the empirical study takes place, it is now time to discuss at greater depth how some of the central concepts are understood. The aim of this chapter is to present the theoretical frame of this dissertation and zoom in on how identity, identity categories and related phenomena such as categorisation are understood. This includes a discussion of the concept of identity and a clarification of this dissertation's overall stance as a social constructionist one. The chapter is structured as follows: first, the concept of identity is discussed in relation to the debate surrounding the term, followed by definitions and a presentation of some of the differences one may find in how different academic disciplines approach the subject of identity. Then, the section on social scientific understandings of identity zooms in on essentialist, circumstantialist and social constructionist approaches to identity and identity categories. Social constructionism is then discussed in further detail with subsections focusing on: the basics of the approach; construction sites; the structural level: identity categories and power; and finally, the interactional level: the negotiation and accomplishment of identities. The final section ties up some of the loose ends and sums up how the different concepts relate to one another. Throughout, I discuss what different understandings do and do *not* mean for the present study. This includes examples of how both old(er) age and migrancy fit into this theoretical frame. What the internal-external dialectic of identification alluded to in the preceding chapters means is also elaborated upon. The chapter aims to show how the very questions of the whens, whos and hows of identification are to be understood, which forms the basis for the analysis of the empirical material (as will be further discussed in Chapter 5 on Methodology).

Identity: A much debated concept

The term *identity* has been subject to much debate over the past decades. Hall (1996) speaks of a “veritable discursive explosion in recent years around the concept of ‘identity’” (p. 1) and suggests that it is a concept that is currently “operating ‘under erasure’ in the interval between reversal and emergence; an idea which cannot be thought in the old way, but without which certain key questions cannot be thought at all” (p. 2). Brubaker and Cooper (2000) suggest that “‘Identity’...tends to mean too much (when understood in a strong sense), too little (when understood in a weak sense), or nothing at all (because of its sheer ambiguity)” (p. 1). As a consequence, they argue that we would be better off abandoning the term altogether. Jenkins (2008) joins the debate on the term identity, agreeing that it has been overused, but he does not deem it useful to abandon the term both because it is so well-established in the world beyond

academia, and because we still would need a term to describe the “human processes” it refers to. Lawler (2014) echoes these sentiments by way of suggesting that the answer is to employ the term identity with precision rather than abandoning it, since one of the problems is that identity has a multiplicity of meanings at the same time as it much too often remains undefined. For instance, as Gleason (1983) suggests in the introduction to his semantic history of the concept, those who write on identity in relation to matters of immigration and ethnicity “use it casually; they assume the reader will know what they mean. And readers seem to feel that they do” (p. 910).

Within academia, then, the term has not been the reserve of a singular discipline, but has rather been a topic of interest for social and developmental psychologists, psychoanalysts, linguists, anthropologists, and sociologists alike, to name but a few (cf. Wetherell 2010). As Vignoles, Schwartz and Luyckx (2011) put it, “different bodies of research on identity have grown out of different theoretical, metatheoretical, and disciplinary traditions, have been pursued using differing types of methodology, and are focused on different levels of analysis” (p. 7). They describe an incident where an anonymous reviewer thought that one of the authors was using all the “wrong” references with regards to identity because they were writing within different disciplines (developmental psychology as compared to sociology and social psychology). Still, even within a single discipline and an apparently unitary tradition of thought, one can still find divergences and multiple conceptualisations with varying emphases in their theoretical frames, as Vryan, Adler and Adler (2003) show in the case of symbolic interactionist understandings of identity. Writing a dissertation for a doctorate in a multidisciplinary field of research such as ageing and later life, then, seems to make it all the more necessary to be precise about what it is I mean, and what I do *not* mean,¹⁸ when speaking about identity.

Definitions of identity and disciplinary differences

What does identity mean, then? Gleason (1983) traces the history of the term, locating its semantic roots in the Latin *idem*, “the same”, which has been used in English since the 16th century. It did not become a popular term in the social sciences until the 1950s. The spread of the term has been attributed to the work of psychologist Erik Erikson (see Gleason 1983; Vryan et al. 2003). The sociological founding fathers of today’s use of identity (i.e. George Herbert Mead

¹⁸ Addressing research that is dissimilar from the theoretical understanding used in this study is indeed necessary if one is to make sense of previous research and to understand the ways in which this study differs from others (see e.g. the literature review in Chapter 4). Not unlike the accusation of using the wrong references experienced by Vignoles and colleagues (2011), during the course of my work on this dissertation, I was often puzzled when reading articles on for instance identity in old(er) age because to me some of these works did not really seem to be about identity – or at least not what my understanding of identity was (and is). With a background primarily in the social sciences, the psychological language of ego integrity and self-esteem seemed rather alien. If nothing else, then, this exercise is needed to make sense of the work of others in the field of identity studies.

and Charles Horton Cooley; cf. Gleason 1983) did not in fact use the term themselves, but rather referred to “the self”. At its very basic, identity is about answering the question of “who we are” (the answer to which includes the question “who others think we are”, as we shall see). How this is interpreted however can take a vast variety of forms. Does it refer to who I am as a person, my character traits? Or is it about the roles one plays, as a mother, teacher, or researcher? Or perhaps membership in groups or categories, as woman, middle class, or German? In the broadest sense of how identity may be understood and how the question of who you are may be answered, all of these types of responses are equally valid. However, not all research on identity needs to be about all of these at once. Which kind of identity is focused upon tends to be influenced not least by the academic discipline from within which one operates. One can distinguish between for example personal identities, role identities, social identities, and collective identities. Further, identities can be thought of as constructed or discovered, as stable or fluid, as given or constructed, as process or structure, as internal, interactional or external, and so on and so forth. This multiplicity is another reason for the confusion that tends to surround the concept. Vignoles and colleagues (2011) suggest that many of the differences between theories – such as along the lines of stability and change, discovery or construction, personal or collective, using quantitative or qualitative methods – are more a matter of emphasis rather than fundamental disparities (which is why they pursue an “integrative view” of identity). In the following, I shall attempt to spell out precisely what it is I do and do *not* mean by identity, and also precisely what “kind” of identity that I seek to examine. One way of doing so is to start by distinguishing between different disciplinary approaches.

Disciplinary differences

Gleason (1983) quite succinctly describes the difference between psychological and sociological approaches as follows:

The two approaches differ most significantly on whether identity is to be understood as something internal that persists through change or as something ascribed from without that changes according to circumstance. For Erikson, the elements of interiority and continuity are indispensable. (...) identity is somehow ‘located’ in the deep psychic structure of the individual. Identity is shaped and modified by interaction between the individual and the surrounding social milieu, but, change and crisis notwithstanding, it is at bottom an ‘accrued confidence’ in the ‘inner sameness and continuity’ of one’s own being. The sociologists, on the other hand, tend to view identity as an artifact of interaction between the individual and society – it is essentially a matter of being designated by a certain name, accepting that designation, internalizing the role requirements accompanying it, and behaving according to those prescriptions.
(Gleason 1983:918)

The distinction is perhaps oversimplified, but it serves well as a starting point to mark one of the most crucial differences in approaches to identity: locating it as internal to the individual and stable, or as the product of interaction and changeable (cf. Gleason 1983). In a sense, then, it seems as though that while most conceptualisations of identity have a general understanding of internality and externality, there is considerable variation in emphasis as well as both the form and extent of the external part (cf. Vignoles et al. 2011).

The present dissertation is best described as a social scientific one, understanding identity (much like the sociologists in the above quote) as the product of interaction (rather than located within a deep psychic structure within the individual). To clarify further how this more social scientific understanding differs from a more psychological one, one might consider the work of Erik Erikson, as well as what Vignoles and colleagues (2011) describe as *individual or personal identity*. This refers to “aspects of self-definition at the level of the individual person” (p. 3), including “goals, values and beliefs”, “self-esteem and self-evaluation” and “one’s overall ‘life story’” (p. 3). Such research would focus on individual-level contents as well as individual-level processes with an emphasis on the agentic role of individuals in “creating or discovering” his or her identity. Developmental psychology, through the writings of Erikson, has formed the basis of much gerontological work on identity (see e.g. Brandstädter & Greve 1994; Coleman, Ivani-Chalian & Robinson 1999; Whitbourne 1999). Erikson (e.g. 1980), writing during the 1950s, has theorised about identity and the life cycle as a series of developmental stages, each of which offers particular challenges to identity construction¹⁹ (or psychological crises). The last stage of the life cycle (“mature age”) is characterised by a striving for integrity, where a lack of integrity entails despair, a feeling that time is too short to make amends. For Erikson (1980), “the term ‘identity’ (...) connotes both a persistent sameness within oneself (selfsameness) and a persistent sharing of some kind of essential character with others” (p. 109). He goes on to describe it as, among other things, at times referring to a “conscious sense of individual identity”, as an “unconscious striving for a continuity of personal character”, as “a criterion for the silent doings of ego synthesis”, and as “a maintenance of an inner solidarity with a group’s ideals and identity” (p. 109). The idea of sameness over time and striving for continuity are central here, while old age (or “mature age”) is regarded as a separate life stage and different from what came before. In the words of Wetherell (2010), “Erikson was interested in how identity as a sense of personal coherence, manifested as an authentic and stable self, might develop across the life-cycle. His writing was highly normative, and even utopian, with a clear notion of what would count as ‘good identity’” (p. 6). Erikson has been

¹⁹ This is an example of how the same terminology can be used to mean quite different things: while identity here is developed through different life stages, it is still rather stable and internal to the individual. This is not to be confused with social construction and the fluid, situationally defined understanding of identity in such approaches.

criticised elsewhere (see e.g. Bernard, Chambers & Granville 2000:13) for a lack of empirical work.

If the present dissertation departed from this understanding, it would seek to examine the psychological processes older migrants undergo in “mature age”, and presumably explore how their processes of seeking to achieve integrity would differ from non-migrants. This is quite a different endeavour than exploring when and in relation to whom the identity categories of old(er) age and migrancy seem to become meaningful as well as how these identity categories seem to be negotiated, which is the subject of this dissertation. Lawler (2014) suggests that a sociological approach “enables the development of an expanded and fundamentally social and collective approach to identity, in contrast to the individualist and psychologicistic perspectives that have tended to dominate discussions of this issue” (p. 3). Applied to the present study, one could say that the approach to identity taken here is a *social* one as contrasted to taking a psychological perspective.

Having established that this is *not* a study in developmental psychology, the line between social psychology and sociology seems to be more blurry than the clear contrast to developmental psychology. The reason for this is that both social psychologists and sociologists seem to draw upon some of the same theoretical inspiration when it comes to identity, such as the works of Cooley and Mead alluded to earlier. The theoretical work of Jenkins (2008) has been most useful in thinking about identity for this dissertation, serving as an overall frame of reference as it draws together social psychology and sociology together with social anthropology. As he puts it,

The argument summarised here relies heavily on the work of others and is not dramatically innovative. It combines perspectives – particularly from social anthropology, social psychology and sociology – which, as will occasionally become clear, sometimes frustrate me in their apparent mutual ignorance of each other. The goal is a synthesis that is greater than the sum of its parts, a theoretical space within which ‘self’ and ‘society’ can be understood as different abstractions from the same phenomenon, human behaviour and experience.
(Jenkins 2008:48)

The combination of social anthropology, social psychology and sociology could perhaps best be termed a *social scientific* approach. This social scientific approach then understands identity as the product of interaction in a dialectic interplay of how we (as individuals or groups) define ourselves internally and how we externally are defined by others. Jenkins (2008) describes this as the internal-external dialectic of identification, which is thought to be the same at both the individual and the group level. It builds upon a template offered by the works of Cooley and Mead, in which Jenkins finds that “an understanding emerges of selfhood as an ongoing and, in practice, simultaneous synthesis of (internal) self-

definition and the (external) definitions of oneself offered by others” (Jenkins 2008:40).²⁰ Both individual and collective identities are produced through this dialectic. This dialectic process can be understood as taking place both over time (in the long term) and in specific situations (in the short term).

The dialectic between internal and external definitions is understood as operating in simultaneous synthesis, meaning that the distinction between the internal and the external is primarily analytical. Nevertheless, identification depends on both parts: “what people think of us is no less significant than what we think about ourselves. It is not enough to simply assert an identity; that assertion must also be validated, or not, by those with whom we have dealings” (Jenkins 2008:42). This means that it is not enough to claim to *not* be old(er), or *not* be an (im)migrant: such claims need to be validated by others. Likewise, others might define one as old(er) or as an (im)migrant, regardless of whether or not one thinks of oneself in such terms.

Definitions

Now let us return to the question of what it is that identity can and does mean. Vignoles and colleagues (2011) define identity as involving “people’s explicit or implicit responses to the question: ‘who are you?’” (p. 2). Further, as answers can be both individual and plural, and the question can be self-reflexive or posed in a group discussion,

Identity comprises not only ‘who you think you are’ (individually or collectively), but also ‘who you act as being’ in interpersonal and intergroup interactions – and the social recognition or otherwise that these actions receive from other individuals or groups.
(Vignoles et al. 2011:2)

The answer to the question of who you are can in other words be expressed both in individual terms (as a type of person) and in collective terms (as member of a group). “Acting as being” places identity in interaction (rather than internal to the individual), where one presents oneself in the way that one wants to be seen (e.g. through impression management, cf. Goffman 1959). This includes an audience that can identify the individual as a particular type of person or member of a group, which reflects the internal-external dialectic of identification, as self-definitions and definitions by others interplay.

To add to this, Vryan and colleagues (2003) have a way of clarifying some of the ways in which approaches towards identity may differ, even within an apparently singular theoretical tradition as that of symbolic interactionism. They

²⁰ As Scott (2015) describes it, Cooley’s (1902) concept of the Looking Glass Self has three elements: “imagining how we appear to others, imagining how they might judge us, and the resultant self-feelings, such as pride and shame. This in turn shows that the self is a dynamic process, which is never complete: we do not simply ‘have’ selves but rather ‘do’ or ‘make’ (and re-make) them, through constant reflection” (Scott 2015:5, emphasis in original).

suggest that definitions of the term identity within symbolic interactionism do vary, but may basically be regarded as a component of (but not equivalent to) the self. Definitions are however more social as identity “indicates a specific location within some form of social structure, whether that structure is seen as situational and transient or as an enduring effect of socially structured relations” (p. 368). Interactionist understandings seem to take an interest in the emergence of identities in face-to-face situations. Vryan and colleagues (2003:367-368) cite the work of Stone (1962) as a working definition of identity:

Almost all writers using the term imply that identity establishes *what* and *where* the person is in social terms. It is not a substitute word for ‘self’. Instead, when one has identity, he is *situated* – that is, cast in the shape of a social object by the acknowledgement of his participation or membership in social relations. One’s identity is established when others *place* him as a social object by assigning him the same words of identity that he appropriates for himself or *announces*. It is in the coincidence of placements and announcements that identity becomes a meaning of the self.

(Stone 1962:93, emphasis in original)

In this dissertation, identity is then understood in *social* terms rather than internal to the mind. It is understood as placing one on a social map (as young[er] or old[er], as native or [im]migrant) through the dialectic of (internal) self-definition and (external) definition by others: it is when the two overlap (or *coincide*, in Stone’s words) that identity is accomplished or becomes meaningful. Similarly, Jenkins suggests:

As a very basic starting point, identity is the human capacity – rooted in language – to know ‘who’s who’ (and hence ‘what’s what’). This involves knowing who we are, knowing who others are, them knowing who we are, us knowing who they think we are, and so on: a multi-dimensional classification or mapping of the human world and our places in it, as individuals and as members of collectivities. (...) It is a process – *identification* – not a ‘thing’. It is not something that one can *have*, or not; it is something that one *does*.

(Jenkins 2008:5, emphasis in original)

Again, identity is accomplished in a complex interplay of internal and external definitions: us knowing who we are and others knowing who we are, and us knowing who they think we are. It is neither a unidimensional self-assertion nor pure ascription. It is through this conceptualisation that identity is approached in this dissertation. In that sense, the accomplishment of identities as old(er) (or not) and (im)migrant (or not) depends on the achievement of an overlap (or coincidence) of internal self-definitions and external definitions by others, which processes of *negotiation* may (or may not) lead to. From such an understanding, neither an individual claim nor an external categorisation (as old[er], as

[im]migrant) suffice for such identities to be accomplished. The notion that identities are accomplished through a process of negotiation, which is central to the present study's approach to identity, will be discussed at greater length in a separate section later in this chapter.

The (re)conceptualisation of identity in terms of *identification*, which also could be seen in the previous citation, has been discussed by several scholars. Hall suggested as early as in 1989 that identity needs to be reconceptualised as a process of identification, something that happens over time and is never stable, but rather is subject to how history and difference play out.

I don't want to bore you autobiographically, but I could tell you something about the process of my own identification. If I think about who I am, I have been – in my much too long experience – several identities. And most of the identities that I have been I've only known about not because of something deep inside me – the real self – but because of how other people have recognized me.

(Hall 1989:15)

The quote suggests both how identity may be (re)conceptualised as a process and how part of the accomplishment of an identity lies in external definition, that is, in how others regard us (and how we think that others may perceive us). In England in the 1950s, Hall writes he became an “immigrant” after having moved there from Jamaica. In the 1960s and 1970s (i.e. the era of the Civil Rights Movement in the USA), he came to be “Black” (Hall 1989). This illustrates how identities can be constructed and emergent in different contexts, both over time and in different contexts. Similarly, older migrants may come to be seen as (im)migrants (and indeed as old[er]) and identify themselves in that manner, too. This is where the significance of the social context as discussed in Chapter 2 comes into the picture, as different identity categories are understood as potentially constructed differently both at different times and in different contexts.

To continue with the theme of speaking of identification (rather than identity), Bauman (2001) suggests the following:

Perhaps instead of talking about identities, inherited or acquired, it would be more in keeping with the realities of the globalising world to speak of *identification*, a never-ending, always incomplete, unfinished and open-ended activity in which we all, by necessity or by choice, are engaged.

(Bauman 2001:129, emphasis in original)

Bauman here suggests that identification is an activity characterised by incompleteness, unfinished and open-ended, rather than speaking of *identities* as inherited or acquired. Jenkins (e.g. 2008) similarly suggests that the term “identification” has an advantage as compared to “identity” insofar as it by definition focuses on the processual nature of identities as shaped in interaction.

However, “while replacing ‘identity’ with ‘identification’ is an alternative that has its attractions, in that it refers explicitly to process, it isn’t much of an improvement, because it is stylistically so cumbersome” (Jenkins 2008:14). What matters instead is that we are careful in using it: “since both ‘identity’ and ‘identification’ are nouns, and therefore potentially vulnerable to reification, what matters most is how we write and talk about them, not an artificial and mutually exclusive choice between them” (Jenkins 2008:14-15). Jenkins (1997, 2003 & 2008), then, conceptualises identity as a *process* as opposed to a “thing”, a constant being and becoming: identities are understood as shaped in social interaction. The distinction between identity as a process as opposed to a “thing” that is acquired or inherited is important as it spells out some of the main differences between essentialist and social constructionist approaches, as will be discussed in the next section. The present study follows Bauman and Jenkins insofar as identity is not conceptualised as a “thing” that may be inherited or acquired, but rather in terms of a process of identification shaped through social processes in the interplay of internal and external definitions. This is why the present work asks about when it is (in what situations) and in relation to whom the identity categories of old(er) age and migrancy seem to become *meaningful for identification*.

Central to the approach to identity used in this study is the internal-external dialectic of identification, through which Jenkins (e.g. 1997 & 2003) describes the process of situational definition of identities. In the process of *internal* definition, actors signal to in- or out-group members a self-definition of their identity. This is necessarily social as it presupposes an audience and an externally derived framework of meaning. This process may also be expressed in terms of claiming or asserting an identity. In the process of *external* definition, one or several persons define the other(s) as X, Y or Z. This may be an affirmation of their own self-definition, or an imposition that affects their social experience. It is embedded in social relationships, power and authority. This process may also be expressed in terms of assigning or ascribing identities. This kind of categorisation influences identities in several ways, as it can be internalised and assimilated in part or in whole. The same basic process operates both on the individual and on the group level. That is to say, both an individual identity and a group identity is understood as situationally defined through the dialectic interplay of internal and external definition (or assertion and ascription).

The same basic process of the internal-external dialectic is understood as holding for individual members of the collectivities that are categorised: that is, *individuals* might be categorised (or externally defined) as old(er) or as (im)migrants through the same basic processes. How collectivities are defined then has consequences for the individuals presumed to belong to such a collectivity. Again, the social constructions of old(er) age and migrancy as discussed in Chapter 2 seem to inform how the related collectivities (namely older people, Swedes and [im]migrants) are constructed, which in turn is likely

to have consequences for the individual. The identity categories of old(er) age and migrancy can be understood as both individual and collective identities, namely pertaining both to how one may think of oneself individually and to potential group membership.

To add to this, on the group level, Jenkins suggests that group identities such as being “Swedish” are primarily internal definitions (or asserted, claimed, and confirmed by outsiders). In contrast, categories such as that of “immigrant” are understood as primarily external definitions (or ascribed). Such external definitions are furthermore understood as entangled in relations of power and may through various processes come to be adapted by those who are defined as such (e.g. Jenkins 1997 & 2003). Two crucial points need to be noted however. Firstly, the distinction between group and category is primarily analytical, which means both that categories may be claimed and group identities ascribed and that the difference (between a group and a category) in practice is not always as clear cut as it may appear. Secondly, outcomes will depend on context. Jenkins writes in the United Kingdom, where the term “immigrant” only applies for the time immediately after arrival, after which one comes to be regarded as “ethnic minority”. In the Swedish context, the label of “immigrant” remains regardless of how long one has lived in the country. Indeed, even children who never migrated themselves become “second generation *immigrants*”, as was explained in the preceding chapter (cf. e.g. Svanberg & Tydén 2005). This suggests that the identity category of migrancy in this specific context may very well form part of how one (internally) thinks of oneself, rather than by definition always being primarily an external categorisation (as will be seen e.g. in Chapter 8). Similarly, one may claim to be old(er), rather than necessarily perceiving oneself as only being regarded as such by others (as will be seen e.g. in Chapter 6).

As previously mentioned, the distinction between the internal and external is primarily analytical: the dialectic is understood as perpetually in motion as both influence one another, to the effect that the dialectic is best understood as a *synthesis* rather than a duality. However, for the purpose of empirical research, this conceptualisation needs to be operationalised. Examining how older migrants negotiate the identity categories of old(er) age and migrancy then includes explorations of both when such identities are claimed (i.e. internal definitions), and situations where interviewees propose that others ascribe identities as old(er) or (im)migrants to them (i.e. external definitions). As will become clear in Chapter 5 on Methodology as well as in the empirical chapters that follow thereafter, the analytical distinction has been temporarily turned into a duality in this study by way of asking interviewees both about situations where they think of themselves (internally) as old(er) and/or as (im)migrants (or non-Swedes) and about situations where they think they are regarded (or treated) by others (externally) as old(er) and/or as (im)migrants (or non-Swedes). The internal and the external may also be understood as two sides of the same coin,

not least since questions about one turn out to evoke answers pertaining to the other.

As the reader may have gathered, old(er) age and migrancy are here referred to as identity *categories*. Other writers have referred to dimensions such as gender, ethnicity, “race”, class and so on as social positions (e.g. Hollander, Renfrow & Howard 2011), social locations (e.g. Calasanti 2003), social divisions (e.g. Yuval-Davis 2006), or “dimensions of the social world” (Chancer & Watkins 2006). Cornell and Hartmann (2007) speak of ethnic and racial *identities*. Lawler (2014) uses the term identity categories to describe public manifestations of identity as compared to a more personal reflective and reflexive sense of who one is (but seeks to combine both aspects, as no-one belongs to just one category): “part of people’s shared identities involves identity ‘categories’: social categories, formed on the basis of social divisions” (Lawler 2014:10). For the context of this study, terms such as “position”, “location” and “division” seem too heavily burdened by association with inequality and injustice (as some works using such terminology would suggest: e.g. Anthias 1998 or Yuval-Davis 2006). Since the main interest here is in *identity* through negotiation and the interplay of self-definition and definition by others (which one indeed may term categorisation), the term *identity categories* seems most suiting. As will be explained (see section addressing the structural level), however, this is not to say that they are free from power structures.

Rather than approaching identity in terms of a totality (where it indeed may mean “too much”, cf. Brubaker & Cooper 2000:1), the present study focuses specifically on old(er) age and migrancy as *identity categories*. Instead of attempting to grasp the totality of who older migrants think they “are”, focus lies on these two identities that socially may (or indeed may not) be claimed by or ascribed to the individuals studied here. One of the reasons for conceptualising old(er) age and migrancy as identity categories is that processes of identification are understood as deeply intertwined with processes of categorisation, where old(er) age and migrancy present two grounds upon which one may be categorised (to be discussed further in a later section of this chapter). What is in focus in the present study is then *not* identity in its broadest sense attempting to answer “who one is”. Rather, it focuses *specifically* on old(er) age and migrancy, *when* these identity categories form part of the answer to “who one is”, in relation to *whom* this may be so, and *how* such identifications may be negotiated in the dialectic of internal and external definitions.

Understanding identity categories in an essentialist, circumstantialist and constructionist manner

The previous sections have presented the debate surrounding the concept of identity, outlined some of the disciplinary differences and how identity can be both defined and understood. Here, focus lies on how identity categories (such

as ethnicity and gender) have been approached in the social sciences. The three strands that will be discussed in turn are essentialism, circumstantialism (also known as structuralism) and social constructionism.²¹ In a theoretical piece arguing for the expansion of the gerontological imagination regarding ethnicity, Torres (2015a) presents these three lenses on ethnicity to show how they can illuminate ethnicity in gerontological work in different ways, a question to which I will return. Here I primarily draw upon the work of Cornell and Hartmann (2007, 2nd ed.; 1st ed. published 1998) to discuss these three alternative theoretical conceptualisations of identity categories. While their focus is on ethnic and racial identities, the same three distinctions have been presented with a focus on gender by Hollander, Renfrow and Howard (2011, 2nd ed; 1st ed. by Howard & Hollander published 1997).²² Throughout the discussion, I will explain what the different understandings entail when applied to old(er) age and migrancy (rather than gender and ethnicity), how each perspective relates to this study, and finally what all of this means for how old(er) age and migrancy as identity categories are (and are not) understood in the present work. Again, including a discussion of other perspectives serve to clarify the understanding employed in this study, and in this case also serves to support the dissertation's second partial aim of exploring the contribution a social constructionist lens may make (as will be discussed in the final chapter, Chapter 11).

The *essentialist* perspective represents “the idea that ethnic and racial identities are fixed, fundamental, and rooted in the unchangeable circumstances of birth” (Cornell & Hartmann 2007:51). One is born into an ethnic group and one's ethnic identity is assumed to be given and seen as stable, unchangeable, and constant between different times and situations. Ethnicity is then seen as deeply rooted in (metaphorical) blood ties and enduring, central to who one is. Its power lies in the importance given to such primordial attachments, “not in the ‘givens’ of social life, but in the significance group members give to them” (Cornell & Hartmann 2007:58). Hence “perception and attribution are more important than the presence or absence of a genuine blood connection” (ibid.). This notion lies close to everyday conceptions of ethnicity, to the way we as laymen tend to talk about different (ethnic) groups (and their members) as *being* a certain way, and how many people tend to experience their identities (see e.g. Cornell & Hartmann 2007:95, more on this later). For gender, an essentialist

²¹ Let it briefly be noted that in the case of ethnicity, these strands can be understood against the backdrop of assimilationist assumptions, namely the expectation that ethnicity would decrease in importance over the course of the 20th century. They form answers to the question of why it is that ethnicity indeed continues to play a role (see e.g. Cornell & Hartmann 2007). To go back further in time in the development of theories of ethnicity however seems to go beyond the scope and intentions of the present chapter.

²² It is hereby duly noted that the notion of identity as done or accomplished originates from gender studies through the seminal work of West and Zimmerman on *Doing Gender* first published in 1987. Referring to the second editions of the works by Cornell and Hartmann as well as Hollander, Renfrow and Howard runs the risk of misrepresenting the historical sequence of theoretical development in the fields of ethnic studies and gender studies.

approach holds that “innate, stable differences between the sexes shape divergent social behaviours” (Hollander et al. 2011:34). Research on gender that holds an essentialist view (although this rarely is explicitly named so) uses sex as a variable where subjects are categorised into males and females, and differences between the two are labelled gender differences: “this approach treats sex and gender as one and the same; sex/gender is conceptualized as a stable, innate, bipolar property of individuals” (Hollander et al. 2011:34). In such research, Hollander and colleagues find that sex differences tend to be untheorised and other social and contextual factors are not explored. Essentialism has been criticised for being too deterministic and not leaving much room for change (see e.g. Cornell & Hartmann 2007). Another weakness of essentialism is that it cannot account for change and variation, or for how some individuals can identify with several ethnic groups at once, or with none. A strength that however tends to be overlooked is that it explains the emotional charge that ethnic identity can have (see e.g. Cornell & Hartmann 2007:58). The focus is then on given-ness, stability and permanence: a matter of *being* young/old, men/women, hetero-/homosexual, natives/(im)migrants, lower/upper class, able-bodied/disabled, the same at all times and in all situations.

Using such an approach would mean that an exploration of identity among older migrants would take both old(er) age and migrancy as given points of departure, as the stable and innate properties of these individuals, taking for granted that *being* old(er) and *being* (im)migrants were (central) parts of who they are (or how they see themselves and are seen by others). Rather than asking if, when and how old(er) age and migrancy indeed become meaningful for identification, the question would be what it is like to *be* an older migrant, or how older migrants experience *being* old(er) and *being* (im)migrants. To add to this, in terms of the internal-external dialectic of identification, the essentialist perspective gives little heed to external definition since identities are primarily internal (i.e. the innate properties of individuals). Having said all that, some might argue that the present dissertation not least by way of failing to ask if (by way of focusing on when, who and how) also takes for granted that old(er) age and migrancy are the given properties of the individuals studied. However, by asking when and how, the very starting point is that the answer very well may be no, and that there are various ways of reasoning as to why this is so (as will be seen in Chapters 7 & 9). Given the interest in the negotiation of identity categories, this study is furthermore interested not just in identifications with old(er) age and migrancy, but also in disidentifications and other forms of distancing from these identity categories such as boundary work (concepts that will be discussed further later in this chapter).

The *circumstantialist* (or structuralist) approach regards context and situation as paramount for identities. Unlike the essentialist approach, identities are not seen as inherently meaningful independent of such situations where they become

significant. Ethnic groups then are interest groups: the reason they exist is not that they have deeply rooted, natural ties, but that they have something to gain and common interests to pursue by organising themselves as groups. This follows a utilitarian logic where actors may emphasise their ethnicity when they have something to gain, and conversely play it down if they have something to lose, since “any identity is potentially a resource or a handicap; it has potential benefits and potential costs” (Cornell & Hartmann 2007:59) depending on context and situation.

In short, by the circumstantialist account, individuals and groups emphasize their own ethnic or racial identities when such identities are in some way advantageous to them. They emphasize the ethnic or racial identities of others when it is advantageous to set those others apart or to establish a boundary between those viewed as eligible for certain goods and those viewed as ineligible. Thus, they might deny persons from one group category access to jobs or housing or schools when it is advantageous to do so but ignore such categories when circumstances change and other interests, poorly served by an ethnic or racial boundary, come to the fore.

(Cornell & Hartmann 2007:61)

Instead of being stable and given (as is the case in the essentialist account), from a circumstantialist view identities are fluid and contingent on situation and context. Importantly, as can be seen in this quote, it is not just one's own identity one might emphasise for gainful purposes, but also that of *others* so as to exclude them from access to a (limited) resource. This highlights the role of power as well as the workings of the internal-external dialectic of identification. In the case of gender, as Hollander and colleagues (2011) put it, “from a structural perspective, observed differences between women and men, whether in personality characteristics, interactional styles, educational levels, or income, are attributable to the differential access of women and men to material and social resources rather than to deep-seated traits or biological factors” (p. 52). In addition, “a structural approach to gender, then, examines the gendered distribution of resources in social institutions (from small groups, such as families, to large organizations, to society itself) and demonstrates how these resources shape gendered behaviors” (Hollander et al. 2011:51). Gender identities and their content are then understood as the product of the structural context rather than as inherent properties of individuals. Finally, from this perspective, “ethnic and racial groups are largely the products of concrete social and historical situations that – for a variety of reasons – heighten or reduce the salience and/or the utility of such identities in the lives of individuals and groups” (Cornell & Hartmann 2007:63). One critique of circumstantialism is that its utilitarian focus leads it to fall short of accounting for the sentiments that actors may hold towards their ethnicity for instance (see e.g. Cornell & Hartmann

2007). The focus is then on resources and circumstance: it becomes a question of *having* youth/old(er) age, man-/womanhood, hetero-/homosexuality, nativeness/migrancy, lower/upper class-ness, able-bodiedness/disability, which, depending on context and circumstance, gives differential access to resources (where any identity indeed can be either an asset or a handicap, depending on the context). This also has consequences for the individual's room for manoeuvre.

Using such an approach for the study of the identity categories of old(er) age and migrancy offers several options: an exploration of the structural features that give meaning (or relevance) to identities as old(er) and (im)migrant, or perhaps an examination of what types of circumstances or situations render old(er) age and migrancy advantageous or disadvantageous to individuals (or groups). This differs from the present dissertation as despite its interest in the whens and hows of identification, it is not the utility (or conversely the uselessness) of identities as old(er) or (im)migrant that is of interest, nor the structural features of the present historical context. Rather, it is the questions of when (in what situations) and in relation to whom old(er) age and migrancy seem to be claimed or ascribed, without ulterior motives by definition pertaining to utility (which, however, is not to say that individuals themselves might not express such notions). Finally, in terms of the internal-external dialectic of identification, the circumstantialist perspective considers both sides: internal definitions can be emphasised or downplayed, just as external definitions that others ascribe one (as individual or group) can significantly impact on one's access to resources.

Finally, the *social constructionist* approach builds upon the previous two. It takes some elements of both essentialism and circumstantialism and combines them into a conceptualisation that regards identities as the situationally defined and contextually bound result of the interplay between self-definitions and definitions by others, accomplished socially in interaction. Importantly, this includes an acknowledgement of the potential strength of perceived metaphorical blood ties:

A constructionism that does not take the primordial metaphor into account loses touch not only with how ordinary human beings in many cases experience their own identities but also with much of what is most potent, distinctive, and revealing about ethnic and racial phenomena.
(Cornell & Hartman 2007:95)

This means that while identity from a social constructionist perspective is not seen as stable and given and rooted in the unchangeable circumstances of birth, it acknowledges that people very well may perceive it as such. In other words, the metaphor of primordialism in the essentialist account forms a part of the social construction of identities (or, rather, the metaphor is constructed socially).

In the internal-external dialectic, this means that essentialist understandings can be found both in actors' self-definitions (i.e. that they think of their identities as old[er] or [im]migrant as stable, given and innate) and in how they experience that others regard them (i.e. as old[er] by virtue of e.g. their chronological age, or as [im]migrants because of their supposed blood ties or having been born in another country). This will be discussed further in relation to this study's sample selection (see Chapter 5).

The social constructionist perspective emphasises the dialectic of internal and external definition, which also can be expressed in terms of assignment and assertion: different identities may to varying extents be assigned (ascribed) by others or asserted (claimed) by actors themselves in different situations, and their accomplishment lies in the interplay (or coincidence) between the two (Cornell & Hartmann 2007). Hollander and colleagues (2011, among others) refer to this approach as *doing gender* (cf. West & Zimmerman 2002),²³ where gender is accomplished and sustained through social interaction, as will be addressed further in short. One could argue that social constructionism adapts the "best" elements of both essentialism and circumstantialism, managing to circumvent some of their criticisms. However, critics have pointed to an overemphasis on individual agency in this approach (see e.g. Hollander et al. 2011:50), which does not always properly take social structural constraints or power inequalities into account.

What would a social constructionist approach towards old(er) age and migrancy mean, then? Understanding old(er) age as socially constructed and as something that one *does* means that it is not regarded as inherently given through chronological age, but instead something that for instance is accomplished through talk and in interaction (see e.g. Coupland et al. 1991, Nikander 2000 or Ylännö-McEwen 1999 for examples). Likewise, migrancy from a social constructionist perspective is not the inherent property of individuals by virtue of their blood ties connecting them to another place and another group of people, but rather is accomplished in interaction when individuals come to be seen as (im)migrants and define themselves that way (see e.g. Clary-Lemon 2010 or Kumsa 2006 for examples). The focus is then on changeability and social interaction: a matter of *doing* youth/old(er) age, masculinity/femininity, hetero-/homosexuality, nativeness/migrancy, lower/upper class-ness, able-bodiedness/disability, as each is accomplished in the interplay of self-definition and definition by others, different(ial)ly in different situations.

A social constructionist understanding of old(er) age and migrancy as identity categories then means that they are not seen as innate properties of individuals, nor as the chance products of utility-driven circumstances, but rather

²³ Which however is not to be confused with the performativity proposed by Butler (e.g. 1990), as they suggest their work has been misread as a "social science version of Judith Butler's theory of gender performativity" (Fenstermaker & West 2002b:209).

as the result of the interplay of self-definitions and definitions by others, which are situationally defined and can vary between different contexts. Such variation can also be expressed in terms of *thick* and *thin* ethnicity (or identity), where thick describes an identity that is important and plays a central role in the social life of the individual, whereas a thin identity may present a more shallow attachment and not organise the individual's social life (see e.g. Cornell & Hartmann 2007). In other words, the assumption is that old(er) age and migrancy *may* be part of how one thinks of oneself and how others think of one in some situations but *not* in others, and that they are accomplished in the interplay between internal and external definitions (rather than givens).

Torres (2015a) suggests that since much gerontological work on ethnicity seems to have been informed by an essentialist perspective,

Gerontologists need, in other words, to shift their attention from *the what of ethnicity*, which is what the essentialist/primordialist perspective focuses on, *to the when and how of ethnicity*, which is what the social constructionist perspective draws attention to (i.e. under which circumstances and within which contexts are these backgrounds expected to mean something, to whom are they expected to mean something and how?).

(Torres 2015b:282, emphasis in original; cf. Torres 2015a:950)

A social constructionist understanding, which has been the most common in the social sciences in recent decades, then has the potential to advance gerontological research on ethnicity by way of shifting focus from the *what* of ethnicity (i.e. “what ethnic backgrounds mean to different old age and age-related issues”, Torres 2015a:950) to the *when and how* of ethnicity (as explicated in the above quote). The same argument can be framed in terms of old(er) age and migrancy (rather than ethnicity): instead of focusing on the *what* of old(er) age and the *what* of migrancy (i.e. what old[er] age and a migratory background may mean for who one “is”), it is perhaps time to shift our attention to the *whens* and *hows* of old(er) age and migrancy (i.e. under which circumstances and within which contexts these identity categories may mean something and how). This means that the present study is *not* primarily concerned with the *whats* of old(er) age and migrancy, but rather with the *whens* and *hows* of such identifications. While answers to the question of *what* old(er) age or migrancy may mean to some extent emerge from the empirical material as identity categories are negotiated, the main focus of analysis lies on the questions of *when* and in relation to *whom* old(er) age and migrancy seem to become meaningful for identification, and *how* they seem to be negotiated. The remainder of this chapter is dedicated to elaborating in greater detail what social constructionism means for the study of identity categories in this dissertation, including the construction of identities at the levels of structure and interaction.

A social constructionist approach to identity and identity categories

The basics of social constructionism

At this point it seems necessary to say a few more words on social constructionism, as this perspective is central to how the subject of research has been approached in the present work. One of the basic ideas can be summarised as follows: "If men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences" (Thomas & Thomas 1928:572). This is known as the Thomas theorem, and while it may not have been intended as a precursor of social constructionism, its sentiment is well in line with the overall idea of the perspective. In their seminal work *The Social Construction of Reality*, Berger and Luckmann (1966) present "a treatise in the sociology of knowledge" which suggests that "reality" (and everything we know about it) is not objectively given, but rather socially constructed by humans in a dialectic process.

The relationship between man, the producer, and the social world, his product, is and remains a dialectical one. That is, man (not, of course, in isolation but in his collectivities) and his social world interact with each other. The product acts back upon the producer.

(Berger & Luckmann 1966:78)

What we perceive as objectively true and real comes to be seen as such through processes of externalisation, objectivation and internalisation. *Externalisation* occurs through our actions in the world, *objectivation* is the process by which (humanly created) institutions come to be seen as objective, and *internalisation* is the process by which we (through socialisation) learn about the (social) world we live in, as well as who we are within it (Berger & Luckmann 1966). These three processes occur simultaneously, to the effect that we continuously create and re-create the world that we live in. For this study, then, rather than an apparent objective reality of old(er) age and migrancy, it is the construction of these identity categories as significant for identity that is in focus. As was suggested in Chapter 2, the categories of old(er) age and migrancy (as well as "elderly immigrants") are not understood as objectively given, but as socially constructed. This means among other things that the distinctions between young(er) and old(er) as well as between natives and (im)migrants come to be *seen as* objectively true and real through the processes described above (i.e. externalisation, objectivation and internalisation). It also means that who is regarded as belonging to a given category is not based upon objective criteria, but rather that these criteria are constructed socially. This becomes apparent not least when considering that such categories may be defined differently in different social contexts (be it historical or cultural), as was suggested in Chapter 2.

According to Berger and Luckmann themselves, their "treatise" is explicitly concerned only with ontology, not methodology or epistemology. Rather, as they state, their argument is "that reality is socially constructed and that the sociology

of knowledge must analyse the process in which this occurs” (Berger & Luckmann 1966:13). Looking beyond this original work and into what has been written on social constructionism since, in the absence of a “social constructionist epistemology” or a “social constructionist methodology”, it might seem more appropriate to speak of social constructionisms rather than a unified whole. Delanty and Strydom (2003) distinguish between three forms social constructionism (or constructivism, as they call it): one focusing on the social construction of the social world in interaction (following Berger and Luckmann), one focusing on the social construction of science by actors, and one focusing on cognitive construction taking place in a relationship between a system and its environment. Burr (2003) agrees with other writers in that there is no singular definition of social constructionism. However, she sees a family resemblance and a sufficient amount of recurring features to be able to present a general model of social constructionism with several key assumptions, which one might think of as “something like ‘things you would absolutely have to believe in order to be a social constructionist’” (Burr 2003:2). Among the general tenets which are relevant to the ways in which the present study has been framed are: a critical stance towards taken-for-granted knowledge (including a challenge to the notion that conventional knowledge is based upon objective observation); historical and cultural specificity of our understandings; knowledge as sustained by social processes (such as social interaction between people); anti-essentialism (seeing no essences in people or things that make them what they are); questioning realism (or the idea that our knowledge is a direct perception of reality: there are no objective facts); and viewing language as central both by way of being a precondition for thought, and as a form of social action (as well as being the central focus of much research). Burr traces the roots of social constructionism to postmodernism, a rejection of the idea of an ultimate truth as well as a rejection of grand theories, in favour of multiplicity and variety of “situation-dependent ways of life” (Burr 2003:12).

The social constructionist lens employed in this dissertation has several implications, ranging from the approach taken to research as a whole, how the central concepts are understood, how empirical research is carried out, how empirical material is analysed, and how one may report the findings in writing. Several of these aspects will be discussed further in Chapter 5 (on Methodology). What needs to be clarified at this point is that the present study does *not* presume that knowledge is based upon objective observation or a direct perception of reality. This means not least that the aim here is *not* to uncover some ultimate (objective) truth, or to arrive at the core essences of old(er) age and migrancy, or to learn what it *really* is like to *be* an older migrant, since all of this would imply an essentialist understanding of identities on the one hand, and a modernist approach to (an ultimate) truth on the other. In this study, the identity categories themselves are understood as socially constructed and the processes whereby

they gain meaning are also considered to be social. The aim is then rather to explore when it is (i.e. in what situations) and in relation to whom old(er) age and migrancy seem to become meaningful, and how these identity categories seem to be negotiated. As will be seen, language plays a part in this as how we speak about ourselves and others conveys something about how we think about who we are and who others are.²⁴ Following the social constructionist (and postmodernist) line of thought, grand narratives are rejected in favour of acknowledging the provisional, contestable and context-bound character of knowledge (see e.g. Burr 2003; Kvale & Brinkmann 2009). Further, interest lies in the process of construction itself and in how meanings seem to be negotiated.

Before carrying on with the presentation and discussion of the social constructionist frame used in this study, some further clarifications seem necessary. Much like the concept of identity, the notion of social constructionism has also been overused and sometimes been used carelessly. There is for example always a risk of simply stating that one regards one thing or another as socially constructed, only to go on to nevertheless treat it as though it was objectively given and a “thing”. It is not least this phenomenon that inspired Hacking to write the book *The Social Construction of What?* (1999) in which he questions the multiple ways in which social constructionism sometimes is used. One of the sources of confusion stems from a tendency to be imprecise with regards to exactly what is seen as socially constructed, where it is constructed and by whom. In the present study, the identity categories of old(er) age and migrancy (=what) are regarded as socially constructed at different sites (=where, see next section) by social actors (i.e. individuals, =who). Burr (1998) in a similar vein attempts to dismantle the debate between realists and relativists by way of pointing to some of the confusions that arise from different understandings of what it is that is socially constructed and what the implications are. She suggests that “reality” as socially constructed tends to be interpreted in three different manners, where the first equals reality to *truth* where the opposite is falsehood, the second equals reality to *materiality* where the opposite is illusion, and the third equals reality to *essence* where the opposite is construction. Burr suggests that problems tend to arise when the social construction of reality in the sense of essence becomes confused with the other two, namely when it is taken to mean that social construction implies that whatever is constructed is *false* rather than true or an *illusion* rather than material. In the present study, then, social construction does *not* mean that the identity categories of old(er) age and migrancy are false or illusions, but rather that they are not essential(ist) givens. What does all of this mean for identity and identity categories, then?

²⁴ Much has been written on discursive constructionism (such as e.g. Potter & Wetherell 1987), also in relation to identity (see e.g. Benwell & Stokoe 2006; Harré 1991). While the role of language for the construction of identities is considered relevant for the present dissertation, this is not primarily a study of discourse.

Construction sites

One of the first questions that needs to be addressed is where or on what level it is that identity construction takes place. Jenkins (e.g. 2000 & 2008), drawing upon the work of both Goffman and Giddens, identifies three orders in which categorisations take place (and identities are constructed). The *individual* order refers to what goes on in people's minds. The *interaction* order refers to what goes on between people. The *institutional* order refers to established ways of doing things. These three are intrinsically interlinked and by no means separate. They are useful tools for understanding that the categorisations that take place in all orders have significance for people's identities, as identifications are made at several levels. Individuals can come across categorisations as old(er) or (im)migrant in all three orders: in their own and others' minds, in interaction with other people, and in encountering various institutions or established ways of doing things. As will be seen in the empirical material of the present study, individuals similarly seem to negotiate the identity categories of old(er) age and migrancy with themselves (i.e. in their minds, albeit shared with the interviewer), with others in social situations (including the interviewer in the interview situation, i.e. what goes on between people), and with a generalised idea of others in society and what they seem to think about old(er) people and (im)migrants (i.e. established ways of regarding them).

Further, identities are constructed and negotiated at different sites, which Cornell and Hartmann (2007) term *construction sites*: the six critical sites of politics, labour markets, residential space, social institutions, culture, and daily experience.

Each site is an arena in which identity construction occurs. It is a place where social actors make claims, define one another, jockey for position, eliminate ties that encourage or discourage, create or transform, and reproduce or ignore identities. (...) Our concern is with the arenas where boundaries are established, where some identities become more elaborate or comprehensive and some less, and where patterns of intergroup stratification are established or change, altering the advantages and disadvantages that different identities carry.

(Cornell & Hartmann 2007:170)

In other words, identities are constructed at different levels (both in interaction and structurally) and at different sites. They are furthermore not neutral but embedded in power structures, where some identities entail advantages and others disadvantages, and relations between groups (or categories) are stratified. Not least because both those who are presumed to belong to the category of old(er) people and those who are presumed to belong to the category of (im)migrants are in the minority in society, stratification plays out in such a way that these categories (albeit context-bound, see Chapter 2) seem to generally tend to be relatively less empowered. As could be seen in the discussion of the construction of the category of "elderly immigrants" in Sweden, those presumed

to be included in the category had little to do with its construction (see Ronström 2002, see Chapter 2). To add to this, as explicated in the previously cited quote, identity is constructed at different sites and social actors make claims and define one another, where identities are created or transformed, reproduced or ignored, and patterns of stratification are established or changed: the emphasis lies on change and process rather than continuity and fixity.

All of these sites are interlinked and identity construction tends to take place simultaneously in several orders (Cornell & Hartmann 2007). Identities as old(er) and as (im)migrant (or indeed as "elderly immigrant") are not constructed only in culture, only in institutions, or only in politics: they are all interlinked. The main site in focus for the present dissertation is that of daily experience:

Daily experience thus constitutes a critical site in which identities are delineated, defined, and positioned. From subtle, perhaps unconscious, and supposedly innocent phenomena such as words, names, advertisements, body language, and the revealing question ("Are you French, or what?") to more confrontational and extreme experiences (Jim Loo beaten to death for being – supposedly – Vietnamese), the encounters of day-to-day life send out messages telling people who and what they are, and who and what they are not.
(Cornell & Hartmann 2007:204)

It is in the everyday experience of individuals, in interaction with other people, but also in encountering institutions, that this study explores the questions of when it is (in what situations) and in relation to whom, that the identity categories of old(er) age and migrancy seem to become meaningful, and how they seem to be negotiated. An underlying assumption is then that such identities are *not* of permanent and equal significance, neither for actors themselves, nor for those they encounter.

Central to the notion of identities as constructed is not only that identity is *not* permanent and stable, but also that different dimensions of identity (or different identity categories) can be of varying salience or significance in different situations and contexts and in relation to different people. Relatedly, we all have a multiplicity of social identities, of which different ones become more relevant than others in different situations (Jenkins 1997, 2003 & 2008). In terms of the internal-external dialectic of identification, one could say that we present ourselves in different ways in different situations: different identities become more prominent than others in certain circumstances, and we are also defined by others in different ways in different situations. In the interplay between internal and external definitions, then, there is room for negotiation. At the same time, there are limits to the identities we can claim for ourselves, as they need to be confirmed by others in order to be accomplished. For instance, a physically frail older person, slowly walking with a walking frame, with a hunched back and wrinkly face, perhaps a little hard of hearing, with grey or white hair, is rather

unlikely to be accepted as a young adult if he or she claimed to be one. Similarly, a person of African descent, with “Black” skin and curly hair, with little or no command of the Swedish language, is unlikely to be considered a native Swede if he or she claimed to be one (see e.g. Daun 1998b; Hübinette & Lundström 2014).²⁵

The different sites (or orders) discussed here range from the individual level via interaction to the structural level. As has been suggested, the different sites at which identities are constructed are interlinked, which means for instance that interaction takes place within a structural context. In the following, we shall first zoom in on the structural level, then on the interactional level, before finally tying up some loose ends.

The structural level: Identity categories and power

The previous section touched upon the idea that identities are constructed at different sites. The construction of the category of “elderly immigrant” in the Swedish context discussed earlier (see Chapter 2) can be seen as an example of this. Construction and negotiation then take place at different sites, in interaction and at the structural level. Since interaction is always situated in a social context (that includes social structure and power relations), more needs to be said about identity categories and power before moving on to the section on interaction and identity negotiation. Focusing on the structural level, theories of categorisation and the boundary metaphor will be useful in explaining the dimension of power.

In the internal-external dialectic of identity, external definition is related to *categorisation*. What lies behind this process? Theories of social cognition are useful in answering this question. Baron and Byrne (1997) describe social cognition as “the manner in which we interpret, analyze, remember, and use information about the social world” (p. 76). Howard (2000) suggests that social cognition (along with symbolic interactionism) forms part of the theoretical underpinnings of traditional understandings of identity. Brown (1995) explains that categorisation is a fundamental human process: the world is simply too complex to handle without a mechanism to simplify and order it first. Assigning phenomena to different categories based on similarity and difference makes it possible to deal with them (Brown 1995). Crucial to note however is that such similarities and differences need not be factual, it is the *belief* in differences that counts (Brown 1995; cf. Cornell & Hartmann 2007). This means that people may be categorised as old(er) or as (im)migrants on the basis of *beliefs* in differences to young(er) people or native-borns, which need not be factual. Such differences may instead be regarded as social constructs. Categorisation is then based on information that is readily available: “gender, race, and age are usually visually

²⁵ Depending on how Swedishness is defined, this might even be the case if the person in question was born in Sweden and was a native speaker of Swedish (see discussion of Swedishness in Chapter 2; also see essays written by African-Swedes in Stephens 2009).

evident, hence readily available, characteristics. Prevailing norms of dress, hair style, stance, and so forth contribute to the visual prominence of gender and race, and perhaps also age, class, or sexual orientation” (Hollander et al. 2011:100). From a cognitive perspective, this means that categorisation as old(er) or (im)migrant very well at the first instance may be based upon information that visually is readily available. As in my earlier examples of the physically frail older person or the person of African descent, external definition in interaction is likely to at least in part be based on appearances, meaning that they may be unlikely to at the first instance be identified as *not* old(er) and as *not* an (im)migrant, respectively. Depending on situation or circumstances, initial categorisations may however be challenged and negotiated.

To add to this, “the two fundamental effects of categorization are the exaggeration of intergroup differences and the enhancement of intragroup similarities” (Brown 1995:54): within the group we define as “us” we consider there to be great individual variation, while “they” are all the same. Experimental studies in social psychology have also shown in-group favouritism to occur even when the social group was formed just for the purpose of the experiment (that is, dividing people into e.g. a yellow team and a green team) (see e.g. Brown 1995). This process can also be considered to be entangled with the relation between similarity and difference which some regard to be central to the concept of identity. Lawler (2014) for instance describes the question of similarity and difference as one of the paradoxes of identity, as we share certain identities with others, at the same time as identity also is a matter of uniqueness and difference from other people. In the words of Jenkins (2008), “‘Identification’ is the systematic establishment (...) of relationships of similarity and difference. Taken – as they can only be – together, similarity and difference are the dynamic principles of identification, and are at the heart of the human world” (p. 18). It is, then, on the basis of similarity that an “us” is formed, against the difference of “them”. How is all of this important for the present dissertation? Cognition and categorisation help us understand the process whereby some come to be regarded as old(er) or (im)migrant by others (and also may identify themselves in such terms), which forms part of the processes of the internal-external dialectic of identification and the negotiation thereof.

Identity categories, then, are understood as socially constructed. Both the very grounds of distinction and the meanings attached to the categories are not “natural” givens, but the outcome of social processes. One way of understanding how *power* plays a role in the construction of identities is through the boundary metaphor, as it helps to make visible how identities are defined from different sides of the boundary, internally and externally. As will be seen, the boundary metaphor is also a useful concept for understanding the negotiation of identities in terms of “us” and “them”. The original idea of the boundary metaphor as introduced by Barth (1969) in *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries* was that rather than

being isolated "cultures" that are objectively identifiable, ethnic groups are "categories of ascription and identification by the actors themselves, and thus have the characteristic of organising interaction between people" (p. 10). Groups are maintained through the maintenance of the boundaries between them, which are produced and reproduced through transactions and interactions at and across boundaries. Of importance to emphasise here are the dimensions of power and consequences: as suggested earlier by the circumstantialist account, those in power can draw a boundary between those who are eligible and those who are ineligible to access a certain resource (see Cornell & Hartmann 2007:61 quoted earlier).

The boundary metaphor can be applied to other social groups as well (cf. Jenkins 2008), and regarding its relation to identities, some view the dynamics of identity and boundary formation as intrinsically intertwined (see e.g. Clark & Petersson 2003). Lamont and Molnár (2002) have surveyed the use of the concept of the boundary in the social sciences, finding valuable applications in a range of fields of study: inequalities of class, gender, and "race"/ethnicity, but also the distinctions between different sciences and professions, to name but a few. One can distinguish between *symbolic* boundaries, which are conceptual distinctions made by social actors in order to organise the world, and *social* boundaries, which are "objectified forms of social differences manifested in unequal access to and unequal distribution of resources (material and nonmaterial) and social opportunities" (Lamont & Molnár 2002:168). Given the socially constructed nature of groups and boundaries, symbolic boundaries can become social boundaries if they are widely agreed upon. The boundary metaphor is a useful tool in the present study as it presents one of the ways in which the identity categories of old(er) age and migrancy seem to be negotiated, namely by drawing boundaries around old(er) age and migrancy and positioning oneself on various sides (as shortly will be explained further). It is also of interest at a larger scale insofar as it helps us understand how categories may be constructed in different ways (see e.g. Chapter 2 on constructions of old[er] age as well as migrancy; cf. section on Construction sites earlier in this chapter).

In a recent contribution to the debate on boundaries, Wimmer (2013) describes boundaries as including both a categorical and a social and behavioural dimension: "the former refers to acts of social classification and collective representation, the latter to everyday networks of relationships that result from individual acts of connecting and distancing" (p. 9). He suggests that categorisation and behavioural scripts on the individual level present two different cognitive schemes, and that one shall speak of a social boundary when the two coincide (i.e. when our cognitive schemes of distinguishing between "us" and "them" also result in different ways of acting). Wimmer further suggests that

The very boundary metaphor helps to imagine social landscapes in which ethnic divides are culturally meaningful, consequential for the allocation of resources and the distribution of life chances, and historically continuous, all the way allowing an observer to describe and imagine how they might move across a landscape, become porous and inconsequential, be crisscrossed by other, more meaningful boundaries, or perhaps even dissolve altogether.
(Wimmer 2013:204)

There are several features in this quote that need to be highlighted: boundaries have consequences for the *allocation of resources* and the *distribution of life chances*. The question of resources is of course central in the circumstantialist perspective (cf. Cornell & Hartmann 2007). If boundaries are drawn so as to exclude those deemed old(er) or (im)migrants, this can impact both upon their access to resources and their life chances. What also is implied, however, is how boundaries might move, be “crisscrossed”, become inconsequential or be dissolved. Such processes can be described as identity negotiation, or as *boundary work* in Wimmer’s terms. He introduces a comprehensive typology of such processes, which he terms “elementary strategies of boundary making” (Wimmer 2013:77). These strategies can be divided into those that shift the boundary, namely changing the topography of boundaries, and those that modify it, namely changing the meaning or membership.

The kind of boundary work (or strategies of boundary making) that turned out to be useful analytical tools for the work on this dissertation (as will be seen in the empirical chapters) are as follows. Strategies for the modification of boundaries include the process of boundary blurring, accomplished through the emphasis on other divisions such as highlighting localism (e.g. the neighbourhood), civilisationalism (e.g. pan-Africanism) or universalism (humanity) (Wimmer 2013; also see Wimmer 2008). In the context of the present study, this could be a matter of appealing to a European identity so as to encompass both one’s ethnicity of origin and Swedishness (which one in practice otherwise may be excluded from, see Chapter 10). Positional moves such as changing one’s position in the hierarchy also present a form of modifying strategy, as one either individually or collectively may change positions (as may be the case when e.g. Finns redefine themselves as Nordic neighbours rather than immigrants, or one e.g. perhaps comes to be seen as an “honourary Swede” due to individual cultural adaptation and possibly intermarriage). The boundary shifting strategies of expansion and contraction may also be mentioned, insofar as expansion makes the boundary more inclusive (i.e. including more people of higher ages in the category of non-old) and contraction makes it more exclusive (i.e. conversely limiting the definition of old[er] age to a small select group of which one is not part).

What are the means of boundary making in Wimmer’s conceptualisation, then? He distinguishes between *discourse and symbols*, which include categorisation

in both official and everyday discourse, as well as identification through behavioural, visual, and documentary markers (such as appearances and passports); legalised, institutionalised, and informal everyday *discrimination* (and, less relevant to the present study, also *political mobilisation* as well as *violence and coercion*, such as forced assimilation, ethnic cleansing, terror and rioting) (Wimmer 2013). Wimmer suggests that both categorisation (defining relevant groups) and identification (determining who belongs to which groups) use discursive and symbolic means to increase the salience of a boundary. In addition, individuals attempting to cross a boundary can use categorisation strategies in everyday discourse to distance themselves from categories they do not want to be associated with. This can be done by passing on the stigma to those who *really* are this or that (see Wimmer 2013). This is one of the ways in which the boundaries of old(er) age and migrancy also seem to be negotiated, as will be seen in the empirical chapters. For example, negotiating by way of distancing oneself from those who (supposedly) *really* are old(er), or *really* are (im)migrants.

The process of distancing oneself can also be conceptualised further in terms of *disidentification*. Medina (2003) suggests that the process of disidentification includes both subversion and transformation as one simultaneously belongs and does not belong to a group (or category) when disidentifying with it, to the effect that one may regard oneself as similar in some ways but different in others. Medina places this within the framework of similarities and differences whereby he suggests that difference is not a problem but instead tends to be misconstrued as such. Drawing upon the Wittgensteinian notion of family resemblances, Medina suggests:

Disidentification could be described as a particularly lucid kind of identification or counter-identification; that is, as a way of identifying with the members of a family without losing sight of one's differences with them, or a way of counter-identifying with the members of other families while seeing one's similarities with them. However, it would be wrong to construe disidentification as a mere special case of identification and counter-identification. This construal would miss what is most characteristic about the relation of disidentification, namely, that it brings both similarities and differences simultaneously to bear on one's identity. Disidentificatory relations highlight the messiness of the process of identity-formation, which is not reducible to simple relations of identification and counter-identification. The mechanism of disidentifications messes things up and creates trouble for the established networks of similarities and differences that sustain familial identities.

(Medina 2003:664)

For the present study, this means that the distancing from the identity categories of old(er) age and migrancy by way of drawing upon arguments to claim one is not like others, can in some cases be understood as a form of disidentification in the sense that one perhaps on some level seems to think one belongs to a

category (or that others may think this is the case), at the same time as one attempts to transform what membership means (i.e. by suggesting that one belongs but is different). The way in which one identifies oneself then incorporates the ideas posed by category membership. That is to say, as Dean (2008) suggests, by defining oneself through the rejection of a category, it still figures in the background in a latent spectral existence. In a sense, then, disidentification is thought to acknowledge that one does have something in common with that which one rejects: otherwise, one would simply not identify with it at all (i.e. non-identification rather than disidentification, see Dean 2008).

In the present dissertation, studying the negotiation of the identity categories of old(er) age and migrancy, part of the key to identifying the dynamics of identification lies in examining where boundaries are drawn and on what grounds. For instance, claiming that one is not old(er) because one is still working suggests that the boundary of old(er) age is situated around one's relation to the labour market. Conversely, saying that others regard one as an (im)migrant because of the way one looks suggests that physical appearance plays into how migrancy seems to be conceptualised (and how people tend to be categorised as native or [im)migrant). Another key to identifying the dynamics of identification lies in not only looking at who or what it is that one identifies with, but also who or what one distances oneself from. Here disidentification comes into the picture as references to who or what one is *not* convey how one seems to construct one's identity. One could also say that one discursively positions oneself by way of speaking in terms of "we" or "they" with reference to different identity categories, suggesting that such a category then does or does not apply to oneself (see e.g. Harré 1991 or Mattsson 2005 for more on discursive positioning).

The concept of the boundary provides a useful analytical tool for this study: differences between "us" and "them" are manifested when boundaries are drawn. At the same time, through the interactions that take place at and across the boundary (in negotiation), boundaries can be permeated or shifted. However, not everybody is individualistically free to move around as he or she pleases:

The strategies pursued by individuals are constrained in many different ways: by their varying power to impose the categorical divisions that serves their symbolic, material, and political interests onto others, by the institutional environment that provides certain categorical cleavages with legitimacy and denies it to others, and, most importantly, by the fact that each individual or corporate actor encounters the strategies pursued by more or less powerful others that may attempt to impose an entirely different version of the legitimate divisions of society. (Wimmer 2013:78)

In other words, while one may seek to distance oneself from the identity categories of old(er) age and migrancy, depending on the situation and the relative power of whomever one is interacting with, there are constraints to the

various strategies the individual may pursue. This is crucial to note since critics of social constructionism (as e.g. discussed by Hollander et al. 2011:50) tend to question the apparently free agency offered to individuals as though they were free of power relations, which however is not thought to be the case here. For this study, the boundary metaphor is seen as a useful analytical tool for examining identity negotiations, to which we now turn.

The interactional level: The negotiation and accomplishment of identities

As has been suggested thus far, identity construction takes place both at different sites (politics, labour markets, residential space, social institutions, culture, and daily experience) and at different levels (that of the individual, the interactional and the institutional order). A view of identities as socially constructed includes an understanding of situational variability. It also includes an understanding that identities are accomplished in interaction through the interplay between self-definition and definition by others, which means that it is at least in principle *negotiable*. The purpose of this section is to zoom in on what is meant both by negotiation and by the idea that identity is accomplished in interaction.

Just as researchers from different disciplines may mean different things when speaking of identity, *identity negotiation* can have quite different meanings, too. In psychological research, identity negotiation seems to refer to the process whereby individuals adjust to new circumstances, employing various strategies to maintain a sense of continuity (see e.g. Chatman, Eccles & Malanchuk 2005; cf. Erikson 1980). Individuals then use various resources to strike a balance between redefinition and self-continuity. Such resources include likes and dislikes, attitudes, beliefs and values, but also “social roles and descriptive attributes such as race, ethnicity, gender, social class, and religion” (Chatman et al. 2005:117). To add to this, “to the extent that individuals are able to reconcile conflicts between the self and these changing contexts, they maintain a sense of positive well-being” (Chatman et al. 2005:117). Swann and Bosson (2008) present a detailed framework of the psychological processes taking place in identity negotiation over time (also see Swann 1987 for a framework of identity negotiation). Negotiation then is understood as part of a developmental process where changing circumstances can be events such as moving to a new location, or taking new roles, such as that of a parent (see Deaux & Ethier 1998). If the present dissertation understood identity negotiation in this (developmental) psychological way, its interest would lie in the psychological adjustments to the role of old(er) age (which indeed has been described as the “roleless role”, see Burgess 1960). It would perhaps also seek to examine how migrants’ ethnicities form a resource in this process (cf. Cool 1981). Likewise, migrancy could be examined in terms of a resource that offers the tools necessary to cope with the challenges of old age (cf. George & Fitzgerald 2012), just as the identity processes of adjusting to a new country over time could be of interest (cf. Feinberg 1996;

Remennick 2003). Being a social scientific study rooted in a social constructionist understanding, identity negotiation here instead refers to the ways in which individuals define themselves and are defined by others in interaction, where identity claims may be challenged and ascriptions may be contested. It is in the process of interaction (both as told by interviewees and in the interview itself) where identities are accomplished that negotiation takes place.

Identity negotiation, then, is understood here as the process whereby individuals may present themselves to others in a certain way, are defined by others, respond to others' definitions and perhaps present themselves in a new way, in the dialectical process of internal and external definition. This includes a process of boundary drawing where one may place oneself on either side of various boundaries, claiming a desirable identity and distancing oneself from undesirable ones. Examining the negotiation of identities in relation to both old(er) age and migrancy is as much a matter of exploring the whens, whos and hows of identifying with these identity categories as it is a matter of the whens and hows of rejecting or *dis*identifying with them.

Much debate surrounds the question of the extent to which identities can be negotiated. As suggested in the previous discussion of boundaries, identity negotiation does not occur in a vacuum that is free from social context and power relations. As Cornell and Hartmann (2007) suggest, identities are constructed at different sites where actors make claims and jockey for position, all the while establishing and changing hierarchies (see previous section on Construction sites). However, speaking of negotiation is not to be misinterpreted as meaning that all identity claims are up for grabs. First of all, the internal-external dialectic of identification requires that others acknowledge an individual's (or collective's) claim to an identity. This means that it is not enough to simply claim an identity, but it needs to be validated by others. Secondly, with regards to primary identities, "identities that are established during infancy and childhood may be less flexible than identities that are acquired subsequently" (Jenkins 2008:84). According to Jenkins (2008), ethnicity may be a primary identification, as "individuals often learn frameworks for classifying themselves and others by ethnicity and 'race' during childhood" (p. 87). To add to this, "ethnicity, when it matters to people, *really* matters" (p. 87; cf. the primordial metaphor in the essentialist account, Cornell & Hartmann 2007). At the same time, ethnicity can be very negotiable: "even the embodied categorisations of 'race' have their flexibilities: 'passing' is not unheard of and, more importantly, the definitions and significances of 'race' are historically and locally variable" (Jenkins 2008:87). "Passing" can be described as the process whereby one (in some contexts) may be defined by others in a way that does not match the way one might otherwise define oneself (or be defined), which may or may not be attempted intentionally, but which one then does not (necessarily) seek to rectify: for instance, a German passing as a Swede, a Lesbian passing as heterosexual, a

man passing as a woman, etc. (see e.g. Renfrow 2004). A foreign-born person may thus pass as a native in some situations, just as a person of an advanced age may pass as not old(er). When migrating for the first time in later adulthood, migrancy as an identity category may not become potentially meaningful until later on in life. Likewise, old(er) age only emerges later on in life as a potentially meaningful identity category.

In the context of the present dissertation and within the theoretical frame chosen here, neither old(er) age nor migrancy are considered primary identities. Rather, the premise is that both are potentially and in principle negotiable. This means that neither old(er) age nor migrancy are presumed to be of primary, central importance and constant parts of the self-definitions of the older migrants studied (although this may be the case for some), and it also means that they are not presumed to be relevant to external definitions at all times and in all situations. Put differently, there is room for situational variability and different combinations of internal and external definitions, leading to processes of negotiation.

As was implied earlier, approaches to identity in interaction can have different emphases in terms of structure and situational face-to-face interaction. Vryan and colleagues (2003) distinguish between situational and structural interactionist approaches (cf. Howard 2000). *Situational* approaches note the role of appearance in the establishment of identifications of participants in social situations. Examples include the work of Stone (1962) and Goffman's (1959) work on impression management, which goes beyond appearances to include all information shared in face-to-face situations. It is interaction in a particular situation that is in focus then, more than the structural context. Howard (2000) describes such approaches as emphasising the processes of identity construction and negotiation. *Structural* interactionists in turn emphasise the structural features of identity rather than situational resources.²⁶ The focus then is more on roles within "social structural role systems and categorizations" (p. 376) which define people's identities, rather than their accomplishment in interaction. The present dissertation leans towards a situational emphasis in that identity is considered as situationally defined, which, however, is not independent of social structure. Both the identity claims one makes and the identities ascribed to one by others are informed by the social context within which they take place, and the claims and ascriptions made may differ between situations.

An example of such work with a situational focus can be found in Scott's (2015) *Negotiating Identity*, where she presents symbolic interactionist approaches to "social identity". Scott focuses on the micro-level of interaction and examines social identity as "formed through face-to-face encounters in everyday life",

²⁶ The work of Kuhn (e.g. Kuhn & McPartland 1954) and the Iowa school is associated with this, employing positivist survey research rather than the method of participant observation advocated by the Chicago school in situational approaches.

where negotiation takes place through “processes of social interaction” (p. 4). What distinguishes symbolic interactionist approaches, Scott finds, is their micro-level focus on interaction and face-to-face encounters. Symbolic interactionism (SI) then regards both identity and society more widely as a process of negotiation, as “relational, communicative, and symbolically meaningful” (p. 11).

Identities are contextual, the details of their expressions varying between settings and situations, as well as dynamic, mutable and contingent. Their meanings are forever shifting in line with situational demands, group values and normative expectations. (...) I suggest that SI describes and analyses the social processes of interaction through which identities can be *created, shaped, maintained, communicated, presented, negotiated, challenged, reproduced, reinvented and narrated*.
(Scott 2015:11, emphasis in original)

This understanding of identity is in line with the social constructionist conceptualisation as well as the internal-external dialectic presented thus far. Scott includes Goffman’s (1959) dramaturgical theory in this perspective as she finds that it shares some key concerns with symbolic interactionism. In Goffman’s dramaturgy, focus lies on how actors present themselves, perform and strategically manage different versions of themselves in different situations. Scott summarises the most central features of both approaches as follows: firstly, identity is a process, something that continuously unfolds and evolves. Scott suggests that identity is negotiated in interaction as the process whereby identity unfolds is mediated by actors who “perceive and respond to the symbolic meaning of each other’s actions” (Scott 2015:20). Identities then are “social categories through which people may be located and given meaning in a situational context” (ibid., citing Maines 2001:242). Secondly, identity is performative: social actors (both as teams and alone) work to display various versions of themselves by way of using numerous strategies, such as information control and impression management (cf. Goffman 1959). Scott thus describes identity as actively accomplished, “done” by individuals in interaction, and furthermore as a self-conscious and reflexive process.²⁷ Thirdly, identity is described as pragmatic, expressed in concrete lines of action that can be observed and analysed (Scott 2015). Research in the symbolic interactionist tradition then includes empirical work that examines how identities are negotiated, performed and managed in specific interactional contexts.

The present study to a large extent agrees with this threefold framing of what distinguishes such approaches. Identities are understood as negotiated in interaction, where identity categories (i.e. old[er] age and migrancy) gain meaning

²⁷ As Scott points out, this notion of performance is however not to be confused with Butler’s “performativity” and other poststructuralist approaches: in symbolic interactionism, there has to be “an actor behind the character” (Scott 2015:20).

in specific contexts. However, the process is seen as somewhat less strategic, self-conscious and reflexive than the above account would suggest, not least since the internal-external dialectic anticipates constraints to identity claims imposed by the need for external validation. To add to this, rather than pre-defining the specific interactional contexts where negotiation of old(er) age and migrancy may occur, the present study inquires as to when (in what situations) such identities may be claimed or ascribed. Studying just *one* type of setting (through observation, no less) would not make it possible to answer such a question. Finally, it is not least for this reason that this study does not approach identity as tangible, observable and expressed in action, but rather as constructed and negotiated in the interview.

We see how social identity is not a simple ‘thing’ that people ‘have’, but, rather, a complex process, which is constructed throughout social life in relation to others. Furthermore, it is precariously contingent on these connections and bonds for its survival. Versions of ourselves can be claimed, displayed and performed, but they must also be accepted and supported by others; thus identity is negotiated at the micro level of everyday life. Through our rituals, routines, interactions and encounters, we navigate paths around possible selves and different identities, managing social reactions alongside private reflections.

(Scott 2015:24)

For this study, this means that identities as old(er) (or not) and (im)migrant (or not) are seen as constructed in relation to others. They can be displayed, claimed and performed, but must be confirmed (or accepted, supported) by others for their accomplishment. This means they must be corroborated in the very interplay between self-definition and definition by others, once again making questions of power salient. For this study, this means that the older migrants interviewed here negotiate their identities in relation to external others in a number of ways. As will be seen, such external others include virtual others in accounts of social situations in everyday life, virtual others in a generalised sense of what people in general would seem to say, an external other in the form of the interviewer, and various other attempts of looking at oneself through the eyes of others. Whose prerogative is it to define who is old(er) or not, and whose is it to say who qualifies as a native and who is an (im)migrant? While identities as old(er) and (im)migrant are negotiated in interaction at the micro level of everyday life, this interaction takes place in a social context with prevailing power structures. The need for external validation of identity claims then places power in the hands of *others* to validate or deny one’s claim, rendering the individual in a potentially vulnerable position.

To understand this process of negotiation, it is worth returning to the boundary metaphor discussed in the previous section. The idea behind boundaries is that in the relation between similarities and differences that

surrounds identification processes, it is at the boundaries between different categories that identities are established. Defining someone as A means that the boundaries of A-ness are demarcated against the allusion to differences of what B-ness, C-ness and D-ness is thought to entail. It is also through the description of what A is *not* that one can establish the boundary to the undesired identity. One of the means of distancing oneself from an identity, as well as defining oneself and being defined by others, is through language. An example of this has been presented earlier through the work of Mattsson (2005) who suggests that (native) Swedes may position themselves by way of speaking in terms such as “in Sweden we...” (see Chapter 2). As will be seen, some of the older migrants included in this study also claim to have come across such ways of speaking.

Finally, the idea of identity as accomplished needs to be addressed. Lawler (2014) proposes that “all identity-making is an accomplishment. There is no silent, untroubled, normal or natural identity” (p. 2). She goes on to suggest that

Identities, in other words, are better seen as ongoing processes (and achievements) rather than as a sort of sociological filing system. This is not to claim that identity categories are unimportant: far from it. Such categories will *inform* (though they may not determine, and they cannot sum up) people’s sense of themselves, and how they view one another. Yet, instead of a passive categorization, it is possible to see identity-making in terms of more active processes of *identification*.

(Lawler 2014:10, emphasis in original)

Regarding identity as a process, this means that identity categories such as old(er) age and migrancy should rather be regarded *not* as subject to a passive categorisation where they may be seen as stable, constant and determining the identities of people, but rather as possibly *informing* how individuals think of themselves and regard one another, where identity actively is “made” or achieved through processes of identification. It is precisely this making of identities as old(er) or not and as (im)migrant or not that this dissertation focuses upon, exploring when and in relation to whom these two identity categories seem to inform people’s sense of themselves.

The idea of identity as accomplished in interaction (rather than essential and given) can also be described through the terms of doing gender (Fenstermaker & West 2002a) alluded to earlier, which is in line with the social constructionist understanding of identity. In *Doing Gender, Doing Difference* (2002a), Fenstermaker and West put together a collection of their original theoretical argument, followed by its criticisms and later reformulations, including those relevant to the *doing difference* argument. The theoretical argument of *doing gender* put forward by West and Zimmerman ([1987] 2002) was that gender sociologically be understood as

a routine, methodical, and recurring accomplishment. We contend that the ‘doing’ of gender is undertaken by women and men whose competence as members of society is hostage to its production. (...) When we view gender as an accomplishment, an achieved property of situated conduct, our attention shifts from matters internal to the individual and focuses on interactional and, ultimately, institutional arenas. In one sense, of course, it is individuals who do gender. But it is a situated doing, carried out in the virtual or real presence of others who are presumed to be oriented to its production. Rather than as a property of individuals, we conceive of gender as an emergent feature of social situations: both as an outcome of and a rationale for various social arrangements and as a means of legitimating one of the most fundamental divisions of society. (West & Zimmerman 2002:4)

The same argument can be made for both old(er) age and migrancy. Thinking of old(er) age and migrancy not as internal to the individual but as situated doings, they become emergent features of social situations. That is to say, each in some situations informs people’s sense of self and/or how others view them (to borrow Lawler’s terminology), as would perhaps be the case when interacting with somebody much younger (for old[er] age) or with a native when for instance applying for a job (when it comes to migrancy). In other situations, however, neither of these identity categories may be relevant. Old(er) age and migrancy then thereby are part of a process whereby divisions in society come to be taken for granted (cf. Berger & Luckmann 1966). This situated doing is furthermore carried out in the “virtual or real presence of others”: that these “others” need not be physically present will indeed become more than clear in the presentation of the findings of the current study. The argument goes against essentialist understandings that would locate the root of gender differences in biology: “a person’s gender is not simply an aspect of what one is, but, more fundamentally, it is something that one *does*, and does recurrently, in interaction with others” (West & Zimmerman 2002:16). This conceptualisation moves away from an essentialist assumption of gender as inherent in the individual, to a socially constructed understanding that places gender in interaction. Doing gender appropriately sustains, reproduces and legitimises the institutional arrangements, and failing to do so leaves us accountable for our actions. This conceptualisation also offers a link between institutional and interactional levels (see section on Construction sites).

In their chapter on “Doing Difference”, West and Fenstermaker (2002) build on the frame of doing gender by simultaneously considering the doing of gender, “race”, and class, by way of reconceptualising “‘difference’ as an ongoing interactional accomplishment” (p. 56). As suggested earlier, the identity category of migrancy can also be thought of as a category of “difference” (as, indeed, can old[er] age). With regards to race, West and Fenstermaker draw upon the work of Omi and Winant (1986) to draw attention to how racial categorisations, albeit

appearing to be natural, are social constructions. Similarly, the distinction between nationals and immigrant minorities can be seen as social constructions, where “both minorities and majorities are made by defining the boundaries between them. The German ‘nation’ or the ‘mainstream’ of American immigration research is therefore as much the consequence of such boundary-making processes as are ‘ethnic minorities’” (Wimmer 2013:27). With regards to “race”, Omi and Winant (1986) argue that the “seemingly obvious, ‘natural’ and ‘common sense’ qualities” of the existing racial order “themselves testify to the effectiveness of the racial formation process in constructing racial meanings and identities” (p. 62, cited in West & Fenstermaker 2002:66-67). Considering “race” as accomplished “renders the social arrangements based on race as normal and natural, that is, legitimate ways of organizing social life” (West & Fenstermaker 2002:68). This can also be said of the “order” that organises nationals and (im)migrants: the distinction between natives and (im)migrants comes to be seen as natural and is taken for granted (which also seems to be the case in Sweden, see Chapter 2). Finally, “conceiving of race and gender as ongoing accomplishments means we must locate their emergence in social situations, rather than within the individual or some vaguely defined set of role expectations” (West & Fenstermaker 2002:69). It is the emergence of identities as old(er) and as (im)migrant in social situations that is of interest here, rather than presuming them to be internal to the individual. This understanding allows us to ask when (in what kinds of social situations) and in relation to whom they seem to emerge, and how they then seem to be negotiated.

Tying up loose ends

While all of the different understandings discussed thus far very well may seem to make sense each on their own, some readers may be left wondering about the relation between some of the different concepts presented here. What exactly is the difference between identity and identity categories? What is being negotiated and by whom? How do identification, disidentification, boundary drawing (or making) and categorisation interrelate? What do all of these processes lead to? Are old(er) age and migrancy really identity categories of a compatible kind? These and similar questions shall be discussed in this final section of the chapter.

Let me start by disentangling the relation between identity and identity categories. In a sense, one could say that identity refers to our sense of who we are and who (we think that) others think we are, which is not given and innate but shaped in social interaction through the dialectic process of internal and external definition. Identity categories such as old(er) age and migrancy then are about specific identities that may or may not inform our sense of who we are, both generally and in particular situations. The process of identity construction takes place both over time and in specific situations. This means that it involves both continuity and change, as we as (embodied) individuals tend to have a

general sense of who we are (and how others think of us), which however can change over time, and where the relevance of different dimensions can shift within a single interactional encounter.

What exactly is being negotiated, then? It is *not* the sense of who one is that is being examined in terms of negotiation in this study, but rather the grounds upon which one may be categorised as old(er) or (im)migrant (or, indeed, *not*) along with the grounds upon which one may claim identities pertaining to old(er) age or migrancy. The very identity categories of old(er) age and migrancy are being negotiated then, as they may or may not be regarded as meaningful both for one's self-definition and for how others seem to define one. The negotiations studied here then are seen as processes occurring in specific situations. When speaking of identity as a process that is context bound and situationally defined in interaction, one may distinguish between *long-term* processes such as the one described by Hall (1989) in the previously cited quote and *short-term* processes in specific interactional social encounters. While both understandings can be accommodated by the overall theoretical frame from which the present dissertation departs, the main analytical focus (as will be seen) lies on the short term by virtue of examining identity negotiations at the present time. It is then not primarily negotiation in the long-term ageing process where one comes to learn to regard oneself as old(er), and it is not the long-term process of migration and settlement where one comes to learn to be regarded as an (im)migrant or to think of oneself in such terms (even though such questions to some extent also may emerge in the interviews). Rather, it is social interaction within the interview situation at the present time that is in focus, including interviewees' accounts of social situations beyond the interview itself.

Who is negotiating, then? In the process of negotiation within the interview, the interviewee negotiates with him- or herself, with the interviewer, and with *virtual others*. Interviewees can firstly negotiate with themselves as they talk about how they think of themselves, change their mind in the process, and debate with themselves (either their current selves or a virtual younger version). Secondly, they can negotiate with the interviewer, presenting themselves to me in such a way as they wish to be seen, perhaps seeking confirmation of their identity claims. Thirdly, they can negotiate with virtual others including both specific others in descriptions of particular social situations (where accounts of what others may say or do are used to make sense of who one claims to be or who one seems to think others perceive one to be) and a generalised idea of others (and what they may think). Such a generalised idea of others can refer to people in society in general but also to specific segments of the population that the interviewee seems to expect to think in a certain way, such as the general non-old population or native Swedes.

What about identification, disidentification, boundary drawing and categorisation? Identification describes the process whereby old(er) age and

migrancy are claimed or ascribed as part of the answer to the question of who one is, or, in other words, become meaningful. In the process of negotiation, the identity categories of old(er) age and migrancy are evaluated, may be embraced but are potentially dismissed or rejected. This includes the process of boundary drawing whereby one positions oneself as belonging or not belonging to an identity category (as one reasons about whether or not and/or to what extent one fulfils membership criteria). Disidentification constitutes a rejection of such definitions (as old[er], as [im]migrant) at the same time as it acknowledges that one perhaps may belong to the category ever so slightly after all (being similar in some ways but different in others). Categorisation finally presents the external definition of people as old(er) or not and (im)migrants or not, regardless of how they may think about themselves.

It also seems necessary to address the question of what it is that processes of negotiation lead to: a finalised, accomplished identity? Or a temporary definition of the situation? I would argue that in the current study, the latter answer seems most reasonable. This means that the process of negotiation is never complete (where identity is better understood as becoming rather than being), but that a situational definition of whether or not the identity category of old(er) age and whether or not the identity category of migrancy is meaningful to who one is is reached. This means that the individuals studied here do convey an overall sense of how they seem to think of themselves in terms of old(er) age and migrancy, and that they do have generalised ideas of how others seem to regard them (as will be addressed in Chapter 10). This dissertation examines both when and in relation to whom the identity categories studied seem to become meaningful (Chapters 6 & 8), the processes of negotiation (Chapters 7 & 9), and the apparent overall identifications of the older migrants included in the study in relation to old(er) age and migrancy (Chapter 10).

One final (potentially) loose end pertains to the question of the compatibility of old(er) age and migrancy as identity categories. Both old(er) age and migrancy have been addressed together throughout this chapter, and they have been treated as identity categories that basically are interchangeably compatible. There seems to be a preconception however among some scholars and other readers that there is something "special" about old(er) age that makes it different from other identity categories. Spini and Jopp (2014) express this in the following way:

Age, as sex and other phenotypic traits of individuals, is a basic social marker that shapes our perception and attitudes toward others. Nonetheless, age is a special social category (compared to more impermeable social categories, such as sex or social class), and the majority of individuals in industrial societies are more or less 'condemned' to become very old, especially if they have a high social status and are women (...). Another important aspect that makes age a special social category is that we will, if our lives are long enough, grow into this category. Whereas

THEORETICAL FRAME

individual characteristics such as ethnicity are fixed and thus allow individuals to build up strategies to handle discrimination and distress related to their membership of a particular ethnic group, individuals build up (often negative) attitudes about the old very early in life even as they invariably progress toward becoming part of this group themselves.
(Spini & Jopp 2014:298-299)

Reading this statement with the perspectives gained through the earlier discussions of essentialism and social constructionism, it soon becomes clear that such a claim (namely that there is something "special" about old(er) age) is based on essentialist premises: sex and social class are described as "impermeable", ethnicity regarded as "fixed" (and curiously an "individual characteristic"), and we are all "condemned" to "invariably progress" towards becoming part of "the (very) old" (a "group" about which we have internalised negative attitudes, no less), provided that we live long enough. From such a viewpoint, both old(er) age and migrancy are fixed and given, determined through chronology and blood ties. This is diametrically opposed to the social constructionist understanding employed here: while our ideas about who is old(er) and who is an (im)migrant are constructed around the markers of life expectancy and the primordial metaphor, they are not fixed. As the empirical findings of the present study also suggest (see Chapters 6, 7, 8 & 9), their meanings are contextually bound and can become relevant in some situations but not in others. Old(er) age and migrancy are through a social constructionist lens better understood as constructed identity categories that are potentially negotiable through the interplay between how we define ourselves and how others define us. This will be discussed further in the chapter on Methodology (Chapter 5), first however let us take a look at previous research on identity and older migrants.

CHAPTER 4: LITERATURE REVIEW

While the purpose of the previous chapter was to present the theoretical frame of this dissertation and to show how the questions of the whens, whos and hows of identification are to be understood, the present chapter serves to place the study in the context of previous research on identity and older migrants.²⁸ Since the main questions this dissertation seeks to answer pertain to when (in what situations) and in relation to whom old(er) age and migrancy seem to become meaningful for identification, as well as how these identity categories seem to be negotiated, the literature here is reviewed through an old(er) age and migrancy lens. This means that previous research has been examined from a perspective that is sensitive to the role that old(er) age and migrancy potentially can play for identity among older migrants. The questions to be addressed here include: How has identity been approached in previous research and to what extent have old(er) age and migrancy (respectively) been examined? Who or what “kinds” of older migrants have been included in previous research? In order to be able to capture the multiple ways in which previous research has or has *not* focused on old(er) age and migrancy in relation to identity, this review starts by exploring the role of older migrants’ older ages, ethnicity and migratory backgrounds in previous research, before zooming in on the extent to which both areas have been combined. As will be seen, while a small minority of the previous works on identity and older migrants do show a general interest in questions pertaining to both the field of ageing and later life and migration and ethnic studies, none have thus far combined this dual interest in both old(er) age and migrancy as identity categories. To add to this, most studies have focused on particular ethnic groups, to the effect that ethnic differences have been in focus, rather than examining

²⁸ The literature discussed here was identified by way of searches in library catalogues (The British Library and Library of Congress) and relevant databases (Sociological abstracts, ISI Web of Science, Applied Social Sciences Index and Abstracts ASSIA, ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global, Social Services Abstracts, and Academic Search Premier). The keywords used were identity, identification, *migrant*, ethnic*, elder*, old*, ag*ing and later life. The following criteria were employed in the process of selecting relevant literature: 1) the literature had to be concerned with questions of identity (broadly defined, since no works were to be excluded by virtue of e.g. using the “wrong” references, see previous chapter); 2) the population studied had to be older migrants, regardless of whether they had migrated earlier in life or just recently; 3) the older migrants had to have migrated internationally (rather than e.g. from Ohio to Florida), and 4) they had to be of an age that might be considered “older” (i.e. usually at least 50 years old, but mostly older). Reading titles, abstracts and keywords showed that far from all of the search results were relevant. Some texts were therefore excluded on further inspection. Whereas no earliest time limit was set in the search, several of the databases used for the literature search include records that go as far back as 1975 (and in one case 1952). The initial search was conducted in the beginning of 2014 and updated in April 2016. The number of texts that were deemed relevant enough to be included here ultimately amounted to 34. Within this body of literature, there was some variation with regards to the extent to which identity questions were in focus: while most texts included here centre on identity and have it as their main focus (n=25), others do show an interest in identity related questions while at the same time focusing more on other issues (n=9). Some of the works with more marginal interests in identity are mostly discussed in footnotes.

the shared experiences of migrancy that migrants of multiple different backgrounds might have.²⁹

Previous research on identity and older migrants

The earliest works on identity among older migrants found through this literature search (e.g. Feinberg 1996; Lee 1996) were not published until the mid-1990s. In fact, of the 34 texts included in this review, six were published during the latter half of the 1990s (e.g. Gee 1999; Peterson-Veach 1999), thirteen during the 2000s (e.g. Gardner 2002; Elias 2005), and the remaining fifteen during the 2010s (e.g. George & Fitzgerald 2012; Zontini 2015). This suggests that research into questions of identity among older migrants presents a fairly new field of research, having existed only for two decades, and also an expanding one, as more seems to be published from year to year. While questions of identity per se have been of interest for much longer in both the field of ageing and later life (namely examining identity in old(er) age or in the ageing process)³⁰ and the field of migration and ethnic studies (namely examining identity in relation to ethnicity in the context of migration, often among younger adults, adolescents and children), it appears as though it is only in recent years that the two fields have found a common interest (namely identity and older migrants).

Table 4.1 shows that whereas almost all of the works show a clear explicit interest in either ethnicity, migration, or both, in most studies, the older migrants' older ages either seem to be taken as a given (i.e. they are older, but just seem to happen to be so) or seem to be chosen due to their time lived (i.e. life experience). Some studies seem to take no particular interests in the older migrants' older ages at all. Eight works, highlighted in Table 4.1 through the light grey background, stand out by virtue of being the only ones that take an explicit interest in both fields. These trends are discussed at further depth in the following, starting with works that seem to take old(er) age as a given (with interest in ethnicity, migration

²⁹ In the review process, an extensive table of analysis was compiled, listing all of the previous research on identity and older migrants identified through the literature search. Note was taken of the following: the role of old(er) age as linked to identity (i.e. none, as a given, in terms of time lived, ageing, or old age); the role of ethnicity and migration as linked to identity (i.e. none, ethnicity, migration, or Other); the type of older migrants included in the study (early, late, or both) as well as their chronological age range; the method employed (as qualitative or quantitative); and finally, the samples' countries of origin and current places of residence. To add to this, note was taken of the following identity related questions: whether or not a definition of identity is offered; what "type" of identity mainly is focused upon (i.e. self/personal identity; identity related to questions of ethnicity, culture and migration; identity related to questions of ageing and/or old age; Other); how identity is understood, both explicitly and implicitly (i.e. in developmental terms, as stable/given, as negotiated, as constructed, in terms of narrative, Other); and finally the temporal perspective on identity (i.e. whether the focus is on identity over the life course, identity in the present day, or past/earlier identities).

³⁰ To clarify, when distinguishing between ageing and old(er) age, *ageing* is here meant to be understood as referring to the (long-term) process of growing old(er), whereas *old(er) age* may be understood as an identity category (see Chapters 2 & 3). Similarly, Higgs and Gilleard (2015) suggest the following distinction between the two: "ageing is seen as the process or processes that emerge from a person living a long life, which is a life that extends beyond the period of reproductive fitness. (...) [O]ld age has typically been represented as a status or social category conferred on individuals at a particular point in their lives" (p. 1).

Table 4.1: Literature on identity and older migrants: to what extent has previous research been interested in ageing and/or old(er) age as well as ethnicity and/or migration?

	Interest in ethnicity and/or migration					
		None (or very vague)	Mostly ethnicity	Mostly migration	Both ethnicity and migration	Other
Interest in ageing and/or old(er) age	None (or very vague)	Le Tran (2004)	Kim, Kleiber & Kropf (2001)	Li, Hodgetts & Ho (2010)		
	Old(er) age mostly as a given		Gee (1999); Lai (2012); Lee, Herrera, Lee & Nakamura (2012)	Feinberg (1996); Li & Chong (2012); Li, Hodgetts & Sonn (2014); Roberman (2007b)	Bolzman, Fibbi & Vial (2006); Elias (2005); Kim (2001); Ng & Northcott (2010); Remennick (2003); Shternshis (2013)	Bartholomew (2012)
	Old(er) age mostly in terms of time lived	Thomas, Sokolovsky & Feinberg (1996)	Delucchi (1998); Kambar (2013); Sokolovsky (2003); Varverakis (2011)	Peterson-Veatch (1999); Roberman (2007a)	Leavey, Sembhi & Livingston (2004); Roberts (2010)	
	Mostly ageing		Kawakami (2012)		Gardner (2002); George & Fitzgerald (2012); Zontini (2015)	
	Mostly old(er) age				Maynard, Afshar, Franks & Wray (2008)	
	Both ageing and old(er) age		Tammeveski (2003)	Oliver (2011)	Lee (1996)	

Note: For the purpose of clarity, the categories are made to be mutually exclusive by way of classifying each study through its most dominant trend. This means that while some works could be further classified into subcategories (such as e.g. “mostly time lived with a vague interest in old(er) age”), categories are kept to a minimum.

or both), followed by old(er) age in terms of time lived (again with interest in ethnicity, migration or both). The works with a main focus on other identity questions are addressed next, before zooming in on the few studies that do indeed display an interest in both areas. How identity has been understood in these studies is discussed throughout this chapter, and details about samples are

largely presented in footnotes (since an excess of details in the main text would make it less reader-friendly). The general trends pertaining to the composition of samples included in these studies are presented in the penultimate section. The final section discusses the role that old(er) age and migrancy seem to have had in these studies.

Ethnicity, migration or both with old(er) age as a given

Quite a few of the studies examined here seem to take the older migrants' ages primarily as a given (see Table 4.1). This means that it is not so much identity in the ageing process or identity in old(er) age that specifically is in focus, but rather other identity related questions. This can be, for instance, ethnic identity in terms of whether migrants primarily identify with the ethnicity of their origins or with that of their second home (see e.g. Lai 2012). It can also be self-identity in the context of migration, focusing on the process of adjusting to a new country (see e.g. Remennick 2003). Others examine ethnic identity in the context of migration, exploring how identifications might change when migrating (see e.g. Roberman 2007b). The migrants studied, then, may seem to just happen to be older rather than being chosen specifically due to their age, or that another question is explored while their (older) ages appear to be a given. Each of these variants will be addressed in turn.

Several studies with ethnicity as their main interest seek to answer the question of whether the older migrants studied primarily identify with their ethnic origins, with their new country, or perhaps with both. For instance, Gee (1999) explores ethnic identity among older Chinese in Canada,³¹ asking whether older migrants feel more Chinese, more Canadian, or both equally. She finds that one third seem to think of themselves as more Chinese, half more Canadian, and the remainder equally Chinese and Canadian. Those who have migrated more recently seem more likely to have retained their Chinese identity, which also appears to be the case for those who are older. Lai (2012) also studies ethnic identity among older Chinese in Canada,³² arguing however that self-identifications alone cannot capture the complexity of ethnic identity. Instead, he proposes a measurement of both internal feelings (such as self-image and attitudes) and external, observable behaviours (such as maintenance of cultural traditions and engagement in cultural practices). His results point to the complexity of considering various factors in relation to the questions asked, suggesting that dimensions of ethnic identity correlate with different factors (such as age, marital status, gender, religion, English language skills etc.). A third

³¹ Gee (1999) uses a random sample of 708 "foreign-born Chinese elders" who are aged above 65 (half of them above the age of 75) and migrated at various points in their lives (about half lived in Canada for more than 20 years, and the other half for less). Informants were interviewed in Vancouver and Victoria.

³² Lai's (2012) sample includes 2272 individuals aged 55 and above who have been living in Canada for varying amounts of time (with less than two per cent in fact born in Canada). The participants of this study lived in Victoria, Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton, Winnipeg, Toronto and Montreal.

study using a similar approach can be found in the work of Ng and Northcott (2010), who are interested in questions of both ethnicity and migration. They explore ethnic and national identities among older South Asian migrants in Canada,³³ examining the extent to which various factors contribute to different identifications. In this study, more than half seem to think of themselves as more South Asian, a third as equally South Asian and Canadian, and seven per cent as more Canadian. Both age at migration and length of residency are considered in relation to various identity outcomes, finding that the former is more significant than the latter: while those who came earlier to a greater extent identified themselves as equally or more Canadian than South Asian, those who came later (aged 55 or older at time of migration) identify themselves as more South Asian than Canadian. These three studies have in common that they use quantitative approaches to measure ethnic and/or national identifications, approaching identity as stable and measurable rather than situationally defined.³⁴ They suggest that having been born in one country does not by definition mean that one continues to identify with one's ethnicity of origin, regardless of time, thereby demonstrating that we cannot assume to "know" the ethnic identity of an older migrant due to his or her place of origin or birth. All of these studies seem to take the migrants' older ages as a given to study *ethnic* identity.³⁵

Other studies that seem to take older migrants' older ages as a given are especially interested in (self-)identity in the process of migration. For instance, Feinberg (1996) takes an interest in the challenges for self-identity that the process of migration poses for recent older Jewish immigrants from the former Soviet Union to the United States.³⁶ The study examines self and identity in the rupture of migration through an Eriksonian framework. The rupture of migration is described as presenting a particular identity challenge for these older migrants as it is thought to make it difficult to achieve a sense of continuity. The

³³ The study by Ng and Northcott (2010) includes 161 individuals of South Asian descent. They are aged between 60 and 92 and include both early and late migrants.

³⁴ It might appear contradictory to describe this understanding of identity as stable when it at the same time shows that changes occur over time. To clarify, as was suggested in the theoretical discussion of identity in the preceding chapter, identity negotiation can mean quite different things, referring either to a long-term process (which still assumes a stable inner core) or to a short-term process where identity can be defined differently in different situations depending on context.

³⁵ Another example of a study with a focus on ethnic identity that however only has a marginal interest in identity can be found in the work of Lee and colleagues (2012). They study older migrants from Korea living in Japan. The study is first and foremost concerned with subjective life experiences and choice of Korean-oriented day care services (which are described as a "place where one belongs", despite long lives in Japan and with all necessary language skills and working lives behind them). The sample includes fourteen women who migrated when they were between five and 21 years old and are aged between 77 and 93 at the time of the study.

³⁶ Feinberg (1996) uses the same empirical data as the study by Thomas, Sokolovsky and Feinberg (1996), namely life story interviews with nine recent older Jewish immigrants (aged 72-92) from the former Soviet Union to the United States. All but one woman (who had migrated 18 years earlier) had been living in the US for 3-5 years at the time the life story interviews were conducted. The group met four to six times, consisted of eight members, and the purpose of the study by Thomas and colleagues (1996) was to assess the method of reminiscence group meetings to facilitate life story telling.

migratory context is also of particular interest to Li and Chong (2012) who examine questions of well-being and health practices among older Chinese migrants to New Zealand.³⁷ Their particular focus lies on the transnational character of the older migrants' health care seeking behaviour. Identity is not defined and mentioned only in connection with health-related behaviours and community ties, emphasising the fluidity of Chineseness (i.e. that its meanings are not fixed). In another study of the same population and sample, Li, Hodgetts and Sonn (2014) suggest that these older migrants experience a sense of community both locally and transnationally, resulting in an identity "inbetweenness" in a transnational context. Identity is however not defined in this study. Roberman (2007a, also see 2007b) in turn examines how older Jewish migrants from the former Soviet Union forge a place for themselves in Israeli society.³⁸ As World War II veterans, Roberman suggests they draw upon their *soldiering* identities as victors over Nazi Germany to construct a place for themselves within the Israeli national narrative. They present themselves as key figures: without ending the war and saving the Jews who survived, they claim that the state of Israel would not exist. In all of these studies, the focus lies on identity processes related to migration. The ages of the subjects included in these works simply are higher rather than being chosen in order to focus upon ageing or old(er) age with regards to identity.

Yet another category of studies is equally interested in ethnicity and migration, exploring for instance what happens with ethnic identity in the process of migration. Kim (2001) focuses upon leisure activities among older Korean Americans as a way of exploring how leisure activities play a role in ethnic preservation and cultural integration (also see Kim et al. 2001).³⁹ Identity is explicitly understood as negotiable and socially constructed. Some of the leisure activities engaged in are described as distinctly Korean while others could be regarded as more American. While specific Korean cultural practices seem to be maintained and some recreated after migration, yet other culture-related activities are described as being particular to the American context (as gathering together to watch Korean videotapes is an example of). Ethnic preservation and the maintenance of ties with other Koreans are described as a means of achieving a sense of continuity, whereas a severance of ties in turn is described as a threat to identity. Elias (2005), not defining identity, studies the "identity dilemmas"

³⁷ Li and Chong's (2012) sample consists of 14 men and 18 women aged 62 to 77 who are described as "new" (i.e. recent) migrants. The authors share empirical data with Li, Hodgetts and Ho (2010) as well as Li, Hodgetts and Sonn (2014).

³⁸ Roberman (2007a; 2007b) uses participant observation and in-depth interviews with 20 migrants aged 75 and older, most of whom migrated because they wanted to be closer to their children. She does not define her understanding of identity.

³⁹ Kim's (2001) six informants (three male, three female) are aged between 65 and 77 at the time of the study and have been living in the United States for at least 15 years. Most were in their 40s when they migrated. The choice of studying older people is partly a practical one: "the value of studying older people is that they often have the time and the perspective on their lives that younger, especially working, people do not" (Kim 2001:21).

faced by older Jewish migrants from the former Soviet Union living in Germany.⁴⁰ Focus lies both on how new cultural identities are forged and on the maintenance of cultural ties. Elias suggests that the informants enter an intensive search for self-definition after migration. While they are expected to integrate into local Jewish communities, a mix of orientations towards Russian cultural heritage and a newfound interest in Jewish roots emerge, brought about by migration. Rather than turning their interest to integrating into German society (deemed to be hostile towards foreigners), Elias suggests that the informants embark upon a rediscovery of their Jewish roots (by way of e.g. starting to attend Saturday services, taking a great interest in Israeli affairs and building symbolic ties to Israel as a “mythological home”, Elias 2005:184). At the same time, Elias suggests they distance themselves from Russia, which they regard as anti-Semitic. Remennick (2003) in turn focuses on how older Jewish migrants from the former Soviet Union adjust to their new lives in Israel,⁴¹ including questions of identity (not defined) in the migratory process. She suggests that these older migrants experience a strong affinity to Israel due to their Jewish heritage, and that they integrate into the largest minority community in the country, namely Russian Jews, which allows them to continue to speak Russian. Transnational ties with Russia are maintained by those who can afford it. In a similar vein, Shternshis (2013) examines gender and identity in oral histories of elderly Jewish Russian migrants to the United States and Canada.⁴² She suggests that gender plays a crucial role in the older migrants’ identity constructions, as men draw upon images of masculinity as associated with fighting in the war, and women draw upon ideals of femininity as expressed through proper childrearing practices, being a good mother and grandmother. Identity is not defined but seems to be understood in constructionist terms.

As can be seen, in all of these studies, focus lies on cultural and ethnic orientations after migration. That the migrants included in these studies are older seems to be taken as a given, explained by chance (as in Elias 2005, where club members happen to be older), convenience (as in Kim 2001, as older people are presumed to have more time than younger ones) or perhaps that it is the migratory process in older age that is of interest (rather than identity in old[er]

⁴⁰ Elias’ (2005) study includes 28 men and women (aged 53 to 89) who have mostly been living in the country for four to twelve years, with some having migrated less than three years earlier. Taking a Jewish club as the point of entry, the choice of studying older migrants (rather than younger ones) appears to be one of chance rather than explicit purpose, since those who regularly visit the club are older.

⁴¹ Remennick’s (2003) sample consists of 39 men and women aged between 60 and 84 who migrated just 5-7 years earlier.

⁴² All migrants in Shternshis’ (2013) study migrated when they were at least sixty years old and have been living in their new home countries for about twenty years at the point of the study, which means that they are in their eighties. Shternshis describes her study as qualitative and includes 256 interviews.

age per se), as perhaps may be presumed to be the case in some of the remaining studies (e.g. Remennick 2003).⁴³

Last but not least, one study taking old(er) age as a given has an “other” interest in ethnicity and migration (see Table 4.1), namely in black womanhood. Bartholomew (2012) examines issues of health, religion and identity from a life course perspective in a study of older African Caribbean women.⁴⁴ Using a social constructionist understanding of identity, Bartholomew describes the shaping of a migrant identity during the women’s initial period in the country, suggesting they suffered through marginalisation in society and discrimination in both housing and the labour market. She suggests that all considered it important to maintain their cultural identities (realised through ties to others of the same origin and through the use of traditional remedies to treat illnesses). The questions of identity here are linked to black womanhood and migration, rather than ageing or old(er) age.

As could be seen, there is some variation in the extent to which identity is defined in these studies. Some use explicit (or implicit) understandings of identity as socially constructed (e.g. Shternshis 2013), while others approach identity in human developmental terms (e.g. Feinberg 1996). They do not seem to take an explicit interest in identity in old(er) age but rather seem to take older migrants’ older ages as a given to study other identity related questions. While they tell us about questions of self-identity in the migratory process or ethnic identity among older migrants, they do not address questions of identity linked specifically to old(er) age, when and how older migrants may identify as old(er) or how they may negotiate the identity category of old(er) age. What about the works that seem to approach old(er) age in terms of time lived?

Ethnicity, migration or both with an interest in old(er) age in terms of time lived

In contrast to the studies that seem to take migrants’ older ages as a given, the studies that seem to take an interest in older migrants in terms of time lived share an interest in them due to their life experiences. *Older* migrants are thus chosen

⁴³ Another study in the same category (see Table 4.1), which however only takes a marginal interest in identity and for this reason is not discussed in the main text, is that by Bolzman, Fibbi and Vial (2006). They examine the future plans for retirement among older migrants from Italy and Spain who have resided in Switzerland for a long time, focusing specifically on the question of return. The authors suggest that retirement for these migrants bears an additional dimension of change in social situation as compared to non-migrants since their status as formerly presumed temporary labourers becomes questioned. This is because their presence in the country, no longer working, no longer may be seen as legitimate. The sample consists of “274 Italians and 168 Spaniards aged 55 to 64 years, i.e. people aged just younger than the legal age for receiving old age insurance in Switzerland” (Bolzman et al. 2006:1361). The authors consider “cultural identity” as a factor in the decision making process, expressed mostly in terms of various “symbolic connections” to the study participants’ countries of origin. The findings suggest that the majority of migrants have intentions of staying in Switzerland or to spend part of the year in Switzerland and the other part in their country of origin.

⁴⁴ Bartholomew’s (2012) study includes a focus group with five women and individual interviews with another seventeen. The women are aged 60-75 and have been living in the UK for a long time.

because they can illuminate the subject of study through their particular experiences of having lived long lives. The topics of interest, again, pertain to ethnicity and how ethnic identity is preserved after a long time (as in e.g. Varverakis 2011), identity in the migratory context (as in e.g. Peterson-Veach 1999), or both ethnicity and migration (as in e.g. Leavey et al. 2004), as will be discussed below.

Several of the studies that include older migrants due to their life experience mainly seem to be interested in ethnicity. For instance, Delucchi (1998), understanding identity as constructed and negotiable, uses a fictional account to examine questions of identity among “aging immigrants”.⁴⁵ The analysis centres on the way in which self-narratives reconstruct the past and identities are negotiated in the long-term, in a process of reconciling Chineseness with becoming American. Kamar (2013) studies the narrative construction of identity through the life stories told by two elderly family members.⁴⁶ The study centres on the questions of how the two subjects use narrative to establish their identities and how they use historical and geographical references in this process. The informants’ diaspora identity as Assyrians is highlighted in the framing of the study and is featured also by focusing on stories of the homeland prior to migration, as well as by turning attention to the preservation of ethnic identity after migration. Sokolovsky (2003) explores questions of identity from a psychological/developmental perspective, studying older Jewish migrants from the former Soviet Union who recently migrated to the United States as refugees.⁴⁷ He examines how these older migrants have experienced and defined their “cultural identity” as Jews over the life course, concluding that their Jewishness has been significant throughout their lives. In a similar vein, Varverakis (2011) explores Greek-American ethnic identity among older people who migrated from Greece to the United States early in life.⁴⁸ Particular interest lies in the question of how ethnic identity (albeit not defined) is preserved at the same time as it becomes a new hybrid version. When asking his informants how they define themselves, all seem to suggest that they are Greek-American (rather than just Greek, or just American). At the same time, Varverakis suggests that “Greekness” has played a central role throughout their lives and continues to do so in older age. Among these works, it is time (rather than ageing or old[er] age

⁴⁵ The fictional characters examined in Delucchi’s (1998) study are four women who have migrated from China to the United States earlier in their lives, as described in Amy Tan’s novel *The Joy Luck Club*.

⁴⁶ Namely Kamar’s (2013) grandfather and great aunt, who both migrated very early in life and are described as being part of the Assyrian diaspora in the United States.

⁴⁷ Sokolovsky’s (2003) dissertation consists of a secondary analysis of life history interviews from another study in which the author is involved as interpreter, translator and transcriber. Informants are aged above 70. The empirical material consists of transcripts of 27 interviews with three men and six women, and transcripts from a life-reminiscence group with six participants (four women and two men).

⁴⁸ Varverakis’ (2011) ethnographic study centres on a seniors’ club and its fifty members at a Greek Orthodox Church. They are described as first generation immigrants (i.e. have migrated themselves) and seem to have been living in the United States for a long time.

per se) that is the main interest (as in Delucchi 1998), or experiences of the historical past (as in Kambar 2013). For two of the studies (Sokolovsky 2003; Varverakis 2011), it is cultural or ethnic identity over time, or over the life course, that is in focus. In other words, again, interest lies less in identity in old(er) age, and more in (ethnic) identity over time, thereby including older migrants by virtue of time lived.

The migratory context is in focus in the work of Roberman (2007a; 2007b), as discussed earlier, as well as in the work of Peterson-Veach (1999) who studies the life stories of four women (aged above 80) in the United States who migrated there from Sweden in their youth. Using a narrative understanding of identity, the idea that telling one's life story reveals who one is serves as a starting point. While the main interest lies in the past and "how things were", attention is given to old(er) age in passing by way of addressing the women's strategies for coping with old age⁴⁹ as well as their attitudes towards it.⁵⁰ There is an intent of capturing and preserving the voices of older people (which also is the case for Kambar 2013) and the main interest lies in self-identity over the life course in the context of migration, seemingly making the older migrants interesting to study by virtue of their life experience.⁵¹

Identity as related to both ethnicity and migration is of interest for Leavey, Sembhi and Livingston (2004), who study older migrants from Ireland living in England.⁵² The study focuses on issues of settlement, belonging and the question of return. Identity is not defined in this study but seems to be understood in social constructionist terms. The findings suggest that the older migrants find it important to maintain an Irish identity. The "myth of return" is discussed by the authors as a phenomenon that serves the primary purpose of giving one a reason not to integrate fully and to maintain one's ties to the country (and community) of origin (described as "both a strategy for maintaining identity and affirming belonging", p. 777). Roberts (2010) examines autobiographical narratives of older women who migrated from Korea to Germany during the 1960s and 70s

⁴⁹ As mentioned earlier, when discussing the work of others, it seems necessary at times to use the more conventional term *old age* rather than old(er) age in order not to misconstrue what it is the authors themselves write. As a rule of thumb, I use old(er) age in my own analyses but the conventional old age when accounting for what others have written.

⁵⁰ This (i.e. Peterson-Veach 1999) is an example of how a study mainly can be interested in older people by virtue of their life experience, while displaying a general interest in old age related questions (such as coping). It is however primarily self- or personal identity through the life course that is explored rather than the role of old(er) age for identity.

⁵¹ In addition, both Peterson-Veach (1999) and Kambar (2013) have a methodological interest in narrative structure, rather than identity as pertaining to old(er) age or migrancy. For another narrative approach, also see Shternshis (2013).

⁵² The work of Leavey, Sembhi and Livingston (2004) includes 24 older migrants (aged 65 to 87) who moved early in life, when aged between 15 and 21. Their stated reason for migration was mostly that there were few opportunities for them to make a living and survive in Ireland.

to work as nurses.⁵³ Focus lies on the transformation of identity after migration (understood as discursively constructed). It is argued that the women forged hybrid identities as Korean-Germans during their first few years in the country. In both studies, it is time lived and life experience, focusing on ethnicity in the context of migration (rather than questions of identity pertaining specifically to old[er] age) that makes older migrants the focus of study.⁵⁴

Identity in these studies is at times defined, at other times not. Several studies approach identity in narrative terms (e.g. Peterson-Veatch 1999), while others employ social constructionist understandings either implicitly (e.g. Leavey et al. 2004) or explicitly (e.g. Roberts 2010). They do not focus on identity related to old(er) age but take an interest in older migrants due to their life experience, focusing on other identity questions. While they tell us about self-identity in life stories, identity in the migratory context or ethnic identity over the life course, they do not address questions about the identity category of old(er) age (or indeed migrancy), when and how it may become meaningful for identification or how older migrants may negotiate the identity category of old(er) age.

Research on identity and older migrants with focus on other identity questions

As can be seen in Table 4.1, some of the studies on identity among older migrants seem to have no interest or only a vague interest in questions pertaining to either ethnicity and/or migration or ageing and/or old(er) age. They can be said to have their interest in other identity questions. The study by Thomas, Sokolovsky and Feinberg (1996) focuses on the role of cultural ideology in identity development. Le Tran (2004) examines religiousness and faith development over the life course among older women who have migrated from Vietnam to the United States.⁵⁵ Using a life story approach, she explores the role of religion and culture in the narrative construction of self. The meanings of "being Vietnamese women" are explored both in terms of what it means to be a woman in a Vietnamese cultural context and in terms of the various popular representations of Asian women in the United States. It is self-identity, religious identities and faith construction that are of main interest. In both of these studies focus then lies more on the inner self in a human developmental understanding of identity rather than identity in

⁵³ The empirical material in the work of Roberts (2010) consists of a collection of essays in a book called *Zuhause [Home]*, edited by Heike Berner and Sun-Ju Choi (2006). The authors of the autobiographical narratives are not described in any further detail than the general description offered here.

⁵⁴ Another study approaching old(er) age in terms of time lived, which however only has a marginal interest in identity with a vague interest in ethnicity and migration, is that of Thomas, Sokolovsky and Feinberg (1996). They explore how ideology and cultural narratives play into identity development and the (narrative) construction of identity. While their discussion is based on life story interviews with nine recent older Jewish immigrants (aged 72-92) from the former Soviet Union to the United States, it seems as though their main purpose is theoretical: namely to expand the Eriksonian developmental framework by adding the dimension of cultural ideology.

⁵⁵ All but one of the twelve women in Le Tran's (2004) study are aged above 55. It is unclear how much time has passed since migration.

a social context (constructed e.g. through the internal-external dialectic of identification).

As can be seen in Table 4.1, an additional two studies seem to have no interest (or only a very vague interest) in ageing and/or old(er) age, but do seem to have an interest in ethnicity, migration or related topics. For instance, Kim, Kleiber and Kropf (2001) focus on leisure activities and ethnic preservation among older Korean Americans (also see Kim 2001 discussed earlier).⁵⁶ Li, Hodgetts and Ho (2010) explore questions of home and belonging among older Chinese migrants to New Zealand⁵⁷ through the notion of place-based identities in the context of migration. The focus lies on how gardening practices serve as a means of identity reconstruction in the new environment by building a link between the past and the present. By virtue of focusing on self-identity, neither identity in relation to old(er) age nor identity in relation to ethnicity are examined specifically. Instead, the migratory context is of interest as well as the benefits of gardening for well-being among older migrants. In other words, for all of the studies in this section, focus quite simply lies on something other than ageing or old(er) age per se.

Having established that the majority of works seems interested in questions pertaining to identity, ethnicity and migration whilst approaching old(er) age mostly as a given or in terms of time lived (or, indeed, not at all, see Table 4.1), it is now at last time to examine those few works that do seem to have an explicit interest in ageing and/or old(er) age in relation to identity.

Research on identity and older migrants with interest in ethnicity, migration or both AND ageing, old(er) age or both

Having described the marginal role of ageing and old(er) age that seems to characterise the majority of the works reviewed here, it is finally time to turn to the studies that indeed do seem to take an explicit interest in identity relating to both questions of ageing and/or old(er) age and questions of ethnicity and/or migration. I shall start with those interested in ageing, followed by the one work interested in old(er) age, and finally address those that seem interested in both ageing and old(er) age in relation to identity (see Table 4.1).

To start with the works interested in ageing, this interest is combined with an interest in ethnic identity (for Kawakami 2012), or in identity pertaining to both ethnicity and migration (as for Gardner 2002, George & Fitzgerald 2012 and Zontini 2015). In her study of older Japanese women who married American (service)men and moved to the United States after World War II,⁵⁸ Kawakami

⁵⁶ The sample included in the study by Kim, Kleiber and Kropf (2001) consists of six older Koreans aged above 65 who have been living in the United States for at least 15 years.

⁵⁷ Li, Hodgetts and Ho (2010) use a sample consisting of 14 men and 18 women aged 62 to 77 who are described as "new" (i.e. recent) migrants.

⁵⁸ Kawakami (2012) conducted participant observation and interviewed 32 women aged 60 or older (except for three younger ones aged 47 to 57) and had been living in the US for a long time.

(2012) studies questions of identity (explicitly understood as negotiable and constructed) relating to ageing and migration with a particular interest in ethnic/national self-identifications and plans for the future. She suggests that most women identify with both countries, few identify exclusively with just one country, and some feel disconnected from both. A sense of belonging to the US is described as an achieved identity whereas a Japanese identity is described as ascribed on the basis of place of birth, heritage and the racialised notion of "Americanness" as associated with being "white European". Ageing comes into the picture by way of exploring plans for growing older in the US and Japan. In addition, interviewees make comparisons between what it would be like to be living in Japan at their age, and how they would be viewed then (suggesting that living in America allows them to e.g. dress in a manner that would be considered inappropriate for their age in Japan). Using a social constructionist approach, Gardner (2002) studies the life course and life histories of Bengali elders in London.⁵⁹ The specificities of Bengali ageing and views on old age are drawn out as it becomes clear that (unlike in many "Western" perceptions of old[er] age, see Chapter 2) physical dependency is not seen as a negative erasure of the self, but rather as a natural part of the life course in which one can be looked after by one's family. The status of being an elder, in turn, is presented as one of increased power and respect. Also using a social constructionist approach (albeit not defining identity), George and Fitzgerald (2012) study identity among older migrants who have been living in New Zealand for four to six decades.⁶⁰ The authors suggest that identity negotiations in the context of ageing and migration are not resolved at a singular point in time, but continue to be of importance. In addition, they suggest that older migrants face identity issues in old age of which some are the same as for non-migrants, but others are different. For instance, the continuing engagement with issues of foreignness, the smaller number of peers to reminisce with and the question of where to be buried. Their experiences of handling the challenges of migration are however described as increasing their preparedness for old age. The notion of "home" is described as complex and shifting: it is suggested that many informants realise that the "home" they remember no longer exists, concluding that they no longer could live in their countries of origin and that New Zealand in fact has become their new homeland. Last but not least, in her study of older Italian labour migrants in Nottingham, Zontini (2015) examines transnational ties and how they can

⁵⁹ Gardner's (2002) ethnographic study includes twenty-three households. While the men in her sample all are aged 50 and over, migrated rather early in life and are in need of care, the women are the men's carers, mostly much younger (some in their thirties), and migrated more recently.

⁶⁰ George and Fitzgerald's (2012) twenty-two informants (aged between 59 and 80) migrated between the ages of 17 and 29 and are all of "white European descent" (p. 243). Their origins are in 12 different countries across the globe: England, Scotland, Ireland, the Netherlands, Denmark, Finland, Hungary, Spain, Italy, Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) and Zambia, USA and Australia.

change over the life course.⁶¹ Most of the migrants in her study originated from the same village in Italy and have maintained connections both through visits and by way of re-enacting practices from their hometown in their new place of residence. However, there seems to be some variation in the maintenance of ties as some older migrants seem to gain a new interest in Italy only as they grow older.

All of these studies take an explicit interest in *ageing* in relation to identity: some mostly by way of exploring ethnic differences in how old(er) age is understood (as in Gardner 2002 and Kawakami 2012), others by way of exploring future plans (as in Kawakami 2012 and Zontini 2015), preparedness for old age (George & Fitzgerald 2012; Kawakami 2012) or in questioning identifications with their old and new homes (as in George & Fitzgerald 2012; Kawakami 2012).

The work of Maynard, Afshar, Franks and Wray (2008) stands out by virtue of being one of the few studies that take an explicit interest in identity as related specifically to *old(er) age* rather than ageing. A single chapter in a larger study on women in later life, it takes a life course approach in examining questions of identity. Their study includes women (aged 58 and above) from various ethnic backgrounds.⁶² The chapter addresses ethnic differences in how old age is understood, both in terms of when (and whether or not) the women feel "old" and what this entails. It explores how they define themselves in ethnic and national terms, suggesting that this may change through time and may differ between the women (with the non-migrants being less likely to think in such terms at all). Experiences of war-time trauma are addressed, as are experiences of discrimination among the African-Caribbean women. Overall, questions of identity in old age are discussed in terms of ethnic differences: namely, suggesting that depending on ethnic background, there seem to be different understandings and meanings of old age, including apparent differences in when and whether or not one may consider oneself to be old.

Last but not least, three studies seem to include an interest in both ageing and old(er) age in relation to identity. Taking a particular interest in ethnicity, Tammeveski (2003) studies the development of national identity⁶³ throughout adulthood among older Estonians who migrated to the United States as refugees after World War II.⁶⁴ The meanings of being Estonian over the life course are

⁶¹ Zontini (2015) interviewed 30 older migrants in Nottingham and 20 in Italy (who had indeed returned). Their ages are not specified.

⁶² The work by Maynard and colleagues (2008) includes focus groups with 121 women (34 African-Caribbean, 43 Asian, 18 White non-migrant and 26 Polish) and individual interviews with 60 women (14 African-Caribbean, 21 Asian, 6 White non-migrant, 6 Polish and 1 Irish).

⁶³ Tammeveski (2003) uses the term "national identity" throughout this work, regarding it as a kin phenomenon to ethnic identity (and hence leaning on definitions of ethnic identity when explaining national identity).

⁶⁴ Tammeveski's (2003) 30 informants (20 women and 10 men) were aged over 20 at the time of migration, were between 75 and 92 years old at the time of the study and had lived the largest part of their lives in the United States.

examined, identifying the notion of “true Estonianness” and the sense of being a “unique generation”. The role of Estonianness in old age is also explored, suggesting that the informants’ engagement in Estonian community activities and the desire to preserve this community offers them a means of maintaining meaningful social relationships in old age. Their national identity “provides them with an important source of existential meaning and a basis for social connections” (p. 399), Tammeveski suggests, making ethnicity a resource in old age. It is then described as a protective mechanism in a society where an “old age identity” is seen as problematic. Taking a particular interest in the migratory context, Oliver (2011) studies a population of older migrants that is unlike those of any of the other studies: international retirement migrants from colder climates to warmer ones, in this case from Britain to Spain.⁶⁵ The particular focus lies on the themes of continuity and change in the older migrants’ narratives of migration. In what is described as the construction of their ageing identities, a link is made between the notion of “life as a journey” with age transitions and physical movement and the act of migration, which coincides with the transition from working life to retirement. This more literal journey is described as enabling the informants to express conflicting emotions around growing older in a socially acceptable way. Last but not least, interested in both ethnicity and migration, Lee (1996) studies Korean labour migrants growing older in Japan,⁶⁶ focusing on social memory, embodiment and ethnicity. She suggests that some of the older migrants experience a feeling of being stuck “in-between”, as they have “become Japanese” (by way of having adapted Japanese behaviours and perhaps having a better command of the Japanese language than Korean) but are still regarded as Koreans. Lee suggests that when growing older, the body becomes a critical site where issues of race, class and gender intersect. According to Lee, the ageing body cannot be separated from the foreign body. In all of these studies, then, an interest in growing older is combined with an interest in old(er) age, be it with a focus on ethnicity (as in Tammeveski 2003), the migratory journey (combined with the “journey” into old age, as in Oliver 2011) or a combination of both ethnicity and migration (as in Lee 1996).

Among the studies that do seem to show an interest in identity questions related to both ageing and old(er) age *and* ethnicity and migration, we can see the following trends: some explore ethnic differences in how old age seems to be understood (as in Gardner 2002, Kawakami 2012 and Maynard et al. 2008); others explore future plans (as in Kawakami 2012 and Zontini 2015) or preparedness for old age (George & Fitzgerald 2012; Kawakami 2012); some seem interested in ethnicity in old age (Tammeveski 2003) or whether migrants

⁶⁵ To be more precise, Oliver (2011) describes these international retirement migrants as being “mainly British” (p. 70). She uses participant observation and “lengthy semi-structured interviews with 67 individuals” (p. 69), but does not describe their age range.

⁶⁶ Lee’s (1996) ethnographic study includes life history interviews with 21 individuals who migrated early in life.

seem to identify with their old or new homes (as in George & Fitzgerald 2012; Kawakami 2012); or interest lies in the migratory journey combined with the journey into old age (as in Oliver 2011), or ageing as an ethnic minority in the migratory life course (as in Lee 1996). Missing are studies that can tell us more about when it is (in what situations) and in relation to whom old(er) age and migrancy (rather than ethnicity) seem to become meaningful for identification, and that explore how older migrants seem to negotiate the identity categories of old(er) age and migrancy.

The sampling of older migrants in previous research

Not least since the following chapter will present the methodology used in this dissertation, this section seeks to briefly address the general trends concerning methods and sample selections in previous research so as to provide a backdrop for what is to come. In terms of methods used, the vast majority of studies reviewed here (30 out of 34) use qualitative methodologies, and only four (namely Bolzman et al. 2006, Gee 1999, Lai 2012 and Ng & Northcott 2010) use quantitative methods. The present study follows suit by way of using a qualitative approach.

Which migrants have been included in these studies, then? With regards to when in life migration took place (i.e. early or late), eighteen of the studies include migrants who moved early in life and spent most of their adult lives in their new home country (e.g. George & Fitzgerald 2012; Kawakami 2012; Varverakis 2011).⁶⁷ Twelve include late-in-life migrants who migrated rather recently, namely close to or during retirement (e.g. Elias 2005; Li et al. 2010).⁶⁸ The remaining four include both types (Gee 1999; Lai 2012; Le Tran 2004; Ng & Northcott 2010). There is much reason to believe that the experience of migration late in life is very different from that of migrating early. Migrating early will most of the time mean that one has lived the largest part of one's adult life in the "new" country of residence, working and perhaps raising a family. As a consequence, questions of identity could potentially be rather different, such as the question of how one settles into life in a new country in old age (as in e.g. Li et al. 2010; Roberman 2007a & 2007b) or where "home" is after a long life in a second home country (as in e.g. George & Fitzgerald 2012; Leavey et al. 2004). One may also expect differences in relation to the whens, whos and hows of the identity categories of old(er) age and migrancy. As the present dissertation is interested in the negotiation of the identity categories of old(er) age and

⁶⁷ The complete list is as follows: Bartholomew 2012, Bolzman et al. 2006, Delucchi 1998, Gardner 2002, George & Fitzgerald 2012, Kamar 2013, Kawakami 2012, Kim et al. 2001, Kim et al. 2001, Leavey et al. 2004, Lee 1996, Lee et al. 2012, Maynard et al. 2008, Peterson-Veach 1999, Roberts 2010, Tammeveski 2003, Varverakis 2011, and Zontini 2015.

⁶⁸ The complete list is as follows: Elias 2005, Feinberg 1996, Li & Chong 2012, Li et al. 2010, Li et al. 2014, Oliver 2011, Remennick 2003, Roberman 2007a, Roberman 2007b, Shternshis 2013, Sokolovsky 2003, and Thomas et al. 1996.

migrancy, those included in the sample had to have been living in Sweden for a long time: they had to have had the chance to settle in, get to know Sweden and learn the language in order to ascertain that they had experiences of migrancy to share (see Chapter 5 for more). As will be seen, the sample of the present study includes older migrants who migrated earlier in life (when aged between 15 and 45) and have been living in Sweden for a long time (between 18 and 61 years) (see Table 5.1, Chapter 5). The reasoning behind the sample selection is presented at greater depth in the next chapter (Chapter 5 on Methodology).

While a number of studies do not seem to describe the chronological ages of the older migrants studied,⁶⁹ out of those that do report the age range of informants, fifteen include older migrants between the ages of 50 and 65,⁷⁰ while eleven include migrants above the age of 65.⁷¹ This adds to the image suggested elsewhere (see Chapter 2 as well as Chapter 5) regarding the social and cultural construction of old(er) age: it does not need to begin with the arbitrary retirement age of 65. This is in line with the present dissertation, which uses a 55+ age range.

As far as the origins of the older migrants included in the earlier studies reviewed here are concerned, in the great majority (31) of cases, studies seem to use samples who all share the same ethnic origins. Indeed, three groups seem to be somewhat overrepresented, as eight studies include Jews from the former Soviet Union (e.g. Roberman 2007a),⁷² six works include older Chinese migrants (e.g. Li & Chong 2008)⁷³ and five studies include Koreans (e.g. Lee 1996).⁷⁴ This means that more than half of the studies (namely nineteen) are based on the experiences of three particular groups. An additional ten focus on older migrants of singular ethnic origins⁷⁵ and two on older migrants from particular regions.⁷⁶ To add to this, most of the studies that include migrants of various origins tend to compare different ethnic groups (such as Italians and Spaniards in Bolzman

⁶⁹ The following six studies do not provide any chronological age specifications: Delucchi (1998), Kambar (2013), Roberman (2007a), Roberts (2010), Shternshis (2013) and Varverakis (2011). An additional two studies (namely Oliver 2011 and Zontini 2015) describe their informants as “retired”.

⁷⁰ Two studies (Elias 2005 & Gardner 2003) use a 50+ age range, five a 55+ age range (namely Bolzman et al. 2006, George & Fitzgerald 2012, Lai 2012, Le Tran 2004, and Maynard et al. 2008) and eight draw the line at 60+ (namely Bartholomew 2012, Kawakami 2012, Lee 1996, Li & Chong 2012, Li et al. 2010, Li et al. 2014, Ng & Northcott 2010, and Remennick 2003).

⁷¹ Four studies use a 65+ age range (Gee 1999; Kim 2001; Kim et al. 2001; Leavey et al. 2004), three draw the line at 70+ (Feinberg 1996; Sokolovsky 2003; Thomas et al. 1996), another three at 75+ (Lee et al. 2012; Roberman 2007b; Tammeveski 2003) and just one at 80+ (Peterson-Veatch 1999).

⁷² The eight works including Jews from the former Soviet Union are: Elias (2005), Feinberg (1996), Remennick (2003), Roberman (2007a), Roberman (2007b), Shternshis (2013), Sokolovsky (2003) and Thomas et al. (1996).

⁷³ The six works including migrants of Chinese origin are: Delucchi (1998), Gee (1999), Lai (2012), Li & Chong (2012), Li et al. (2010) and Li et al. (2014).

⁷⁴ The five works including migrants of Korean origin are: Kim (2001), Kim et al. (2001), Lee (1996), Lee et al. (2012) and Roberts (2010).

⁷⁵ These are (one case each) from Assyria/Persia (Kambar 2013), Bangladesh (Gardner 2002), Estonia (Tammeveski 2003), Greece (Varverakis 2011), Ireland (Leavey et al. 2004), Italy (Zontini 2015), Japan (Kawakami 2012), Sweden (Peterson-Veatch 1999), the UK (Oliver 2011) and Vietnam (Le Tran 2004).

⁷⁶ Namely the West Indies (or African Caribbean) (Bartholomew 2012) and South Asia (Ng & Northcott 2010).

et al. 2006 or African Caribbeans, Asians,⁷⁷ Polish, Irish and British in Maynard et al. 2008). Thus, these studies tend to focus on the (cultural) particularities of specific ethnic groups rather than shared experiences of migration or migrancy. The only exception amidst this is the sample used by George and Fitzgerald (2012), which includes 22 older migrants from twelve different countries. As the present study also includes migrants from twelve different countries for the purpose of studying migrancy rather than ethnicity or ethnic particularities (see Chapter 5 on Methodology), the sample in the study by George and Fitzgerald (2012) lies closest to the present one. Studying migrants from various origins allows us to shift focus from *ethnic* particularities to shared experiences of migration and the shared experiences of *migrancy* which potentially arise from them.

What about old(er) age and migrancy?

The review suggests that while nearly all works seem to have an explicit interest in ethnic identity, identity in the context of migration, or both, the interest in identity in *old(er) age* or identity in the ageing process seems to be not nearly as widely spread. More often than not, informants' older ages seem to be taken as a given, chosen by virtue of time lived (or life experience), or indeed seem to be of no particular interest at all. Such studies instead seem to focus on questions such as whether the older migrants studied identify with their ethnicity of origin or with their new home country (as e.g. Gee 1999), examine self-identity in the process of adjusting to a new country (as e.g. Feinberg 1996), study ethnic identity in the migratory process (as e.g. Kim 2001), the narrative construction of identity (as e.g. Kambar 2013), how ethnic identity seems to be defined after a long time in another country (as e.g. Varverakis 2011), or where home is after all those years (e.g. Leavey et al. 2004). Older migrants then seem to just happen to be older or are chosen due to their life experience.

In those studies that do seem to take an interest in questions pertaining to ageing and/or old(er) age, focus mostly seems to lie on migration, ethnicity and ethnic differences: studying ageing and being old as an ethnic minority (Lee 1996), ageing in the context of the migratory journey (Oliver 2011), future plans (Kawakami 2012; Zontini 2015) and preparedness for old age (George & Fitzgerald 2012; Kawakami 2012). Old age seems to be studied mostly in terms of the role of ethnicity (Tammeveski 2003) or ethnic differences (Gardner 2002; Kawakami 2012; Maynard et al. 2008). What they do not explore is how older migrants seem to negotiate the identity category of old(er) age (let alone migrancy), or when and in relation to whom old(er) age (or migrancy) may become meaningful for identification. To add to this, the research on identity

⁷⁷ "Asians" are of course not an ethnic group (and technically, neither are African Caribbeans). Rather, the study includes individuals from various (unspecified) Asian countries.

among older migrants reviewed here seems to have been based mostly on specific ethnic groups, where as many as 19 studies out of 34 draw upon the experiences of older migrants from just three different ethnic origins and an additional 12 include singular ethnic groups or migrants from specific regions. Two of the remaining studies compare different ethnic groups (hence examining ethnic differences), and only the final one includes migrants from a range of different countries.

But what about *migrancy* in previous research? None of the works explicitly set out to study identity in relation to migrancy. Nevertheless, in several studies, accounts that reflect experiences of foreignness, ethnic or racial otherness, or discrimination (based on ethnicity or race) seem to be offered, which all could be described as pertaining to experiences of migrancy. For instance, George and Fitzgerald (2012) suggest that informants find themselves being regarded as foreigners despite long lives in New Zealand. The Irish in the UK in the study by Leavey and colleagues (2004) seem to continue to see themselves as settled but not belonging. In the US context, both Japanese (Kawakami 2012) and Koreans (Kim 2001) seem to find themselves excluded from "Americanness" due to racial otherness. Finally, experiences of discrimination are addressed in a number of studies (e.g. Bartholomew 2012; Maynard et al. 2008; Roberts 2010).⁷⁸

Thus one could say that while the significance of experiences of (ethnic) otherness seem to be acknowledged and sometimes also linked to the identity questions at hand, none of the studies explicitly aim to address migrancy as an identity category but instead focus on ethnicity or self-identity in the context of migration. Needless to say, then, old(er) age and migrancy have not been studied together in relation to identity and older migrants. This is where the present dissertation comes in, exploring when it is (in what situations) and in relation to whom old(er) age and migrancy (rather than ethnicity) seem to become meaningful for identification, and how the identity categories of old(er) age and migrancy seem to be negotiated. Rather than taking older migrants' ages as a given, studying them by virtue of time lived, or exploring cultural differences in how old(er) age is understood, it seems merited to specifically consider the potential role of the identity category of old(er)age for older migrants' identifications. To move beyond the examination of ethnic particularities and differences, we need to shift focus to *migrancy* and the shared experiences of perceived difference resulting from migration and include migrants from various origins. How this has been done in the present dissertation is the subject of the next chapter.

⁷⁸ Other works that refer to similar experiences are: Elias (2005), Gardner (2002), Lee (1996) and Sokolovsky (2003).

CHAPTER 5: METHODOLOGY

How has the present study been designed and conducted then? In the present chapter, we shall first look at how the study is designed, including the choice of methods used and the reasoning behind the sampling strategy. Thereafter, we shall look at how the study was conducted, including the recruitment of interviewees, a description of the sample, interview guide and the interview procedure. The process of analysis leading to the findings presented in the chapters to come is discussed next, before addressing issues of quality assurance and challenges pertaining to language and translation. Last but not least, ethical considerations and the study's limitations are discussed.

Designing the study

Choosing the interview

Given the overall frame of the project as a social constructionist one, interested in how individuals seem to negotiate identity categories and when it is that the identity categories of old(er) age and migrancy seem to become meaningful for identification, whether to choose a quantitative or qualitative approach was never a question. The choice between focus groups and individual interviews was however not so obvious. While the decision ultimately fell on the individual interview, what was of particular interest with focus groups was not least the potential of group dynamics to allow participants to challenge one another (see e.g. Bryman 2004; Morgan 1996), as well as the increased power placed in participants' hands rather than the researcher's (see e.g. Pollack 2003; Wilkinson 1998). Interaction between participants (and the researcher) also might have brought negotiations and constructions to light in action, or "reflect the process through which meaning is constructed" (Bryman 2004:348). Some of the main drawbacks of using focus groups however are, firstly, that practical issues are more complicated than with individual interviews (such as the arrangement of group sessions and transcription). Secondly, the researcher has less control over the discussion, making it more difficult to ensure that it remains focused on the topic in question. Thirdly, individual views cannot be explored at the same depth (by way of giving less space for each person to talk, conveying collective rather than individual experiences). Finally, as far as recruitment of interviewees and group composition is concerned, for logistical reasons, it might have been practically impossible to use anything other than "natural" (or homogeneous) groups (namely of single ethnic origins, recruited through ethnic organisations) (see e.g. Bryman 2004; Morgan 1996). This may in turn have made it difficult to stay focused on migrancy, running a dual risk of ending up comparing different groups and of participants discussing ethnic identity rather than experiences pertaining to migrancy. Some of the benefits of individual interviews (as

compared to focus groups, leaving practical issues aside) are that they allow for an in-depth exploration of individual views, offer the possibility of achieving a great overall level of depth, and give the researcher a greater level of control over the interview situation to remain focused (see e.g. Morgan 1996; for a full consideration of the two options, see Machat-From 2011).

Ultimately, while both focus groups and individual interviews constitute viable options for data collection given the present study's theoretical frame and research questions, the data generated through each method is qualitatively different. Focus groups would have placed group level negotiations and constructions in the spotlight, whereas the individual interview places the individual at the centre. Individual interviews also allow for a different kind of sample composition that does not need to take potential group dynamics into consideration. The theoretical sample with regards to migrancy which this study has employed (see section on Sampling strategy) would not have been possible in group interviews. In other words, while focus groups hold much potential for immensely interesting material when it comes to studying identity, old(er) age and migrancy, they would have resulted in quite a different study.

The individual interview, with its widespread use in (qualitative) research, however comes in many shapes and sizes. Departing from the social constructionist stance taken in this dissertation (see Chapter 3), the overall frame for the interviews conducted for this study can be described as a *constructionist* one. Koro-Ljungberg (2008) identifies a number of key ingredients in constructionist approaches, including that the interview is regarded as a site of knowledge production, in a collaborative, contextual and active process (cf. also Holstein & Gubrium 2004), also referred to as a “negotiated text” (Fontana & Frey 2000). Most importantly, this means that interviews need to be treated as “situated, constructed reports, not actual representations of facts or ‘true’ experiences” (Koro-Ljungberg 2008:431). Constructionist interviews are described as “dialogical performances, social meaning-making acts, and cofacilitated knowledge exchanges” (Koro-Ljungberg 2008:430). This means that rather than supposing that the interviewer neutrally gathers information from the interviewee who states objective facts, interviewer and interviewee interact and both together influence the knowledge and meanings that are produced.

For the present dissertation, this means that the interviews conducted are not considered to be channels of gathering objective information about the authentic experiences of older migrants and various “facts” concerning their identities. Instead, they are regarded as social meaning-making acts where the interviewer and interviewee interact and together construct knowledge and meanings: my questions influence interviewees' answers, they tell me things they may not have thought about before, and their responses also reflect what they presume I or somebody else might expect. An example of this would be me

asking about experiences of first coming to Sweden from another country (in terms of interviewees' ethnic or cultural identities meeting Swedes), and some interviewees telling me that they *did not* have to change anything about the way they dressed, or that they were lucky to *not* have had to meet any unpleasant people (such as e.g. racists). Since the question was framed openly, such answers reflect what interviewees expect others (i.e. me as the researcher, or perhaps any native Swede) to assume about their experiences, such as having to abandon traditional clothing or encountering racists.

Considering the interviews as particular situations where the interviewer and interviewee interact and together construct knowledge and meanings also means that what interviewees say needs to be contextualised when presenting the findings. This is why interview excerpts presented in the empirical chapters to come (i.e. Chapters 6, 7, 8 & 9) generally include a presentation of the question that had just been asked, rather than presenting quotes out of context. When presenting and discussing what interviewees say in the interviews, I therefore mention what question has preceded the statement, whether or not a statement was given in response to any particular question, or whether it perhaps just surfaced at any time over the course of the interview. It is also for this reason that interview excerpts include symbols (especially //) to indicate when the interviewer has somehow responded to what the interviewee has said, also in cases where it does not seem relevant to state exactly what it is I said (namely whether I said "okay", "right" or perhaps "yes").

Seeing the interview as a collaborative, contextual and active process also means that the interviewer is fully aware that interviewees might not have thought much before about the things they are asked about,⁷⁹ and that they might have answered differently if asked at another time, or indeed if asked by another person. Interest then lies in *how* interviewees talk about their identities and what it is they deem to be relevant to talk about, rather than capturing "true experiences". In other words, since it is how interviewees talk and reason about the questions asked that is of greatest interest rather than any "facts", it is of little consequence if it perhaps is the first time they reflect upon whether or not they think of themselves as old(er). Considering that the interviewer in the constructionist interview is considered to be part of the process, *any* interviewer asking questions may very well influence what kind of answers are offered, which means that regardless of who conducts the interviews, answers are never neutrally collected in a vacuum free from social context. In this particular case, the interviewer was female, much younger than the interviewees, and a migrant.

⁷⁹ Multiple interviews would of course have solved this particular issue in the sense that interviewees would have had time to reflect between interviews and indeed may have started to think differently about their relations to the identity categories of old(er) age and migrancy. However, the aim of the study has neither been to capture changes over time nor to gather "facts".

In other words, in line with the overall social constructionist approach of this study, this means that the interview data is not seen as reflecting the “truth” of interviewees’ lives, but rather as constructed and situated in a context which means that what they tell me is dependent upon the interview situation itself, what they think of telling me in that particular situation, and what they choose to tell me (or not) in that context. All of this is to the largest extent possible reflected in the way the findings are presented, namely by writing what the findings “suggest” and what patterns “seem to” emerge, rather than what they “show” or perhaps “demonstrate”.

Sampling strategy

The sampling strategy employed here is best described as both purposeful and theoretical (see e.g. Creswell 2007). Purposeful sampling means that “the enquirer selects individuals and sites for study because they can purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon in the study” (Creswell 2007:125). The individuals included in this study had to be of an age that may be considered potentially *older* (i.e. 55 and above) in order to inform our understanding of old(er) age in relation to identity, and they had to be (international) *migrants* in order to inform our understanding of migrancy in relation to identity. Theoretical sampling, largely associated with grounded theory but not necessarily limited to it, is defined by Strauss and Corbin as

Data gathering driven by concepts derived from the evolving theory and based on the concept of ‘making comparisons’, whose purpose is to go to places, people, or events that will maximize opportunities to discover variations among concepts and to densify categories in terms of their properties and dimensions.
(Strauss & Corbin 1998:201)

The concepts under scrutiny in the present dissertation are old(er) age and migrancy. The theoretical sample used here seeks to maximise opportunities to find variations specifically in *migrancy* (namely different experiences depending on one’s ethnic background), as will be seen. While it is especially with regards to migrancy that variation was sought, the sample also includes variation in old(er) age: namely individuals of different old(er) ages (ranging from the mid-fifties to late seventies). Creswell (2007) further describes theoretical sampling as “find[ing] examples of a theoretical construct and thereby elaborate on and examine it” (p. 127). Finally, in the words of Bryman (2004), theoretical sampling “places a premium on theorizing rather than the statistical adequacy of a sample, which may be a limited guide to sample selection in many instances” (p. 334). It is therefore *not* a question of finding a sample that is representative of the population from which one draws one’s study participants, but rather one of maximising the potential for theorisation. Using a theoretical sample here, then, aims at a variation of experiences of old(er) age and migrancy, so as to be able to

explore multiple dimensions of how they can be constructed in different situations.

In other words, departing from the aims of the study and the research questions, interviewees then had to be selected so as to be able to tell me something about how they reasoned about the identity categories of old(er) age and migrancy, at the same time as potential for theorising was desirable. The following criteria were employed: interviewees had to be born abroad, have lived in Sweden for at least 15 years,⁸⁰ speak Swedish,⁸¹ and be at least 55 years of age. As will be explained below, however, there were further more specific criteria pertaining to potential variations in experiences of migrancy connected to countries of origin.

The lower age limit of 55 might seem unusual to those who take for granted that old(er) age begins when one retires, conventionally in Western countries most often around the age of 65. However, from a social constructionist perspective, it becomes clear that this age marker is a construct (see e.g. Warnes & Williams 2006:1258) to the effect that people in fact may see themselves as old(er) both earlier and later, quite independently of their chronological age (see Chapter 2 for a discussion of the construction of old[er] age). When studying migrants, then, Warnes and Williams (2006) suggest 50 years and older as an appropriate marker for old(er) age, both because the point at which a person is considered old(er) is a culturally determined social construct, and because “many less-skilled labour migrants experience job-related illness, disabilities or redundancy and cease paid work in their 50s or even earlier” (Warnes & Williams 2006:1258). While acknowledging that many in this age group might still be working, the lower age limit of 55 was nevertheless deemed appropriate for this study. The reasons for this are both that this age limit holds the potential of capturing variations in experiences of old(er) age and that it increases the chances of finding interviewees who match all other criteria. While it certainly is the research question(s) that must be the driving force in the sample selection, to make research possible, some practical aspects also need to be considered: the population from which to draw potential interviewees nearly doubles when

⁸⁰ There are two main reasons for drawing the line at 15 years in Sweden. Firstly, I wanted to ensure that the interviewees had had the chance to settle in, get to know Sweden and learn the language. Secondly, I did not want to by definition exclude certain groups of more recent migrants (as might be the case for people from e.g. Somalia and to some extent the Balkans), which would have been the case if the line had been drawn at 20 years for instance.

⁸¹ As to the criterion of speaking Swedish, there are a number of reasons for this. Firstly, the use of an interpreter was not an option, both due to lack of funding and for scientific reasons: despite professional training of interpreters, nuances in the use of personal pronouns (we/they, us/them), for instance, would in all likelihood have been lost in translation (hence making it impossible to conduct an analysis which looks into e.g. discursive positioning). Secondly, while I could have conducted interviews in English or German instead of Swedish, the first hand choice was to conduct all of them in Swedish, both for the sake of coherence and for reasons of levels of what one might call integration: not being able to communicate in Swedish after having lived in the country for fifteen years or more would imply rather limited contact with the country's native population.

drawing the line at 55 as compared to 65.⁸² Last but not least, *not* using retirement age as a marker is also in line with how several previous studies on identity among older migrants selected their samples, since as many as fifteen out of the thirty-four studies examined in the literature review include individuals aged between fifty and sixty-five (see Chapter 4).

With regards to migrancy, in order to be able to capture a variety of experiences, the idea from the start was to include a range of different countries of origin, with the common denominator being the migratory background and the potential experiences of migrancy entailed by this. Unlike most previous studies of identity among older migrants (see Chapter 4), this dissertation moves away from studying singular ethnic groups and making comparisons of cultural and ethnic differences in favour of examining shared experiences of migrancy. These have less to do with where one comes from and more to do with constructions of difference, regardless of origin (see Chapter 2). A hypothesis was that how one is regarded by Swedes will be influenced by how similar or different one's country of origin is perceived to be as compared to Sweden (which, in turn, is also likely to influence one's own perceptions of similarity and difference). The social constructionist approach used in this study, as discussed in Chapter 3, acknowledges that "how ordinary human beings in many cases experience their own identities" (Cornell & Hartman 2007:95) lies close to the primordial metaphor embedded in essentialism, namely that people very well may perceive their identity as stable, given and "rooted in the unchangeable circumstances of birth" (Cornell & Hartmann 2007:51). This means that such an essentialist understanding forms a part of how identities are constructed socially. As previously discussed in Chapter 3, in the internal-external dialectic of identification, this means that both actors' self-definitions and how they think others regard them very well may be based on essentialist criteria. In other words, migrants may be regarded as (im)migrants in stable and given terms because of their supposed blood ties or having been born in another country. To add to this, some countries may be regarded as more different from Sweden than others (and consequently, depending on country of origin, some people may be more or less likely to be regarded as [im)migrants). Including migrants from different countries that are considered more similar or more different acknowledges that ordinary people may perceive such differences in essentialised terms. These differences are in turn regarded here as socially constructed (thus not as stable and given), meaning among other things that "actual" differences are not presumed, instead opening up for the possibility of variation. It is not a matter of actual difference but of how potential similarity and difference are perceived

⁸² In the year 2011 when the interviews were conducted, the foreign-born population aged above 65 years amounted to 209 371 individuals and the number of foreign-born residents aged 55-64 amounted to 180 209 (SCB 2017). Corresponding numbers for the year 2016 are 251 778 foreign-born persons above the age of 65 and 210 019 aged 55-64 (SCB 2017).

(or what is perceived as real is real in its consequences, cf. the Thomas theorem mentioned in Chapter 3).

Building a sample upon the idea of including a variety of experiences and multiple countries of origin that to various extents are considered to be similar or different, the theoretical sample employed in this dissertation has taken its starting point in a Swedish attitudinal survey called *Mångfaldsbarometern* (*Ethnic Diversity Barometer*). This survey has been conducted annually since the year 2005, originally by researchers at Uppsala University's Department of Sociology and currently (since the year 2013) at Gävle University (see Ahmadi et al. 2015). While the survey includes a range of questions pertaining to attitudes towards immigrants and immigration, the part that has formed the basis for the sampling strategy employed here is a measurement of *perceived cultural distance* to different nationalities or peoples. While cultural distance sounds as though it is only culture that influences perceptions of similarity or difference, the very notion indeed includes ideas about physical appearance, or "race" as well (see e.g. Eriksen & Sørheim 2003). This seems to make the idea of perceived cultural distance resonate well with how migrancy seems to be constructed, not least in the Swedish case (see Chapter 2). To add to this, as the authors of the *Ethnic Diversity Barometer* (e.g. Mella & Palm 2010) note, geographical distance has some influence on perceptions of cultural distance, as do religion, cultural expressions and historical events. In another writing commenting on the *Ethnic Diversity Barometer*, one of the authors (Mella 2015) comments on the question of culture in the concept of perceived cultural distance. He clarifies that the term "culture" is neither defined in the questionnaire, nor are interviewees asked to define the term. Rather, he writes that the researches worked with the hypothesis that interviewees will associate the question of culture with "something that penetrates all of society with regards to values, norms, rituals, codes, patterns of action and ways of thinking" (Mella 2015:38). Figure 5.1 (see next page) shows the results for the year 2011, which was the year in which the sample selection was made and interviews were conducted.⁸³ The aim was to include a range of countries so as to be able to capture variation and potentially different experiences of migrancy, which offers fertile ground for theorisation. Interviewees from the whole spectrum have been included for this reason, ranging from some of the most "close" to some of the most "distant" countries.

⁸³ Unfortunately, the question on perceived cultural distance was removed from the survey in 2016. In 2015, the 10-year anniversary book (Ahmadi et al. 2015) was published instead of the regular annual survey results. As no data is available for the most recent year as this dissertation goes to press, it was deemed to make most sense to present the data for the year in which interviews were conducted. As can be seen in the collection of the annual surveys from 2005 until 2014, published in Ahmadi and colleagues (2015), while some of the groups sometimes switch places from year to year, the general thrust seems to remain the same.

Figure 5.1: Perceived cultural distance of different groups in the year 2011

Source: *Mångfaldsbarometern 2011* [*Ethnic Diversity Barometer 2011*] (Mella, Palm & Bromark 2011; also see Ahmadi et al. 2015).

Note: For this question, respondents were asked to assess how similar or different (on a scale from 0 to 6) they thought these groups were as compared to themselves (Mella, Palm & Bromark 2011).

Why use the concept of perceived cultural distance? One reason can be found in the construction of migrancy vis-à-vis Swedishness as described in Chapter 2. The way in which migrancy seems to be constructed in Sweden, which includes ideas surrounding cultural difference and the notion of cultural racism, makes the concept of perceived cultural distance a fruitful starting point when seeking to study variation in constructions of migrancy. An added bonus is that the information provided by the *Ethnic Diversity Barometer* captures the extent to which different groups of people seem to be constructed as similar or different which, in turn, are key concepts in the dynamic construction of identities (see Chapter 3). Two interviewees from each of the following countries were ultimately successfully recruited for the study: Norway, Finland, England, USA, Poland, Greece, Chile, Bosnia, Thailand, Turkey, Kurdistan and Iran (for more on recruitment and sample characteristics, see following sections).

The sampling criteria employed here might by some be (mis)interpreted as essentialist and therefore strangely at odds with the overall social constructionist stance taken in this study. As has been discussed, essentialism forms a part of the social constructionist approach. Nevertheless, it seems as though the approach taken here requires further explanation so as to avoid misreading.

Social constructions around any kind of phenomenon are not randomly floating around somewhere out there, but rather the phenomenon in question is constructed around a marker that makes it recognisable in one way or another (as gender may be regarded as a social construct built around biological sex as a marker, see e.g. Hollander et al. 2011). Old(er) age can then be said to be constructed around notions of life expectancy, while migrancy can be said to be constructed around notions of ethnic or cultural difference. To take such notions as a starting point for the exploration of these phenomena is therefore a necessity. The question of the risk of essentialisation is less one of *which* criteria one employs but more one of *what it is one assumes* about them. It cannot be overemphasised that the criteria employed here must not be misread as assuming old(er) age and migrancy as essential and permanent qualities of those interviewed here. Rather, the assumption is that unlike for example ethnically Swedish teenagers, those included in the sample hold the potential of possibly, in certain situations, identifying themselves and/or being identified by others, as old(er) or as (im)migrants. This is in line with the theoretical approach towards identity and identity categories discussed previously (see Chapter 3).

In addition to the risk of an essentialist reading of the sample selection, some might interpret the inclusion of people of different countries of origin as lumping together and homogenising a great diversity of people who have nothing more in common than being born outside of Sweden.⁸⁴ However, what needs to be borne in mind is that the focus of this study is not ethnicity or ethnic identity, nor is it “culture” (whatever one may mean by that concept). Instead, the focus is on *migrancy*, an identity category resulting from migration, the experience of which is potentially shared by all who have migrated to a country where they do not share the same ethnicity as the native population, albeit in a range of ways. The question is not one of the particularities of ethnic identities or cultural experiences, but one of identifications as (im)migrant (or non-Swede). Including people from different countries of origin, who have migrated for a variety of reasons, is then not to say that they all are the same and all take part in a shared “immigrant culture”: this is neither what this study is about, nor is it in fact implied in the study design. Quite the opposite is the case. The point of including a variety of countries of origin is precisely to capture a range of potentially different experiences, so as to be able to work from a fertile ground for theorisation. For instance, experiences can be expected to vary depending on how similar or different one’s country or culture of origin is perceived to be; how similar or different one *oneself* feels as compared to the native population; how easily one may be identified as an (im)migrant by others, depending on markers such as one’s name, language skills and appearance (see Chapter 2); and perhaps

⁸⁴ Indeed, the same criticism can be directed at studies of “older people”, who also may share little in common other than their chronological age.

also depending on one's reasons for migration, which may have been voluntary or involuntary.⁸⁵ All of these elements (and more) are likely to influence one's experiences of when it is (in what situations) and in relation to whom the identity category of migrancy becomes meaningful for identification, as well as how the identity category of migrancy is negotiated. The question is therefore if – and if so, how – experiences of the identity category of migrancy differ between migrants from different countries of origin.

Conducting the study

Recruitment of interviewees

Given the specific criteria drawn up for this sample, finding interviewees was not the easiest task and had the potential of becoming a matter of looking for the proverbial needle in a haystack. The perhaps most obvious points of entry were to either look for potential interviewees wherever one might find older people (i.e. seniors' organisations, assisted living facilities), or looking wherever one might find foreign-born people (i.e. ethnic organisations). As success seemed more likely by way of following the latter, ethnic organisations formed the primary point of entrance.⁸⁶ While not unproblematic, this was deemed the most efficient and realistic way of finding interviewees. The main issue with this recruitment channel when it comes to research on identity is that members of ethnic organisations almost by definition very well may have an orientation towards their country or ethnicity of origin that potentially differs from those who have no apparent interest in membership in such an organisation. However, this would have been of greater concern if this study had been about ethnic identity instead of migrancy. The main interest was in experiences related to the identity category of migrancy, defining oneself or being defined as an (im)migrant or non-Swede, and not about ethnicity per se.

To get in touch with potential interviewees, a list of ethnic organisations was compiled. The contact information for several of these (as found on the internet) however turned out to be out of date. In cases where there were no phone numbers, letters were sent and sometimes returned unopened as the addressee was unknown. Phone calls showed that numbers were no longer in use. In some cases, the phone numbers still worked, but it had been years since the organisations had been active. In a couple of such cases, I nevertheless succeeded in finding interviewees, as the persons who answered the phone themselves fit the criteria and were interested in participating in the study. On

⁸⁵ All of these arguments further explain what some readers may regard as a paradox, namely that the interviewees are described as sharing experiences of migrancy at the same time as their experiences are expected to be different. In other words, while all interviewees share the experience of having moved from one country to another, how one is received in the host society potentially differs between individuals, not least due to the various ways in which they will be categorised or defined by others depending on how they or their countries of origin seem to be perceived.

⁸⁶ A third option would have been to place advertisements in newspapers. However, this did not seem practical, both because of the very specific selection of countries of origin and due to the costs involved.

the whole, once I did get in touch with the presidents of (active) ethnic organisations, I introduced myself, told them about the project, and asked whether they might be able to help me find someone who fit the criteria. In some cases, I was told right away that there were no members who fit the age group; in other cases, a not uncommon response was "...but the older ones don't speak Swedish..." (which, however, sometimes was re-evaluated upon my mention of 55 as the lowest age).⁸⁷ As to those who thought they might be able to help, in a couple of cases we agreed that I would come to a group meeting and introduce myself in person. A couple chose to e-mail my request to members. For the largest part however I sent over written information, and the presidents (qua gatekeepers) talked to people who might be interested, passing on their contact information to me with their permission, or letting them contact me directly. Towards the end of the data collection period, some seniors' organisations were also contacted in the hope of finding interviewees from certain countries. Out of the 24 interviewees who participated in the study, seventeen were recruited through different ethnic organisations (of which fourteen were active members),⁸⁸ three through personal contacts, two through seniors' organisations and two through snowballing. An overview including some of the basic background information about those who participated in the study can be found in Table 5.1 (see following pages). While geographical location (such as urban or rural) was not part of the sampling criteria, it might be of general interest to note that interviewees were recruited from a number of different cities in Sweden. Most interviewees lived in urban areas, with only a couple living in smaller towns outside of urban centres.

Whichever way they were found, potential interviewees spoke to me directly on the phone (if not face to face) prior to agreeing to an interview, giving me the chance to tell them everything they needed to know personally and answering all questions they might have. We then agreed on a time and place to meet, allowing interviewees to choose whichever location they were most comfortable with. Eleven interviews were conducted in interviewees' homes, four in private rooms at public libraries, four at interviewees' workplaces, two at different organisations' own premises, two in public places (cafés) and one at my office. On average, interviews lasted two hours and fifteen minutes, with the shortest

⁸⁷ Another more anecdotal experience of contacting organisations was that in a couple of cases, I was initially met with suspicion and asked to call again from a phone that would show my number on the display (which was not the case for the phone at my office). I complied by calling from my mobile phone instead, which seemed to immediately alleviate their concerns.

⁸⁸ Describing interviewees as "active members" should in this case be understood in the sense that they formally seem to be members in ethnic organisations that still are up and running (unlike those that had out-dated information and no longer exist). This membership status however does not convey anything about the extent of active engagement in the organisation such as how frequently meetings are attended. It should be noted however that at least two of these fourteen claimed they had only joined the organisations in recent years, suggesting that they had not always been interested in interacting with others of the same ethnic origins.

Table 5.1: Overview over sample (based on information provided by interviewees)

Name*	Sex	Age	Country of origin	Time of birth	Time of migration	Age at migration	Years lived in Sweden	Stated reason for migration†	Marital status	Children
Kjersti	F	66	Norway	Mid-1940s	Late 1960s	21	44	Love	Widowed, co-habiting (Swedish man)	No
Lars	M	73	Norway	Late 1930s	Early 1960s	24	49	Education, love	Married (Swedish wife)	Yes
Sinikka	F	66	Finland	Mid-1940s	Mid-1960s	20	46	Work, love	Married (Swedish husband)	Yes
Terhi	F	79	Finland	Early 1930s	Early 1950s	19	61	Work, love	Widowed (Norwegian husband)	No
Fred	M	65	England	Mid-1940s	Late 1960s	21	44	Love	Married (Swedish wife)	Yes
Jane	F	66	England	Mid-1940s	Mid-1970s	30	36	Love	Married (Swedish husband)	Yes
Adriana	F	68	USA	Early 1940s	Early 1970s	27	41	Love	Married (Scottish husband)	No
Audrey	F	71	USA	Early 1940s	Early 1980s	43	28	General interest, love	Registered partnership (Swedish woman)	Yes
Agnieszka	F	70	Poland	Early 1940s	Early 1970s	30	40	Love	Married (Swedish husband)	Yes
Natalia	F	69	Poland	Early 1940s	Mid-1970s	33	36	Love, marriage	Widowed (Swedish husband)	Yes
Alexandros	M	60	Greece	Early 1950s	Late 1960s	18	42	General interest	Co-habiting (Swedish woman)	Yes
Jannis	M	55	Greece	Mid-1950s	Early 1970s	15	40	Economy (parents)	Married (Swedish wife)	Yes

Name*	Sex	Age	Country of origin	Time of birth	Time of migration	Age at migration	Years lived in Sweden	Stated reason for migration†	Marital status	Children
María	F	72	Chile	Late 1930s	Late 1970s	39	33	Politics (husband)	Widowed (Chilean husband)	Yes
Rodrigo	M	65	Chile	Mid-1940s	Mid-1970s	30	35	Politics	Married (Chilean wife)	Yes
Luka	M	56	Bosnia	Mid-1950s	Early 1990s	37	19	War	Married (Bosnian wife)	Yes
Safet	M	63	Bosnia	Late 1940s	Early 1990s	45	18	War	Married (Bosnian wife)	Yes
Mayuree	F	63	Thailand	Late 1940s	Early 1970s	25	38	General interest, love	Married (Swedish husband)	No
Yongyuth	M	71	Thailand	Early 1940s	Late 1960s	27	44	Education, love	Married (Swedish wife)	Yes
Orhan	M	73	Turkey	Late 1930s	Mid-1960s	27	46	General interest	Married (Finnish wife)	Yes
Zeynep	F	70	Turkey	Early 1940s	Mid-1960s	23	47	Love	Married (Swedish husband)	Yes
Mustafa	M	58	Kurdistan (Iran)	Early 1950s	Mid-1980s	31	27	Politics, war	Married (Kurdish wife)	Yes
Sayid	M	60	Kurdistan (Iraq)	Early 1950s	Early 1990s	40	20	Politics	Married (Kurdish wife)	Yes
Amir	M	56	Iran	Mid-1950s	Late 1970s	23	32	Education	Married (Iranian wife)	Yes
Nima	M	57	Iran	Mid-1950s	Late 1980s	32	24	Politics	Married (Iranian wife)	Yes

Notes: *Pseudonyms. Interviewees are listed in order of perceived cultural distance, from the “closest” to the most “distant” (cf. Figure 5.1). †Those cases that state one reason for migration followed by the reason of “love” should be understood to indicate that the person in question stated he or she initially came to Sweden for another reason (i.e. education/work/general interest), but decided to stay because they had met someone.

lasting just under an hour and the longest three and a half hours. All interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim by the researcher. Data collection started in May and was completed in November of 2011.

Sample description

The recruitment process resulted in 24 interviews with individuals from twelve different countries, including two from each one. As can be seen in Table 5.1, eleven interviewees are female and thirteen male,⁸⁹ the youngest is 55 and the oldest 79. Five are in their mid- to late fifties, eleven in their sixties, and the remaining eight are in their seventies. Accordingly, the oldest four were born in the 1930s, the majority was born in the 1940s and some of the youngest ones during the 1950s. The one who has been living in Sweden the longest migrated in the early 1950s, whilst most came to Sweden during the 1960s and 1970s. Some migrated during the 1980s and only the three most recent migrants (all refugees) came to Sweden in the early 1990s. At the time of migration, most interviewees were in their early twenties and thirties, with only five of them migrating closer to the age of forty. While the time since migration ranges from 18 to 61 years, the great majority of interviewees have been living in Sweden for much more than thirty years, averaging 37 years for this group of interviewees as a whole. Particularly striking is the rather large number of interviewees who stated that they had migrated to Sweden, or had decided to stay, for reasons of love. Other stated reasons for migration pertain to general interest, the pursuit of an education, finding work, or fleeing from one's country of origin for political reasons or due to war (or indeed both). In terms of marital status, four stated they are widowed, of which one stated she is now co-habiting with a new partner. Of the remaining ones, eighteen stated they are married, one that she lives in a registered partnership and one that she is co-habiting. Of these twenty-four present and past relationships, eight seem to be with people of the same country of origin, thirteen with Swedes, and three with people from a third country.⁹⁰ All but four of the interviewees stated that they have children, of which all but one (to my knowledge) also seem to be living in Sweden. In terms of educational and

⁸⁹ While the overall numbers of men and women are almost equal, it is hereby acknowledged that the spread over the spectrum from countries perceived as "culturally close" to countries perceived as "culturally distant" is uneven to the effect that the sample contains more women from countries perceived as "closer" and more men from countries perceived as more "distant". To add to this, some countries of origin include only female interviewees (namely Finland, the USA and Poland) while other countries only include male ones (namely Greece, Bosnia, Kurdistan and Iran). While this is unfortunate, a gender perspective is not included in the study design, hence rendering the issue relatively inconsequential. See section on Limitations later in this chapter for a further discussion.

⁹⁰ As mentioned in the section on demography in Chapter 2, the report on integration (SCB 2012)* suggests that 40 per cent of older migrants who are married have a Swedish-born partner. Its prevalence is greater for those who migrated young (i.e. before the age of twenty-five). While statistical adequacy or questions of representativeness have *not* been of concern in the sample selection, it may nevertheless be of general interest to note that more interviewees than might be expected indeed had Swedish partners (which, in turn, is interesting when considering that most were recruited through ethnic organisations). *This report from 2012 is to my knowledge the only source of data available on this specific topic, hence figures for more recent years cannot be provided at this point.

class background, while I did not ask interviewees about their levels of education, it seems as though at least two thirds have some form of post-secondary education, with only a couple of them stating that they have only gone to (elementary) school for a couple of years. Their occupations are quite varied, ranging from teachers, accountants and administrators (at state agencies) to shop assistants and cleaners.⁹¹ Altogether, the interviewees are a very diverse group, not only in terms of countries of origin but also when it comes to their reasons for migration, ages, and (former or present) occupations.

Interview guide and interview procedure

An in-depth, semi-structured interview format was chosen as the most appropriate for this study. The advantage of using semi-structured interviews (rather than unstructured or structured) is that they allow for the use of a guide. The interview guide provides structure, making some level of comparability possible, while at the same time allowing for greater flexibility than other forms of interview (see e.g. Bryman 2004; Flick 2006). The works of both Bryman (2004) and Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) were useful in thinking about how to best frame the interview guide, not least with regards to the different kinds of questions one might ask. In addition, various previous studies of identity in relation to, for instance, ethnicity or class were consulted so as to explore how interview questions were phrased there, which offered some inspiration (e.g. Butcher 2008; Lamont 2000; Salih 2000; Vadher & Barrett 2009; Zevallos 2008). Ultimately, however, it came down to testing and refining the interview guide through pilot interviews.

Two pilot interviews were therefore conducted before the interview guide was finalised. As with the other interviews, they were recorded and transcribed verbatim. Before moving forward, the two pilot interviews were preliminarily analysed and evaluated, focusing in particular on the extent to which the interview questions seemed to work as well as on the usefulness of the material produced in relation to the overall aims and research questions. The goal was both to test the interview guide and to evaluate the choice of data collection method. The evaluation of the pilot interviews led to a slight revision of the interview guide, adding notes to myself to ask for elaborations, clarifications and so on, and to bear the overall research questions in mind (shortened to the *when*, *where*, *who* and *how* of the identity categories studied). For the interviews that were included in the study, then, while the list of questions was quite long, what mattered was not to ask every single one exactly as it was phrased on paper. Rather, they served as probes to attain answers to the overall research questions.

⁹¹ In hindsight, it would perhaps have been interesting to have taken note of interviewees' levels of education, even though this information is not of any direct relevance for the research questions. At the time, I was more interested in learning what they had worked with prior to migration and whether or not they had been able to work in areas that matched their qualifications after migration.

The order of the topics was largely the same in most interviews, but was changed at times if topics came up by themselves at an earlier point. The interview guide used in the study can be found in Appendix I.

With regards to the interview procedure, at the outset of the interview, I told the interviewees once more about the project, its purpose, and my reasons for pursuing the topic, both scientific and personal. I also shared my own biographical background: born and raised in Germany, the offspring of a Dutch mother (who now lives in Egypt) and a father of ethnic German descent who was born and raised in Romania (now married to a woman from Finland). I also explained how I ended up living in Sweden today,⁹² after earlier having lived one year in the United States, three years in England and one year in the Netherlands. The purpose of sharing this information was both to give the interviewees a better idea of who I was, to make everyone more comfortable, and to suggest that we in fact have something in common as migrants, despite differences in age, time lived in Sweden and the perceived cultural distance of our countries of origin. A number of interviewees referred to my background at some point during the interviews. Even for those who did not, I believe that not being a native Swede myself was an advantage insofar as it allowed interviewees to tell me what they thought about Sweden and its native population without having to worry about me taking offence.

The interview itself proceeded largely by following the interview guide. As can be seen (see Appendix I), the topics addressed pertained to the first period of time in Sweden (including experiences of feeling or being treated as an [im]migrant or non-Swede), general self-description (both today and at a point earlier in life, including whether or not one experienced one's ethnicity and age as being central to who one is), life in Sweden today (including experiences of feeling or being treated as an [im]migrant or non-Swede), the question of the supposed special needs of "elderly immigrants" (referring to policy discussions alluded to earlier, see Chapter 2), and finally age, ageing and old(er) age (including experiences of feeling old[er] or being treated as old[er] by others). In addition, there were a range of simpler questions on background facts (concerning e.g. when they were born and their marital status), of which some were asked at the outset and others at the end, if they had not been addressed already.

After each interview, I wrote down my thoughts on how the interview had gone, what the setting or location had been (cf. Bryman 2004), particular questions raised with regards to my research questions, and just about anything I thought was worth noting before I would forget (including e.g. instances of non-verbal communication during the interview which could help render the recording more intelligible). Interviewees were offered (eventual) copies of both

⁹² Namely that I first came to Sweden for a year as part of my undergraduate studies, met my husband-to-be, and returned after having completed my education abroad. In Table 5.1, my stated reason for migration would be described as "general interest/education, love".

their interview transcripts and of the dissertation. Some were interested in both, others in one but not the other, and some had no interest in either. It should be noted that this was a question of offering to give something back, rather than an invitation to give me their feedback (and should hence not be confused with member-checking or member validation, i.e. the practice of discussing findings or sometimes interview transcripts with interviewees as a way of confirming validity, see e.g. Kvale & Brinkman 2009 or Seale 1999).

Analysing the empirical material

The process of analysis

As Koro-Ljungberg (2008) suggests in her discussion of constructionist interviewing, analysing interview data involves looking at “both the *whats* of the content and the *hows* of the production” (p. 431, emphasis in original), referring among other things to the previously described characteristics of constructionist interviews as situated, contextual and active processes of cofacilitated knowledge production. This was borne in mind throughout the process of analysis, albeit perhaps more when it comes to some overall questions than others. On the whole, data analysis in qualitative research can be described as a process that starts with the preparation of the data for analysis (e.g. through transcripts), followed by “reducing the data into themes through a process of coding and condensing the codes, and finally representing the data in figures, tables, or a discussion” (Creswell 2007:148). The coding process is described as first dividing the data into meaningful segments and assigning names to them, where different codes then are combined into broader categories or themes. These can then be displayed so as to make comparisons with the use of tables and charts. The whole process of data analysis can be likened to “moving in analytical circles”, where various facets of analysis are touched upon in a movement that leads from the original data to an account of the findings (Creswell 2007).

How has analysis proceeded in this study, then? Data analysis largely followed the process described by Creswell. The interview data was first prepared for analysis by way of transcription. All interviews were transcribed verbatim by the researcher herself. The first step in the process of analysing the interviews quite simply entailed reading the transcripts, focusing on different overall themes that had been discussed in the interviews. The very first codes were “prefigured” (see Creswell 2007) insofar as the themes were pre-determined. Such themes pertained to for example “(old[er]) age” (one’s own, or that of others), “migrancy”, “Swedes and Swedishness”, “immigrants” or “ethnicity of origin”. Transcripts were read and marked with different colours, which each represented a theme. Interview sequences that touched upon such general topical themes were marked with the appropriate colour, where some passages thus could be marked by several colours at once.

The second step was to compile tables that aimed at offering overviews over the empirical material, or specifically *what* interviewees had said in relation to the different themes. These tables addressed topics such as "identification as old(er)", "being regarded as old(er)", "new in Sweden", "migrancy today", "elderly immigrants" and so on and so forth. In the process of compiling and arranging the tables, the subcategories (or sub-themes) were "emergent" (cf. Creswell 2007). This means that they emerged from the data rather than having been decided beforehand. To give just one example, a sub-theme of the overall topic of "self as old(er)" is "the physicality of old(er) age", namely the body or physical aspects that in one way or another lead one to feel old(er). As can be seen in the interview guide (see Appendix I), I never asked interviewees about their bodies or whether they felt old(er) physically, but they themselves frequently conceptualised feeling old(er) in physical terms. References to the body emerged from the data, as did the patterns concerning various relations of similarity and difference that form part of the negotiation of identity categories (see Chapters 7 & 9).

The third step of analysis entailed a re-reading (or skimming) of interviews so as to determine whether interviews on the whole seemed to be characterised by identifications with old(er) age, with self-definitions as *not* old(er), or whether interviewees seemed ambivalent. The same was done with regards to migrancy or definitions as different from the native population, and correspondingly, definitions as *not* different and ambivalent. The same procedure was done so as to examine how interviewees generally seemed to think they were regarded by others: as (not) old(er), as (not) (im)migrants, or ambivalent on either question. The purpose of this step was to find a possible gateway towards identifying patterns in the empirical material pertaining to different kinds of identifications with old(er) age and migrancy or rejections of such identities (as will be discussed further in Chapter 10).

The fourth step built upon the previous ones by way of taking a further in-depth look at *how* interviewees speak about different identities and, again, identify different patterns. The further process of analysis moved in "analytical circles" as the identification of patterns entailed a need to revisit the empirical material, and as tables were rearranged, new questions could arise, while revisiting the material could lead to the need to compile new tables, and so on and so forth. As findings were rearranged and organised differently as patterns clarified, the need to check for disconfirming evidence also emerged (see next section for a further discussion of what this entails).

It was only in the fifth and final step, after the identification of various patterns, that interviewees' demographic information such as chronological age, countries of origin (in relation to perceived cultural distance), gender, time lived

in Sweden, age at migration and (inter)marriage⁹³ were taken into consideration. The purpose of this step was to examine whether or not there seemed to be any patterns having to do with these dimensions, which may be of interest for future research to explore further. The reason for doing this last is quite simply that from a social constructionist perspective, neither chronological age nor country of origin or any of the other demographic factors are presumed to have inherent meaning for identification as old(er) or as (im)migrant, by oneself or by others. Rather, if there are patterns that suggest connections, this is for research to find out, not to presume. Finally, needless to say, the research questions were borne in mind throughout the process of analysis, ultimately leading to the findings presented in the chapters that follow.⁹⁴

The quality of qualitative research

Borrowing this caption from the book by Seale (1999) bearing the same title, a few words need to be said about the possibilities of quality assurance in qualitative research. Suggesting that validity and reliability belong to an earlier period of modernist research and are out-dated in qualitative research today, Seale (1999) discusses different stances that have been taken since, ultimately arguing

for a position of intense methodological awareness, rather than the two extremes of complete anarchy or strict rule following. (...) Qualitative researchers need to demonstrate an educated awareness of particular methodological decisions during a research study, whether they relate to the production of data or the choice of writing style.

(Seale 1999:33)

Choosing this middle way for this study, then, entails following some guiding ideals, or strategies, rather than strict criteria (cf. Seale 1999). Some suggestions for strategies of ensuring the quality of qualitative research can also be found in the work of Creswell (2007), who suggests that it is mostly a question of ascertaining that the account one gives is valid and accurate, while realising that it is always the researcher who does the representation. Further strategies suggested by Creswell (2007) that are used in this study are: peer review (by way of scrutiny of two supervisors, the research institute and discussants from other universities),⁹⁵ clarification of researcher bias (being appropriately reflexive and

⁹³ I here use the term (inter)marriage loosely to refer to the question of whether interviewees are married to or in a relationship with people from the same ethnic origin, with native Swedes, or with persons from a third country. This includes former relationships and is less about whether or not they are legally married and more about the relationships per se (regardless of legal status).

⁹⁴ It may be of interest to note that the analysis was conducted at two separate points in time: first early in 2012 and again in early 2016 after two extensive periods of maternity leave. This means that I could return to the empirical material with new eyes after a few years.

⁹⁵ In the Swedish university system, it is customary for draft versions of doctoral dissertations to be discussed at academic seminars both around the half-way point and close to the end (about half a year before the finalisation of

open), and thick description (being as clear and detailed as possible), and letting the data speak for itself at times. Further strategies are to provide detailed descriptions of every step in the research process, transcribing interviews, and the use of multiple coders (see Creswell 2007). This is why the recruitment process, interview procedure and process of analysis have been described at such a level of detail here, and also why the empirical chapters include such thick description.

A strategy of particular importance is that of looking for disconfirming evidence, or “seeking out and attempting to account for negative instances that contradict emerging or dominant ideas” (Seale 1999:73). This strategy allows one to modify general ideas, or indeed offer additional support, ultimately improving the quality of research accounts (Seale 1999). In this study, then, negative instances have been sought out before conclusions have been drawn, in order to potentially strengthen both the credibility of the account and “extend[s] the scope and sophistication of theories” (Seale 1999:86). For instance, in the analysis leading to Chapter 7 on Negotiating old(er) age, the idea emerged that in the processes of negotiation, the boundaries of old(er) age are stretched to the effect that interviewees themselves claim they are not old because they are not retired/not frail or perhaps do not look their age. It seemed as though there always was somebody else who was “really” old, keeping “real” old age at a distance. However, what about those instances where interviewees seem to identify as old(er) after all? They appeared to be negative instances that seemed to disprove the emerging idea (after all, if some identify as old[er], it does not make sense to claim that old[er] age is kept at a distance). Returning to the empirical material once more to examine those cases, it became clear however that despite identifying as old(er), such identities are still negotiated in a not entirely dissimilar way: yes, they are old(er), but old(er) in a *different* way. A distinction is still made between oneself as old(er) and those others as (“really”) old. The idea of the pattern of negotiation that suggests that old(er) age is kept at a distance was in fact strengthened since it indeed also includes identifications with old(er) age. Examining those cases that did not seem to fit the pattern further proved the overall pattern of negotiation and thereby strengthened the emerging idea.

Further guidance for quality assurance can be found in Silverman’s (2006) “eight reminders”: in particular, the reminder to avoid treating the actor’s point of view as an explanation, and the reminder to study the interrelationship between elements. Further relevant “reminders”, which perhaps go beyond quality assurance, are those of attempting theoretically fertile research, beginning with “how” questions before asking “why”, and treating qualitative research as

the dissertation). Expert researchers from other academic institutions are invited to scrutinise and comment upon the work in progress. The main commentator then takes the role of discussant (or *opponent* in Swedish).

different from journalism. These “reminders” can also be seen as a set of guiding ideals. What they have meant for this study are, among other things, that theorisation has been an ambition from the start, that interrelations between old(er) age and migrancy have been explored, that attempts have been made to avoid treating interviewees’ answers as answers to the research questions (i.e. without extensive processes of analysis), and that reporting the findings has been treated as different from journalism (i.e. not e.g. presenting individual stories as “features” or “human interest”, but rather analysing and aggregating findings from several interviews).

Finally, Seale (1999) suggests that an awareness of issues of replicability and reliability form part of the exercise of reflexivity, and should therefore not be dismissed in qualitative research. He distinguishes between internal and external reliability: while external reliability is concerned with replication of entire studies (i.e. the question of whether another researcher would produce the same findings when studying the same or a similar setting), internal reliability is a question of the degree to which other researchers would match given constructs to data in the same way (Seale 1999). Seale suggests that qualitative research in reality only can strive after internal reliability, which can be achieved through transcribing data on the one hand, and great reflexivity on the other, so as to share as much as possible of the procedures with the reader. It is, then, less a question of whether the findings would be replicated in a second study conducted by someone else, and more one of the extent to which the procedures followed, described as clearly, reflexively and openly as possible, make sense to other researchers. This is why the process of research is described in such detail here.

For purposes of transparency, clarity and openness, as advocated by both Seale (1999) and Creswell (2007), the empirical chapters include tables that present the findings that the analytical process previously described has led to. While one of the main purposes of the tables is to offer transparency, they also visually enhance the presentation of the findings, guide the reader by way of providing the structure for how the chapters are organised, offer a bird’s eye view of the findings discussed, allow the reader to see connections and to examine who referred to which types of topics. To make it easier to find individual interviewees in the tables and to compare findings on different questions, all tables are ordered in the same way, namely by perceived cultural distance (from “closest” to most “distant”, see Figure 5.1 as well as Table 5.1). What should be borne in mind however is that the markings in the tables reflect what interviewees choose to tell me, which means that the absence of a mark on a particular issue only can be understood to mean that something simply was not mentioned by a particular interviewee (since there were no “yes or no” questions). To add to this, since the findings are not presumed to reflect the “true reality” of interviewees’ lives or “actual facts” (see section on Choosing the interview earlier in this chapter), the tables should not be interpreted as reflecting

anything of the sort (but rather, again, what interviewees choose to tell me in the particular situation of the interview).

Language and translation

While all interviews were conducted in Swedish, this dissertation is written in English, which poses some challenges of translation. The process of analysis (as previously described) was carried out using Swedish interview transcripts. Most of the tables of analysis compiled in the process were also in Swedish. In the process of moving in analytical circles, some questions started to be framed in English. However, it was only at the point when the findings were to be presented in writing in the empirical chapters that selected passages were translated into English, namely those excerpts that are presented in the text.

As my command of both English and Swedish (arguably) are at near-native levels (although neither language is my mother tongue) and I have received some undergraduate training in translation,⁹⁶ all translations are done by myself. One of the issues with translation in research pertains to the possibility that meanings may be lost in translation (see e.g. van Nes et al. 2010). While some nuances are bound to be lost, all efforts have been made to consult all relevant sources to arrive at adequate translations. In doubtful cases, footnotes are used to explain things that cannot be captured fully in direct translation.

The challenges of translation in research however may differ depending on when, where, by whom and at which stage in the research process translations are carried out. In cross-cultural research, researchers may have to rely on interpreters when conducting interviews, which poses quite different challenges than the ones faced in project such as this one (see e.g. Bradby 2002; Larkin et al. 2007; Wong & Poon 2010). That is to say, in the present study, the researcher and the interviewees share a common language, and translation was not necessary until the findings were to be presented in writing. Insofar as the analysis was conducted in the original language and eventually bilingually rather than involving interpreters and translators, some of the potential problems could be circumvented.

Some words need to be said about the particularity of interview transcripts. As the interviews were transcribed verbatim, the original transcripts include all "ehms", "mhms" and half-finished words. In addition, some of the interviewees were at times struggling with their Swedish, meaning that original transcripts (in Swedish) in some parts perhaps may be difficult to read for those who were not part of the interview. When presenting excerpts from the interviews, while attempts have been made to remain as true to the original as possible, preference was given to readability and intelligibility. Most "mhms" have been deleted whilst

⁹⁶ For example, course in "Translation from the Scandinavian Languages", Department of Scandinavian Studies, University College London, UK.

half-finished words could be completed in square brackets (as th[is] would be an example of).

Since all readers of this dissertation cannot be presumed to have a command of the Swedish language, only the translated interview excerpts are presented in the empirical chapters. An alternative might have been to keep the Swedish originals in footnotes. However, since this would have taken a considerable amount of space without necessarily making any substantial contribution to the presentation of the findings, this option was ruled out. Swedish originals are only provided in cases where translation cannot quite seem to capture their meaning.

Ethical considerations

While ethical approval from the regional ethics committee was not necessary for this particular project according to the Act on ethical review on research involving humans (SFS 2003:460) in the Swedish Code of Statutes, needless to say, standard research ethics need to be observed in any kind of social scientific research. For instance, ethical guidelines concerning informed consent, anonymity, confidentiality, and permission to use the material for the purposes stated have been followed (cf. Creswell 2007). One of the major ethical issues of research interviewing is the asymmetrical power relation between interviewer and interviewee (see e.g. Kvale & Brinkmann 2009). This asymmetry is exacerbated when one adds unequal power relations that go beyond just the interview situation itself: gender, age, ethnicity and class on both sides in the interview will also have an impact on the dynamics of the interview situation. A growing methodological literature has taken an interest in the role of different identity categories in the research encounter (see e.g. Manderson, Bennett & Andajani-Sutjahjo 2006 on age, class and gender; Pini 2005 on gender; Best 2003 as well as Adamson & Donovan 2002 on ethnicity/"race", to name but a few). While the researcher cannot free him or herself from his or her background, awareness and reflexivity have been named as the best measures of handling possible bias (see e.g. Gunaratnam 2003). Reflexive awareness has been exercised as far as possible in this study.

Another ethical issue is that of informed consent. It seems as though researchers have increasingly questioned what it is that interviewees really can consent to in an informed way (see e.g. Kvale & Brinkmann 2009). This study followed conventions (see e.g. Seidman 1998) by being as clear and open as possible about the aim and purpose of the study, allowing (potential) interviewees to ask questions, and ensuring that they understood every step in the procedure: what the interview was about, that it would be recorded and why, that I would transcribe it, that they would be anonymous, that the material would be handled with confidentiality, and that they had the right to discontinue their participation without having to give any reasons. Written consent was obtained

after having discussed all of these points, prior to the start of the interview. The information letter and consent form can be found in Appendices II and III.

Anonymity and confidentiality have been assured by way of storing all materials that might reveal who interviewees are in such a way that it is only the researcher who has access to them. Transcripts have from the very start left out the names of persons as well as places of birth and any other biographical information that may disclose who they are, at the same time as care has been taken not to allow transcripts to end up in the wrong hands (as might happen e.g. when printing them in public or semi-public places). In the case of the interviewee who chose to come to my office to be interviewed, I was concerned with the risk of others seeing the individual in question there. Upon hearing this, however, the interviewee claimed s/he did not care at all.

A further question of ethics in the study of migration and ethnic relations is the process of categorisation that is done by the researcher. While we cannot study something without defining what it is, care should be taken so as to ensure an awareness of the categories we use and what we mean by them (cf. Gordon 1992; Gunaratnam 2003). How old(er) age and migrancy have been understood and operationalised in this study should be more than clear by now. It should perhaps nevertheless be reiterated once more that the interviewees never were presumed to *be*, essentially, "elderly immigrants". In other words, the question has been when it is, and in relation to whom, the identity categories of old(er) age and migrancy seem to become meaningful, and how they seem to be negotiated. These questions are open and give equal leeway to the potential rejection of such identity categories.

Limitations

All good intentions aside, any research project will invariably encounter limitations as to what can or cannot be said, not least based upon the methods employed. Regarding the interview data as contextually constructed (rather than a gathering of objective facts) may be viewed as a limitation by some readers. However, the purpose of the study is to explore negotiations as well as the whens and whos of identification, and not to capture some ultimate objective "truth". Indeed, by way of not assuming that interviewees are reporting "facts", attention has been drawn to the various ways in which they themselves construct meanings around their own identities and how they seem to think they are defined by others. The constructions and images pertaining to old(er) age and migrancy might not have come to light otherwise.

Another possible limitation could be found in the fact that while identity here is understood as accomplished in the interplay between self-definition and external definition, it is only the perspective of self-definition that is captured, along with *how interviewees seem to think* others regard them (i.e. define them externally). The findings are thus biased towards the individuals' own

perspectives of how they define themselves and seek to present themselves. However, it would have been practically impossible to capture the “actual opinions” of others in the types of situations described by interviewees. For the present study however focus has been on those who potentially may be defined by others as old(er) and as (im)migrants (or not) and how they negotiate such external definitions, which is no less important.

Some readers may still not be convinced that a chronological age of 55 and older is reasonable when studying identity in relation to old(er) age. One may be tempted to claim that only the “oldest old” (see Chapter 2) would be subject to a categorisation as old(er), or claim to be old(er) themselves. In other words, the age range of 55-79 that the interviewees in the present sample cover may be considered as a limitation. However, as will be seen, chronological age per se does not seem to necessarily lead one to self-define as old(er), nor to suggest that others regard one as such. Indeed, by not presuming that old(er) age only pertains to the oldest old, this study has been able to examine the role of chronological age. The age range from one’s fifties to one’s seventies has been an advantage by way of making it possible to shed light onto variations (or a lack thereof) between different chronological ages.

As has been suggested, while the overall numbers of men and women are almost equal, the spread over the spectrum from countries perceived as “culturally close” to countries perceived as “culturally distant” is uneven to the effect that the sample contains more women from countries perceived as “close” and more men from countries perceived as “distant”. In addition, the latter tend on average to be chronologically younger than the remainder of the sample. This means that when examining the findings for patterns pertaining to gender and perceived cultural distance, the two cannot always be clearly discerned, although common sense may sometimes indicate which dimension may be more relevant. The main purpose of examining the findings for patterns pertaining to dimensions such as gender however is to offer a point of departure for future studies. Another study may thus explore the ways in which gender may play a role in the negotiation of identity categories such as old(er) age and migrancy, since this was not an aim of the present dissertation.

Last but not least, one limitation can be found in what it is that can and cannot be said due to the overall social constructionist stance taken here. The writing process is limited to taking great care to write what findings “suggest”, what may be “claimed”, or what “seems to” be the case, rather than being able to write what might be “shown” or what something “is” like. However, this is perhaps more a matter of exercising discipline on behalf of the author than it is a problem for the reader or indeed for the study itself. This “limitation” however seems to be outweighed by the potential that the social constructionist lens seems to hold for deepening our understanding of identity and the negotiation of identity categories.

CHAPTER 6: THE WHENS OF OLD(ER) AGE

This chapter is the first of four that present the empirical findings with the purpose of answering the research questions outlined in Chapter 1. The focus of the present chapter lies on the question of when and in relation to whom *old(er) age* seems to become meaningful for identification. The following chapter (Chapter 7) will address how old(er) age seems to be negotiated. During the interviews, I ask the interviewees whether they can think of any particular situations where they themselves feel that they are old(er), and about situations where they think they have been treated or regarded as old(er) by others.⁹⁷ These questions open up for the possibility of saying no, which, as will be seen in the next chapter, is used fairly frequently. Accounts of such situations and talking about oneself as old(er) can however also appear in other parts of the interviews, independent of the questions directed specifically at the topic. This chapter focuses specifically on those contexts where interviewees claim they feel old(er) or seem to think of themselves as such, and claim that others seem to treat or regard them as old(er). In other words, the focus hereby is on the situations and contexts where old(er) age seems to become meaningful for identification, be it internally (through self-definition) or externally (through perceived definition by others).

However careful one seeks to be in the use of different terms, the risk of reification when it comes to *identity* seems to be ever-present (cf. Chapter 3). One solution is to state exactly what it is one means when using different expressions. While I approach old(er) age and migrancy as identity categories, it would (to say the least) be stylistically cumbersome to persistently speak of “regarding old(er) age as an identity category that informs one’s sense of self”, or perhaps “rejecting migrancy as an identity category that one deems meaningful for how one thinks about oneself”. To simplify the language used and to thereby make the text more accessible, especially in the presentation of empirical findings it seems necessary in spite of everything I have written to write of old(er) age and migrancy in terms of *identities* that can be claimed or rejected, and that one may claim to *be* old(er) (or not), or reject the idea of *being* an (im)migrant, since these expressions seem to lie closest to how individuals in everyday life seem to express such notions.

⁹⁷ The questions asked in the interviews (see Appendix I for the full Interview guide) are of course not the same as the research questions. This means that the theoretically informed research questions had to be translated into questions that make sense to ordinary people in everyday life. The internal-external dialectic where identity categories may become meaningful for identification both internally and externally was hence framed in terms of feeling that one is old/older or not Swedish/not originally from Sweden (i.e. internal definition), and conversely perceiving that others seem to treat one as old/older or somehow make relevant that one is not originally from Sweden (i.e. external definition).

When does old(er) age seem to become meaningful?

As can be seen in Table 6.1 (to be found on pp. 122-123), the situations or contexts where interviewees propose they feel old(er) pertain to two broad themes, namely the physicality of old(er) age (including various references to the body and to activity) and the question of time in old(er) age (including chronological age and the perception of time passing). Situations where interviewees claim they are regarded or treated as old(er) mostly seem to be related to being offered benefits (such as a discount or a seat on the bus) and being paid respect (such as being listened to at work), or on the contrary being called denigrating names. These different contexts or themes will be presented in turn in the following.

While identity here is understood as situationally defined in the interplay of internal and external definitions (see e.g. Jenkins 1997 & 2003 as discussed in Chapter 3), since the internal and external are intertwined, the distinction between the two is primarily analytical. However, the empirical material pertaining to the whens of old(er) age more readily allows for the two to be separated than the whens of migrancy, as will be seen in Chapter 8. In this case, the findings are presented by way of first examining self-definitions and subsequently zooming in on how interviewees seem to think that others define them.

When do interviewees seem to self-define as old(er)?

To briefly remind the reader, self-definition when understood in terms of a process of internal definition (or assertion) means that actors signal to in- or out-group members a self-definition of their nature or identity. This is necessarily social as it presupposes an audience and an externally derived framework of meaning (e.g. Jenkins 1997 & 2003, see Chapter 3). This means that the assertions here necessarily rely on a social context (or externally derived framework of meaning) and that the process also presupposes an audience: be it oneself, the interviewer, or one's image of others in society in general (i.e. a virtual other). What are some of the situations where old(er) age seems to become meaningful, and in relation to whom?

The physicality of old(er) age

Regardless of whether or not interviewees on the whole seem to think of themselves as old(er), most claim that they experience situations where they feel old(er) in relation to their physical bodies (cf. constructions of old[er] age, see Chapter 2). The most common point of reference pertaining to the question of *when* one feels old(er) is the body. Quite common are references to a lack of

energy and feeling tired (see Table 6.1). For instance, Amir (male, 56, Iran; 32 years in Sweden)⁹⁸ explains the following when I ask him:

*Interviewer:*⁹⁹ Then if you think about age kind of independent of retirement, // if you just think, if there are any situations or contexts where you nevertheless feel old?

Amir: ... Well, when I pl[ay], I play ball with the kids (laughs a little) and that sort of thing and... Every once in a while you feel that, this is, you know, you can feel that the body isn't – as I said, I have played a lot of football, until I was about thirty-five or thirty-eight I think. But now you can feel that, your body of course gets older and older and you don't have the same...muscle strength and not the same fitness, all that stuff. // So *that* I can feel. And then this e[nergy], of course energy as well that, I used to be able to work two or three days at home and build and do woodwork or do, put up wallpaper, but now, you're kind of, "I'll do it in two weeks". I think this is a little bit because...well, physically maybe you'll get t[ired], too tired, I don't know. I'm not that old but, I fix quite a lot of stuff at home, but it's like, as I said, you can feel it, especially when you have to keep up with the kids in their activities. So it's... I don't know, age takes its toll as they say. When you're, it's just in those kinds of situations you think "now I'm a little, starting to get, well, yes, old." And my daughter always says "you're so old dad".¹⁰⁰

Amir previously talked about not feeling old(er) yet because he is still working. When asked whether there is anything independent of retirement that might make him feel old, he claims that he can feel his body getting "older" when playing ball with the kids. Then it is "every once in a while" that he can feel that way, proposing that he does not have the same strength and energy compared to when he was younger. Amir also tells me that he still does a lot of fixing at home, arguing that he still is as active as he has ever been (which stands in contrast to a certain passivity associated with "real" old[er] age, see Chapter 7), but compares his energy levels to earlier times with the conclusion that now he has less energy and would rather procrastinate. He also poses that he now physically gets more tired because "age takes its toll". In those kinds of situations he claims that he has started to think of himself as old(er), but several of his statements seem to indicate that he does not consider himself to be an old(er) person ("I'm not that old but"). Last but not least, he claims that his daughter "always" calls him "old".

⁹⁸ While some of the interviewees' names can easily be understood by most readers as being male or female, others are not. For reasons of consistency, this information is provided in parentheses for all interviewees (alongside age at time of the interview, country of origin and the number of years they have been living in Sweden).

⁹⁹ The interviewer in all interviews is me, who could at the time of the interviews be described as Laura (female, 29, Germany; 5 years in Sweden). (As the dissertation goes to press, it is however [female, 35, Germany; 11 years in Sweden].) See Chapter 5 for a brief discussion of the researcher's role in the research process.

¹⁰⁰ Key to symbols in interview excerpts: (...) means that a section of the excerpt has been omitted, ... indicates a pause, [text in square parentheses] has been added for purposes of clarification, and (laughter) and similar descriptions in round parentheses describe other things taking place. // indicates that a comment by the other person (such as e.g. "right" or "okay") has been omitted.

Table 6.1: When and how does old(er) age seem to become meaningful?

	When old(er): Self-definitions												When old(er): Perceived definitions by others				
	The physicality of old(er) age							The question of time in old(er) age					Treated as old(er): When and how?				
	Feeling tired, having less energy	Less strength	Stiffness	Aches, pains and illness	Mental/learning capabilities	Inability to do the same things	Being less active	Things take more time	Chronological age	(Grand)children growing up	Time passed	Life's finitude	Social change	Receiving benefits (seat, help, discount)	Being treated with respect	Name calling & invisibility	Old(er) in relation to labour market
Kjersti (f, 66, Norway; 44 years in Sweden)																	
Lars (m, 73, Norway; 49 years in Sweden)	X							X	X	X	X	X		X	X		
Sinikka (f, 66, Finland; 46 years in Sweden)	X	X		X	X	X		X						I			X
Terhi (f, 79, Finland; 61 years in Sweden)			X	X		X		X	I					X			
Fred (m, 65, England; 44 years in Sweden)	I	X				X	X				X	X	X	X	X	X	I
Jane (f, 66, England; 36 years in Sweden)	X		X				X	X			X	I	X			X	
Adriana (f, 68, USA; 41 years in Sweden)									X		X	X	I	X			
Audrey (f, 71, USA; 28 years in Sweden)			X	X													
Agnieszka (f, 70, Poland; 40 years in Sweden)																	
Natalia (f, 69, Poland; 36 years in Sweden)		X		X				X									
Alexandros (m, 60, Greece; 42 years in Sweden)			X			X											X
Jannis (m, 55, Greece; 40 years in Sweden)	I	I															

	When old(er): Self-definitions												When old(er): Perceived definitions by others				
	The physicality of old(er) age								The question of time in old(er) age				Treated as old(er): When and how?				
	Feeling tired, having less energy	Less strength	Stiffness	Aches, pains and illness	Mental/learning capabilities	Inability to do the same things	Being less active	Things take more time	Chronological age	(Grand)children growing up	Time passed	Life's finitude	Social change	Receiving benefits (seat, help, discount)	Being treated with respect	Name calling & invisibility	Old(er) in relation to labour market
Maria (f, 72, Chile; 33 years in Sweden)	X			X		X											
Rodrigo (m, 65, Chile; 35 years in Sweden)												I					I
Luka (m, 56, Bosnia; 19 years in Sweden)																	
Safet (m, 63, Bosnia; 18 years in Sweden)		X	X	X	X			X				I					X
Mayuree (f, 63, Thailand; 38 years in Sweden)	X		X		X		X	X						X			
Yongyuth (m, 71, Thailand; 44 years in Sweden)	X	I				X	X			X	X	I			X		
Orhan (m, 73, Turkey; 46 years in Sweden)				I		X						X					
Zeynep (f, 70, Turkey; 47 years in Sweden)	I			X	X				X		X	X					
Mustafa (m, 58, Kurdistan; 27 years in Sweden)	X	I			X							X		I	X	X	
Sayid (m, 60, Kurdistan; 20 years in Sweden)	X			X		X						X		X			
Amir (m, 56, Iran; 32 years in Sweden)	X	X											I		X		
Nima (m, 57, Iran; 24 years in Sweden)									X	X	X	X				X	

Notes: X=explicit, I=implicit

Amir here seems to be negotiating with himself and with a virtual other in the form of what people in general would consider to be old(er) or not. Several of the things he mentions as making him feel old(er) “every once in a while” seem to be reconcilable with his overall claims to *not* being old(er) (yet). For instance, his kids are of course much younger and from their perspective it would appear only natural that they might consider him “old” regardless of his age. Playing sports with the kids and working on one’s house are also likely to be things that most adults would feel made them tired. In other words, feeling old(er) here seems very fleeting and is negotiated in such a way that it can be kept at a distance.

The excerpt from the interview with Amir illustrates various bodily references to feeling old(er). As can be seen in Table 6.1, it is rather common that interviewees refer to having less strength when talking about feeling old(er). Another reference to feeling old(er) is described in terms of stiffness, as is exemplified by the following excerpt from the interview with Jane (female, 66, England; 36 years in Sweden). She tells me the following when I ask about situations or contexts where she feels old:

Jane: When I try to run to catch the bus. ... When I don’t have the same level of energy as I had when I was younger... Yeah, everything is a little slower... Yeah, that your body is stiff sometimes, that sort of stuff. I like the cold weather, I react to it quite strongly... So it’s more physical stuff that isn’t so nice, but, [there’s] not much you can do about it.

Jane here proposes that she feels old(er) when trying to run to catch the bus, and comparing herself to a younger version of herself, she finds that she has less energy today. She claims that everything is slower and that her body feels stiff sometimes, reacting to cold weather. She describes it as “physical stuff that isn’t so nice” and seems to accept it as there is nothing to be done about it. Jane here negotiates with herself, comparing herself to a younger self, and seems to conclude that she is old(er) now: that’s the way it is.

The following sequence from the interview with María (female, 72, Chile; 33 years in Sweden) is illustrative of how aches and pains, or illness, are drawn upon when claiming that one feels old(er), which also was rather common (see Table 6.1):

Interviewer: You said that you, that you feel old, did you?

María: Yes, I feel old.

Interviewer: What, what do you think-

María: Because I’m sick. // I’m not quite as well as... I can’t do much, I have asthma, // I can’t do much (puffs), start like that. And I get really angry with this, I...

She goes on to talk about how the house where she is living was good when her husband was still alive, but finds that it is too much work now. Picking up on an earlier statement where she claims she feels old, when I ask her, she confirms this claim and goes on to propose that it is due to being sick and having asthma that she feels that way, which seems to be rather frustrating to her (“I get really angry”). María does generally seem to think of herself as old(er), which means that this self-definition does not appear to be only temporary.

While feeling sick seems to lead to a general self-perception as old(er) in María’s case, Natalia (female, 69, Poland; 36 years in Sweden) proposes the following:

Interviewer: But when you think that you do feel old sometimes, what is it that you associate with that feeling, so to speak?

Natalia: Yeah I, I can say that, when I for instance am in pain, then I feel old you know. // Yeah! I feel that way. But it, when it goes away, then I feel right away, oh I’m young! // Still. There’s a difference.

Interviewer: So it’s more [about] the body

Natalia: Yeah the body yeah. // Yeah, [when] I’ve got an ache here or there then, aha, I feel [it] straight away.

Natalia claims that she feels “old” when she’s in pain, but that as soon as the pain goes away she feels “young”, “*still*” young, which implies that it is something that does not last. Again, when she feels an ache, she claims she feels it (i.e. old[er] age) straight away. This can be seen as an example of how the identity category of old(er) age is situationally defined, namely being made relevant at times of illness, but not at other times (as also suggested e.g. by Hurd Clarke 2001 and Wilson 2009). In contrast, Terhi (female, 79, Finland; 61 years in Sweden) makes a point of *not* associating aches and pain with her age:

Interviewer: But how do you feel, do you ever feel old?

Terhi: Yes, of course, sometimes you can feel like you’re maybe a hundred years old, like a, although, no, if I feel kind of sickly then I don’t think about my age then either. It’s just me who’s sick then.

Interviewer: Okay. So there aren’t any, or are there any situations where you, that is, particular situations, like you say your feet are hurting or anything,¹⁰¹ that make you think then that you are old or

Terhi: No, then my feet hurt...

When I ask whether Terhi ever feels old, she first responds “yes, of course” and goes on to claim “you” *sometimes* can feel like you’re “a hundred years old”. She then goes on to change her mind, arguing that “although, no”, when she feels sickly she does not think about her age. She thus makes a full turn from first proposing she can feel much older than her actual age at times (i.e. a hundred

¹⁰¹ Referring to something she had mentioned earlier.

years rather than close to eighty), but then turns around in the middle of the sentence to claim that even when feeling like she's in poor health, it has nothing to do with age: "it's just me who's sick then". When asked again, she holds on to her second claim that she does not (ever) think she is old, and argues that she herself as a person always comes first (i.e. "it's just me"), rather than age. Previous research on identity in old age has also suggested that people may not think of themselves as old(er) even if they are old chronologically (see e.g. Hurd 1999; Jones 2006; MacRae 1990).

References are also made to mental or learning capabilities, as exemplified in the interview with Mustafa (male, 58, Kurdistan; 27 years in Sweden). While I ask about age in general and not specifically about old(er) age in the following excerpt, Mustafa claims earlier in the interview that he thinks of himself as old(er). Therefore it seems appropriate to interpret his responses as pertaining to old(er) age:

Interviewer: (...) So I'm a little curious about how you, how you think about your own age, the age you are today.

Mustafa: Yes of course, I feel so tired. // ... A part of the side of the body is worn out because of the injury,¹⁰² [it] isn't working. Quite often I go to the doctor's now and the orthopaedic and the like. Some of it, during the time I've been living in Sweden I haven't had any trouble, even though just this year I've started to become allergic to pollen for instance

Interviewer: Okay, mhm! Imagine that (laughs a little)

Mustafa: That is age. Yes, exactly! And then, difficult to learn the language, I tried to, sometimes when you're watching TV and there are subtitles, some words I don't understand. I check, ask the kids, well, difficult to learn. // Or difficult to keep your words that are in your memory. Of course.

Mustafa, who generally seems to think of himself as old(er), proposes that his (older) age makes him feel tired. He seems to attribute this to feeling that his body is worn out and that he has a more difficult time remembering new (Swedish) words that he comes across (as he explained earlier in the interview that it was much easier to remember words when he originally studied Swedish). He relates recent physical changes to growing older ("That is age.") and contends that it is only normal, or to be expected (i.e. "of course"), that one's memory may not be the same as before.

Various references to levels of activity are also made in relation to feeling old(er), which to a certain extent are related to the bodily aspects discussed earlier. Particularly common (see Table 6.1) are references to not being able to do the same kinds of things as before (as Amir's previous quote also is an example of), or being less active. For instance, Yongyuth (male, 71, Thailand; 44 years in Sweden) contends that one aspect of growing older is to adjust one's

¹⁰² Mustafa lost a leg prior to migrating to Sweden.

activities to one's changing capacities. He tells me about how he had tried wakeboarding as a frequent water-skier, with the following conclusion:

Yongyuth: (...) I tried it, but I couldn't get up, even though, "now I'll stop, now I'm old" (laughs a little).

Interviewer: Okay (laughs a little)

Yongyuth: That's it, one can feel old in that way. (...) There's lots of stuff you'd like to do. But you don't have the energy. // So old in that way, but, old at work, I still work as a translator. (...) (adds a number of different projects he is involved in) So in that way, I still work. But it's just sports [I] can't, I play badminton every Friday, two hours in a row, but now one doesn't have the energy. ... Now I feel old in that sense.

Yongyuth here first claims that he finds himself saying "now I'll stop, now I'm old" when he realises that he (physically) cannot manage to get onto a wakeboard (which of course is a difficult feat for most people), laughingly posing that "*one*" can feel old in that way. He claims that there are many things he would like to do but lacks the energy, which he associates with feeling old. He however goes on to claim emphatically that he still is engaged in a range of work related projects (despite being formally retired) and claims that he does not feel old(er) in relation to that. In this interview excerpt, Yongyuth conveys some ambivalence with regards to feeling old(er), proposing that he now "feel[s] old" in the sense of having less physical energy for sports, but *not* old(er) when it comes to work (despite retirement).

In a similar vein, Mayuree (female, 63, Thailand; 38 years in Sweden) tells me when I ask if she ever feels old:

Mayuree: Yes, sometimes (laughs). Sometimes you can feel it. You're kind of not as active as before, kind of, you can feel a little, well your body is a little stiff and stuff. And things don't go as quickly [as they used to], like that. // Yeah, I can feel that. But now you start, my body starts to show, // but my, my head, [and] my heart don't feel it. What, I'm old? Starting to get old. (laughs)

Mayuree claims that she *sometimes* feels old and relates this to being less active, her body being "a little stiff" and proposes that things "don't go as quickly" as they used to (or take more time, see Table 6.1). She goes on to claim that her body is starting to show signs of old(er) age, but that her mind and her heart don't feel old(er). She thereby distinguishes between the inside and outside (as will be discussed further in Chapter 7 on Negotiating old[er] age). Laughingly adding "what, I'm old?" could be regarded as a way of adding an element of surprise, proposing she has not really thought of herself in that way, since her "head" and "heart don't feel it".

To sum up, one dimension of the *when* question for old(er) age seems to relate to the physicality of old(er) age: various changes in the (physical) body are

cited by interviewees as making them feel old(er), be it tiredness, aches and pains, changing learning capacities, decreasing activities or that things seem to take more time (see Table 6.1). As interviewees seem to be negotiating with themselves and to some extent with a virtual other in the form of what people in society in general are thought to presume about old(er) age, the *who* here seems to be another version of oneself on the one hand (be it younger, more energetic, or healthier), and the general non-old(er) population on the other. As will be seen, both “still being active” and an emphasis on high activity levels are precisely the kinds of reasons that sometimes are drawn upon when explaining why one does *not* feel old(er) (see Chapter 7 on Negotiating old[er] age).

The question of time in old(er) age

Further situations where interviewees claim they could feel old(er), as can be seen in Table 6.1, relate to the passage of time. This is related to chronological age and time passing, finding that one’s children or grandchildren have grown up. It can also be a sense of life’s finitude. Social change in terms of technological advances and changing values are also cited by some, as will be discussed in turn in the following.

The experience of time passing could be connected quite simply to chronological age making one feel old(er), as was expressed by Adriana (female, 68, USA; 41 years in Sweden) in the following way:

Adriana: It’s more like, it’s more like age itself. I-, that sometimes I think, God, sixty-eight. My mother died, my father-in-law died when he was sixty, my mother was sev-, seventy-two. In twelve years I’ll be eighty. It, so it’s more like the very idea of age that makes me – And then sometimes you think, “God I’m old!”...

Interviewer: When you think sixty-eight

Adriana: Yes. Yes.

Interviewer: Okay. ... But n-, not so much in other contexts or

Adriana: No

Interviewer: No

Adriana: No. // Hm!

Adriana here argues that “age itself” makes her feel old(er), namely thinking about her chronological age, especially in relation to the ages at which her older relatives passed away. In addition, thinking in terms of the number of years left before she will turn eighty make her “sometimes” think “God I’m old!”. While she here claims she can think of herself as old, and generally seems to think so (as conveyed throughout the remainder of the interview), she argues that this pertains only to thinking about the number sixty-eight, not to other contexts. As will be seen in Chapter 7, chronological age also presents one of the boundary markers that may be referred to in the negotiation of old(er) age.

The passage of time could also be connected to finding that one's children or grandchildren have grown up. Yongyuth (male, 71, Thailand; 44 years in Sweden) says: "And then when you look at children and grandchildren, you feel 'ho?'...". Lars (male, 73, Norway; 49 years in Sweden) similarly tells me when I ask about everyday situations where he can feel old:

Lars: ... (sighs a little) Well, what is old... No, I have to say – (sighs a little) no, it's when you see your grandchildren grow up, you know, I guess that's when you know. You think about [it], oh.

Lars here first questions what "old" means, and proposes that "you *know*" you are old when you see your grandchildren grow up. That is what makes him think about it. Put differently, these allusions seem to suggest it is nothing he otherwise thinks about. Again, at another point he says:

Lars: ... No, you can tell that you're getting older when your children and grandchildren grow up. And they also get older. After all I've got children who both are over forty years old now. Or *we* do. Yeah, and when you remember yourself as a 40-year-old, you don't think that it was that long ago, but it's probably been a while since then (laughs)

Interviewer: (laughs a little)

Lars: Yep, that's it!

Lars here refers to both children and grandchildren, proposing that "getting older" becomes apparent when they grow up and also get older. Remembering his 40-year-old self, he claims that it doesn't feel that long ago but laughingly concedes that "it's probably been a while" since then. The way in which Lars expresses himself here seems to suggest that he feels old(er), which he at the same time with a humorous sense of self-distance presents as something that suddenly has crept upon him.

A sense of time passing could also be expressed in more general terms, as Nima (male, 57, Iran; 24 years in Sweden) for instance tells me:

Nima: Sometimes I, when we meet with some old friends in a little forum and drink a little, and it, it was, then the feelings really swell up. Maybe someone cries and with tears talks about "now we'll soon be fifty-five, sixty-five, we have, you don't have two lives". And it took so much time. And there's also this dimension that when you're gone for more than twenty-five years, a new generation grows up in this country, too. And some think that we live in these old memories, mummified memories. It's not there, the image that we once left.

This excerpt from the interview with Nima exemplifies several different themes drawn upon in relation to old(er) age: chronological age ("we'll soon be fifty-five, sixty-five"), children growing up ("a new generation"), time ("gone for more than twenty-five years"), and life's finitude ("you don't have two lives"). The

theme of living in the past (“we live in these old memories”) could also be added to this (cf. e.g. Lundgren 2010 on nostalgia and old age identity), which however was not very common in this empirical material. Nima here refers to a group of friends who all have migrated, contemplating their lives in their new home country. He proposes that (as “some” think) they perhaps “live” in old memories at the same time as they realise that what they dream of no longer exists (“it’s not there, the image that we once left”) (cf. e.g. George & Fitzgerald 2012, see Chapter 4). He debates with himself and multiple virtual others, both his friends and “some” others who look upon their group.

The sense of life’s finitude displayed in the preceding interview excerpt was mentioned by many of the interviewees, however not necessarily always explicitly in relation to thinking of oneself as old(er) (as indicated by the “I’s” in Table 6.1). Several of the older migrants in this study thus seem to associate becoming old(er) with getting closer to the end of life. For instance, Adriana (female, 68, USA; 41 years in Sweden) says:

Adriana: I thought it was tough [to turn sixty-eight]. Tough to, to grow older, just because...to have, you have to think, you have to start thinking in a different way. You don’t have life ahead of you like you used to, the opportunities, you have to take the opportunity when it comes along because you don’t know how long it will last. // Then I – it annoys me, when I look at the obituaries, but I am so curious about which people who were born in forty-xxx.¹⁰³ // Who have died. And when you get closer and closer and closer, to, to my age. That... I th[ink], I don’t think of it as depressing, but I, I don’t think of it as a bright golden age. I... I have some friends who have, who have severe illnesses now, // it is very much that isn’t fun, that influences... Last Friday I was at a funeral for a friend who was born in forty-xxx, who I have known since, // and then, suddenly people you know pass away! // It wasn’t like that, when I came to S[weden], it was, // there was no, so... It’s an alarm clock.

Adriana tells me that she finds it tough to grow older. She proposes that one needs to change one’s mindset when growing old(er), seizing opportunities as they come along, since one doesn’t “know how long it will last”. She also tells me that she reads the obituaries with ambivalent feelings, finding it “annoying” at the same time as she is “curious”, checking for the years of birth among those who have died. She claims that now that her peers have started to pass away, it is as though an alarm clock has gone off. She proposes that she does not find it depressing, but does not think of old(er) age as a “bright golden age” either (cf. e.g. Ylänné-McEwen 2000, see Chapter 2). The sentiments displayed here go hand in hand with a sense of discomfort conveyed by Adriana over the course of the interview with regards to growing older as she seemed to worry about the

¹⁰³ Adriana’s year of birth, not cited here for reasons of anonymity.

future and potential care needs. Adriana here associates growing old(er) with life's finitude.

Some interviewees also cite social change in relation to seeing themselves as old(er) (see Table 6.1). This is expressed in terms of not being in tune with technological advances and having different values than younger generations. Jane (female, 66, England; 36 years in Sweden), who runs her own business from home, talks about not having upgraded her word-processing software to the latest version, which means that she cannot always open files that are sent to her:

Jane: But I'm a little reluctant towards new technology, even though a part of me really wants to learn about it. If I continue working, I won't be able to ask people to keep on sending old versions that much longer. So when it comes to that I feel old.

Jane seems to be ambivalent about new technologies, claiming that she is reluctant at the same time as she is curious. She contends that asking people to send old file formats does not seem to be viable in the long run. She claims that not quite being updated with regards to new technology makes her "feel old". Fred (male, 65, England; 44 years in Sweden), who in a similar vein says he feels old when having to ask his sons-in-law for help with technical matters, also finds that his values are different from that of some younger generations, reasoning:

Fred: It's not just physical [aspects], I mean, this, so to speak, in terms of values you can feel that you are getting older, and it is easy to say "ach, I don't understand these kids nowadays"

Interviewer: (laughs a little)

Fred: "I'm starting to get old then". But I can learn new things and stuff. And of course, your resistance against this, it grows a little stronger the older you get. I think it's a little hard to learn new things.

Fred here proposes that feeling old(er) is not just physical but also a matter of changing values. With a certain sense of humour and self-distance, he contends that he doesn't "understand these kids nowadays" and that he then must be "starting to get old". While he points out that he still can learn new things, he proposes that one becomes resistant against new things as one gets older, and concludes that he thinks it is "hard" to learn new things. Fred seems to suggest that he does feel old(er), at the same time as he seems to make fun of the stereotypical older person who complains about "these kids nowadays". At another point Fred mentions frequent job changes and the seemingly unreflective use of modern reproductive technologies as examples of different values among "younger people", and proposes that he can feel alienated: "when you think about it there actually is a sense of alienation towards some things."

On the whole, then, as can be seen in Table 6.1, several of the interviewees claim to think of themselves as old(er) in relation to the passage of time, be it in

terms of chronological age, (grand)children growing up, time passed, life's finitude or social change (such as technological advances and changing values). The answer to the question of *when* therefore seems to lie in the realisation that time has passed, that the world is changing and that one is not as young as one used to be. When it comes to the question of in relation to *whom* old(er) age seems to become meaningful, the answer seems to be younger generations, younger selves (i.e. who one realises were left behind a while ago) and also memories of preceding generations.

When do interviewees seem to think that others define them as old(er)?

To briefly remind the reader, in the dialectic between internal and external definitions wherein identity is situationally accomplished, definition by others can be understood as external definition, which is the process whereby one or several persons define the other(s) as X, Y or Z (or, in this case, old[er]). This may be an affirmation of one's own self-definition, or an imposition that affects one's social experience. External definition is embedded in social relationships, power and authority, and can be internalised and assimilated in part or in whole (see e.g. Jenkins 1997 & 2003, discussed in Chapter 3). This means that what is described in the following are situations where interviewees propose they are perceived by others as old(er), definitions with which they may or may not agree, which also may lead them to redefine their own self-definitions.

While several interviewees emphasise that they do not think they are regarded as old(er) by others, as will be discussed further in the next chapter (on Negotiating old[er] age, Chapter 7), a number of interviewees tell me about instances where others seem to have treated them as an old(er) person. As can be seen in Table 6.1 under the heading "Treated as old(er): when and how?", such instances often seem to have to do with situations where interviewees propose they may receive some form of benefits or are treated with respect. The examples cited suggest that this could be in the form of being offered senior discounts, a seat on a bus, or have to do with the way they are addressed. Perceiving that one is treated as an old(er) person however is not always expressed in entirely positive terms. While this seems much less common than the more positive instances, some nevertheless claim that they have been called (age-related) names or in fact seem to think that they are made invisible by their older age (see Table 6.1).

To start with the more positive instances, being offered a seat is mostly described as happening very rarely, and when it happens, it is described as quite a surprise (more on this in Chapter 7). Terhi (female, 79, Finland; 61 years in Sweden) tells me the following in relation to my question about situations where she may feel old(er):

Terhi: But what I (laughs a little) have noticed somehow is that people kind of, if I go somewhere they want to give me their seats and stuff like that, and I, “oh okay”, I almost don’t understand that I, that it is because I am old. // That they kind of, well, “oh take this seat” and stuff like that. And things like that, well, I can notice, even though I, I don’t think [about that] myself. But it, it’s of course [that], others see me from the outside (laughs a little) (...)

Interviewer: But how does it feel then when you, when you’re offered a seat

Terhi: No but then, then I suddenly think that, but wh-, why? Or like that, but then, then I think it’s, well I guess she thinks that I’m so old that I need to sit, yeah, so then, then I say thank you. So that... But it’s very rare that I take the bus. // I walk as much as possible because, you know, I think one should get about every single day. Absolutely.

Terhi proposes that to her apparent surprise people “somehow”, “kind of” want to give her their seats, which she claims she “almost” does not understand why. By going on to say that it is “because I am old”, she claims an identity as old(er) and proposes that others may see her as old(er) as well. She refers to how others see her “from the outside”, claiming that her appearance perhaps is that of an old(er) person even if she does not necessarily think of herself in that way. When I ask how she feels about being offered a seat then, she says that it makes her wonder why, but claims that people probably think that she’s “so old” that she needs to sit. While she proposes that “people” do see her as old(er) at times, she plays it down by emphasising that it happens very rarely as she claims she tries to “walk as much as possible”. Terhi thereby stresses the importance of exercise, which could be connected to sentiments of staying active, fit and healthy, thereby warding off old(er) age (cf. e.g. Gilleard & Higgs 2000, see Chapter 2; also see Chapter 7).

Another example of seemingly being surprised can be found in the following excerpt from the interview with Adriana (female, 68, USA; 41 years in Sweden), who responds as follows when asked whether she could think of situations where she has been treated as an old(er) person:

Adriana: Yes! Once on the underground this, a white-haired, a younger white-haired woman gave me her seat.

Interviewer: Okay

Adriana: Hm!

Interviewer: And how- (laughs a little)

Adriana: Yes

Interviewer: What did you think of that?

Adriana: I was like “ah!”

Interviewer: (laughs a little)¹⁰⁴

Adriana: “well God, but she is-“, I don’t know how old she was, but I thought it was funny. And sometimes it’s men who are offering their seats, this has

¹⁰⁴ In case clarification is needed, my laughter was due to the humorous way in which Adriana expressed her astonishment about this episode.

CHAPTER 6

happened a couple, two or three times, // when, when they thought I nee[ded it].
And th-, then when I get on the bus I, I sit in the seats for older people. Pch! Oh,
I'm an older person.

In both cases, the element of surprise can be interpreted as meaning that Terhi and Adriana seek to present themselves as not old(er) to begin with, but propose that others may regard them as old(er) in this type of situation. Adriana expresses a sense of astonishment from the beginning, presumably not least since the person offering her a seat is described as “white-haired” (but “younger”), indicating she found it “funny”. She further claims that sitting in “seats for older people” makes her think of herself as an older person, which also almost seems to come as a surprise to her.

In a similar vein, Fred (male, 65, England; 44 years in Sweden) also seems to think that the following situation was humorous, when asked whether there are any situations where others treat him as old(er):

Fred: ... Yes, there are situations where they ask you whether you are retired for instance, wherever there kind of are situations where there are discounts or cheaper tickets for instance. When you're buying a season ticket on the train, when you're going to a museum, and exhibitions and things like that, the movies have some stuff like that

Interviewer: So you, so they ask you sometimes?

Fred: Yes, they ask, “is that going to be full price or...?” they say (laughs)

The type of situation described here, then, is one where old(er) age can be seen as an advantage as one receives the benefit of a discount if belonging to the category of retired people. The way that Fred proposes he could be asked politely, “full price or...?”, with a heavy suggestive pause, appears funny to him. The way he talks about this episode seems to suggest that Fred seeks to present himself as somebody who perhaps apparently has started to be regarded as old(er) by others, but who does not quite see himself in that way (yet), perhaps making these kinds of situations appear absurd and strange to him. The following would seem to confirm such a conclusion:

Fred: Yeah, sometimes you notice youngsters start to stand up on the train and offer (laughing) their seat and stuff like that you know. I never sit on the train, I usually stand, because I stand and work because, because of my back. But I notice kind of that, yeah, (laughs a little) kind of, okay, if they think I should sit, alright.
// Even though I usually don't want to. But it

Interviewer: But it happens that someone

Fred: Yeah it happens. It's mostly immigrant youth actually. // Of course I take the train where there are a lot of immigrant youth. It's especially among them that you can find this attitude towards older people kind of...

Again, Fred proposes that it is funny that he is offered a seat on the train, and he emphatically presents himself as someone who does not need to sit, claiming however that his back feels better when standing (rather than not wanting to take a seat for other reasons). He seems to laugh it off by saying “if they think I should sit, alright”. The humorous manner of talking about it again suggests both that he doesn’t really think of himself as old(er) and that this perhaps is a bit of a new phenomenon. At the same time, by describing how he is offered a seat and that certain groups in society treat “older people” in such a way, in effect Fred talks about this category as though he belonged to it (see Chapter 10 for more on ways of speaking).

An instance of being paid respect can be found in the following excerpt, again from the interview with Fred (male, 65, England; 44 years in Sweden):

Interviewer: Are there any, if you think once more about your usual, daily life, are there any situations you can think of where you experience that your age matters somehow?

Fred: ... Yes, in a positive way, I think I get more respect being older. And it’s in various kinds of situations. At work it’s easier when you have to talk to executives, directors, // parliamentary secretaries and people like that, they listen, you know. // In a different way than they maybe would if – partly it’s got to do with security, that you’re kind of knowledgeable and are used to giving presentations in front of lots of people, so to speak, and being able to handle lots of questions and stuff.

Fred here claims that his age can matter in a positive manner, proposing he is given “more respect” due to his “*older*” age. He claims that for him “being older” at work it is associated with being experienced, knowledgeable and quite simply worth listening to, thereby presenting a rather positive image of old(er) age. Fred then presents himself to me as “being older” here. Another instance of being treated in a positive manner can be found in the following quote from the interview with Lars (male, 73, Norway; 49 years in Sweden):

Lars: Youths your age today, they like saying *ni*¹⁰⁵ to me, a lot! Then I take it as a form of expression of honour that, okay, they express reverence towards people who are a little older. Maybe.

Lars here addresses me and includes me in a category of “youths”, who he claims tend to address him politely, which he proposes that he takes as an “expression of honour” and “reverence”. Associating this with people “who are a little older”, he positions himself as belonging to that category. He qualifies this by

¹⁰⁵ The direct translation of the Swedish word *ni* would be “you”, which however does not capture its implications. *Ni* is both the pronoun of the second person plural and is a polite manner of addressing the second person singular, much like the German *Sie* or French *vous*. Unlike its German and French counterparts it is however no longer in common use.

way of adding “maybe” however, posing that it may or may not have to do with being “a little older”.

Finally, some of the interviewees (namely Mustafa and Sinikka) propose that they are treated differently depending on whether or not they use a cane, crutches and (Nordic) walking sticks: they claim that they are met with kindness when using aids for walking, in a way that they are not otherwise. Here is what Mustafa (male, 58, Kurdistan; 27 years in Sweden) tells me:

Interviewer: But this thing with being treated as older, are there any particular situations where, that you can think of, that it happens

Mustafa: I notice, when I leave these [Nordic] walking sticks and walk with a crutch, I’m treated better

Interviewer: Be-, better with the walking sticks or better with the crutch?

Mustafa: I leave these, then I take a crutch, then I see people, I receive better treatment. // Sometimes I don’t take either. I walk just like this. You know I want to, my body, it doesn’t let go of the pain... Then [there’s] hardly anything, just normal, people can’t tell. But then with the crutch, it’s some sort of proof that people notice and then they pay more respect I think.

Mustafa claims that visual markers associated with infirmity, such as crutches, lead to being treated “better” as compared to not using them. As he mentions this in relation to my question pertaining to being treated as older, it would seem as though he connects this to old(er) age as well (and not infirmity only). Mustafa proposes that walking aids offer “proof” that somebody perhaps needs help and that it leads people to “pay more respect”, which is quite interesting when considering that most interviewees do not seem to think that old(er) people are treated well in society in general.

Also consider what Sinikka (female, 66, Finland; 46 years in Sweden) says when I ask her if she thinks people ever treat her as old or older:

Sinikka: No, I don’t think so. Well, there have been times when I’ve had trouble with my back, and then I’ve used a cane and of course that’s something that is clearly visible. And then...you’re treated in, most of the time in an entirely different manner right away. // You notice of course on the one hand...they tend to offer you a seat more easily, kind of, in many places. // And when you get on the bus then, then it’s kind of not a problem if you want to sit in a seat for older people and stuff like that. Another day maybe I don’t have as much pain in my back and don’t take the cane and then maybe there is a seat like that, then it is a bit of a problem. // And then you kind of go and brood, “should I say something”, that I want to sit down, or not, or should I try to hold on to the bar (laughs, *Interviewer* laughs a little). So this is a little, it’s not that often that we take the bus like that, but of course it happens.

Similar to Mustafa, Sinikka claims that using a cane entails an advantage since it leads strangers to offer her a seat. She first responds to my question with a “no”,

but then proposes that she is treated very differently when she uses a cane. She claims that people then are quick to offer a seat, so much so that it can become a problem when she does not use a cane, since she still wants to sit. Just as some of the other interviewees (e.g. Terhi), Sinikka is also quick to point out that she does not take the bus very often. Interestingly, while there seems to be a tendency among interviewees to presume that being regarded as old(er) is something negative, in these two cases where interviewees could make claims based on the use of visible markers that suggest old(er) age and based on not doing so, they propose that their experiences are positive.

Perceiving to be treated as an old(er) person however is not always described in positive terms. Some interviewees talk about having been called (age-related) names, as expressed in the following by Fred (male, 65, England; 44 years in Sweden):

Fred: But then of course, one has been called an old devil but it is kind of – by the kids in the courtyard – when you tell them that they shouldn't do what they're doing to cats or whatever it is they are doing, because I do go and tell them, and they don't like it. So then you get to hear that sort of stuff. But it's kind of something you just have to take. But I don't really care.

Fred claims that he has been called age related names (“old devil”) by young kids, which he describes as something one just has to take, claiming that he does not really care. In this situation, pointing out right behaviour from wrong is what leads him to being called “old”. To add to this, the name-callers are kids who are much younger than him. In other words, as compared to them, Fred will invariably be regarded as “old”.

Finally, Jane (female, 66, England; 36 years in Sweden) proposes that being seen as old(er) perhaps entails not being seen at all:

Jane: I had been colouring my hair for quite some time, and then when I got sick I thought okay, I'll stop colouring my hair, I'll go grey. But at the same time, there's a part of me that doesn't like it. Because you can tell that when you're grey-haired, you aren't seen when you're out. You're just, well, an old lady. So... No, older people aren't seen much. With those of the same age it's okay but not with younger people...

Jane claims that she is not seen outside with grey hair, in the sense that she claims it makes her “just, well, an old lady”. She goes on to propose that “older people aren't seen much”, which she however qualifies further by distinguishing between peers of the same age and younger people (claiming that the sense of invisibility emerges in relation to younger people, not same age peers). While Jane is the only one who expresses such a view (which however also was expressed by women in another study, see Maynard et al. 2008; also cf. Ward & Holland 2011), other interviewees (namely Adriana and Sayid) claim that changes

in hair colour (from dark hair to grey or white) have led to different (more positive) treatment from others.

Finally, some propose they could feel old(er) (or experience that they are regarded as old(er)) in the context of the labour market (as suggested also in an earlier interview excerpt with Fred). Some sectors could have a more youthful orientation, as Alexandros (male, 60, Greece; 42 years in Sweden) argues:

Interviewer: But are there also any situations, when you think in your everyday life, anything, that you nevertheless feel old?

Alexandros: ... I'm thinking about when you, when you're going to...apply for... I try, I work as a consultant most of the time you know, I look for work every now and then, and then, within [the] IT [sector]. And... You're to write, to write your age, then I say that... By the language in the ads you know, they say they want, they want an awesome programmer

Interviewer: Mhm. ... Oh, right (laughs a little)

Alexandros: I understand, you know who you are, but awesome sounds, well... I'm probably old. // I can't do this job.

Interviewer: (laughs a little)

Alexandros: But it's true, then only then you look at the question, yes, I am old. Only then, I mean otherwise I guess it is, yes, of course, you need, you don't go to a bar for, for 20-year-olds, you just don't do that, after all, of course, I think, I don't think about that. But that I think that it is old in, in such situations that, awesome programmer, yes that job stands, that sort of people, yes, I am old. I am old.

Alexandros proposes that the language used in some job advertisements in the IT sector sounds as though they are youth-oriented, as the description “awesome programmer” would imply. In relation to this description, he claims “I’m probably old” and jokingly adds that he “can’t do this job” for this reason. Alexandros claims that in relation to that, “yes, I am old”, but “*only then*”. He explains this by proposing that he does not go to “a bar for 20-year-olds”, implying that he would feel old if he did go there, but since he does not go there, he does not feel old. He claims he only feels old in relation to what the job as “awesome programmer” and “that sort of people” stand for, repeatedly stating that then, yes, “I am old. I am old.” This example illustrates once more how interviewees may identify as old(er) in some situations but not in others. Similar sentiments with regards to the labour market were expressed by Rodrigo (male, 65, Chile; 35 years in Sweden), who proposes that he expects to be devalued at his workplace within a couple of years, and Safet (male, 63, Bosnia; 18 years in Sweden) who proposes that he does not expect to be able to get another job after his ongoing sick leave (see Table 6.1). Otherwise however, as will be seen, Alexandros claims that he is not (yet) old(er) precisely because he is still working (i.e. not yet retired, see Chapter 7).

To sum up, the *whens* of old(er) age in terms of external definitions described here seem to be associated with kindness and respect on the one hand, and with name calling and invisibility on the other. Most examples cited are instances from everyday life where interviewees seem to think they are treated in particular ways due to being defined as old(er). The context of the labour market has perhaps less to do with everyday life and more with a particular (construction) site (cf. Cornell & Hartmann 2007, see Chapter 3), where being seen as old(er) does not appear to always be regarded as an asset (with the exception of some who claim they are listened to and respected due to their age, e.g. Fred and Amir). The *who* appears to be of an uncertain but likely younger age (including kids) and most of the time a stranger.

Fleeting identifications?

The purpose of this chapter has been to zoom in on the research question pertaining to when (in what situations) and in relation to whom old(er) age seems to become meaningful for identification. In terms of self-definitions as old(er), the *when* question for old(er) age seems to relate to the physicality of old(er) age on the one hand and to the passage of time on the other. Various changes in the (physical) body are cited by interviewees as seemingly making them feel old(er), be it tiredness, aches and pains, changing learning capacities, decreasing activities or that things seem to take more time (see Table 6.1). The passage of time could be described with reference to chronological age, (grand)children growing up, time passed, life's finitude or social change (such as technological advances and changing values). The answer to the question of *when* then seems to lie in the realisation that time has passed, that the world is changing and that one is not as young as one used to be. When it comes to being regarded as old(er) by others, some claim that they (mostly to their own astonishment, surprise or bemusement) have been offered seats on the bus or train, or claim that their opinions seem to be particularly valued due to their life experience (based on age). Others however claim that they have been called denigrating names (i.e. e.g. "old devil"), or claim that their more aged appearance (with e.g. grey hair) has made them invisible. Most examples cited are instances from everyday life (with the exception of the labour market) where interviewees claim they are regarded as old(er) and treated in particular ways as a result of such external definitions. With regards to the *who* question, as interviewees seem to be negotiating with themselves and to some extent with a virtual other in the form of what people in society in general are expected to presume about old(er) age and old(er) people, the *who* with regards to self-definitions seems to be another version of oneself (be it younger, more energetic, or healthier), younger generations, memories of preceding generations, and the general non-old(er) population. The *who* in being defined (explicitly) by others appears to be of an uncertain but likely younger age, and most of the time a stranger (although exceptions are found).

When looking at Table 6.1 more closely, it becomes clear that there seem to be some tendencies as to how different individuals seem to conceptualise old(er) age. For instance, some seem to think of old(er) age predominantly in physical terms, as the markings under the heading “The physicality of old(er) age” seem to suggest. Others seem to associate it more with the question of time. Some seem to refer more or less frequently to both, while others only seem to make few references to either and the remainder either do not seem to cite any such particular situations at all, or only seem to do so by implication. Most of such situations are described as fleeting or as occurring only at times. Comparing when interviewees claim they are regarded as old(er) by others to self-references as such, it seems as though all of those who propose that they at times have been treated as old(er) also claim that they at times could feel old(er) themselves. This suggests that these external definitions do not seem to be entirely imposed (cf. discussion of external-internal dialectic in Chapter 3, e.g. Jenkins 1997 & 2003).

As was explained in the discussion of the dissertation’s methodology (Chapter 5), one of the final steps of analysis was to examine whether there seem to be any patterns in the findings concerning demographic characteristics such as chronological age, perceived cultural distance, gender and time since migration. This was done last (rather than first) because from a social constructionist perspective we cannot presume that these dimensions matter for identification. In other words, whether or not (and if so, how) these dimensions play into constructions and negotiations of the identity categories of old(er) age and migrancy is for research to find out, not for us to presume. In the context of the questions of when and in relation to whom the identity category of old(er) age seems to become meaningful, the following patterns emerge with regards to the aforementioned dimensions. While most references as displayed in Table 6.1 cut across all ages, some seem to be cited mostly by interviewees above the age of 60 (as seems to be the case for references to illness, learning capabilities, inability to do the same things, things taking more time and being less active). This may however mostly have to do with interviewees’ overall identifications, where most of those under the age of 60 generally do not seem to think of themselves as old(er) (see Chapter 10). That is to say, the types of situations interviewees refer to with regards to the identity category of old(er) age becoming meaningful may have more to do with whether or not they generally seem to think of themselves as old(er) than with their chronological age. Neither perceived cultural distance, time since migration, age at migration nor (inter)marriage seem to play into the whens of old(er) age. As far as gender is concerned, it seems as though only male interviewees make reference to being treated as old(er) in terms of being treated with respect. All of those who mention the passage of time in relation to (grand)children growing up also happen to be male. It should however be noted at this point, as was discussed briefly in the presentation of the sample in Chapter 5, that the sample happens to be

composed in such a way that there is a majority of women among those from more “culturally close” countries and a majority of men from more “culturally distant” countries. To add to this, comparatively more of the men from “culturally distant” countries are also relatively younger (aged 60 and below), making it difficult to suggest any clear patterns in the findings as pertaining exclusively to either gender or perceived cultural distance. In some cases, however, common sense may indicate which dimension is likely to be more relevant. Such patterns may be explored further in future research.

What is striking then with regards to the question of *when* the identity category of old(er) age seems to become meaningful for identification for the older migrants interviewed here is that it seems to be much more common that interviewees claim they *themselves* feel old(er) (i.e. internally defining themselves as old(er)) as compared to claiming that others regard them as old(er) (i.e. being externally defined). The types of situations where they nevertheless claim that they are treated as old(er) furthermore are frequently described as surprising and very rare. To add to this, expressing such situations in terms of physicality and time further adds to the impression that old(er) age seems to be perceived as comparatively fleeting by most (but not all). This fleetingness suggests that the identity category of old(er) age seems to become meaningful mostly briefly in particular situations and in relation to particular kinds of others, rather than appearing to be pervasive and more permanently meaningful for identification. Without much further ado, let us now examine how the identity category of old(er) age seems to be negotiated.

CHAPTER 7: NEGOTIATING OLD(ER) AGE

Having answered the questions of when and in relation to whom old(er) age seems to become meaningful (see Chapter 6), it is now time to examine how the identity category of old(er) age seems to be negotiated. Some patterns of negotiation have already come to light in the interview excerpts discussed in the preceding chapter. As was discussed in the presentation of this dissertation's theoretical frame (Chapter 3), identity negotiation can be understood as the process whereby individuals may present themselves to others in a certain way, being defined by others, responding to others' definitions and perhaps presenting themselves in a new way, in the dialectical process of internal and external definition (see e.g. Jenkins 1997 & 2003). Negotiation includes a process of boundary drawing where one may place oneself on either side of various boundaries (such as not old vs. old, young-old vs. old-old), claiming a desirable identity and distancing oneself from undesirable ones (cf. Wimmer 2013, see Chapter 3). Examining the negotiation of old(er) age is then as much a matter of exploring when and how the identity category of old(er) age becomes meaningful for identification as it is a matter of exploring rejections, *dis*identifications and other claims to not being old(er). Departing from this theoretical frame, the findings presented below focus on both identifications and rejections, exploring who it is the older migrants interviewed seem to be negotiating with, what identities they seem to claim or reject and on what grounds, using the concepts discussed in Chapter 3 (and briefly summarised here) as analytical tools.

How does old(er) age seem to be negotiated?

As displayed in Table 7.1 (see following pages), one way of negotiating the identity category of old(er) age can be described as presenting oneself as not old(er) yet, which can be understood as a form of boundary work (cf. e.g. Wimmer 2013, see Chapter 3). By way of (re)drawing the boundaries of oldness so as to place the beginning of old(er) age at a distance, one can in effect exclude oneself from the category. As will be seen, in the process, an image of others as “really” old is drawn. One's claim to not being old(er) may also be understood as a claim to sameness, still *not* being old(er) and thus the same as one's younger self and the same as the general non-old population. Another way of negotiating old(er) age pertains to distinguishing between how one feels on the inside and one's (outer) physical body, which allows for contradictions between one's self-definition and how one thinks one is regarded by others. Redefining the category of old(er) age by way of presenting oneself as “old(er) but different” is another way of negotiation, not least in terms of boundary work by way of redefining the meaning of a category and passing on the stigma to others (cf. e.g. Wimmer 2013,

Table 7.1: How does old(er) age seem to be negotiated?

	Seen as old(er)? Direct responses		Presenting oneself as not old(er) yet							Inside vs. outside			Presenting oneself as old(er) but different			
	No	Hmm...	Chronological age	Retirement status	Still active, vigorous	Physical appearance	Not using cane or walker	Still interested in life, curious	What do you mean, old(er)?	Humour	Young inside, old(er) body	Not looking one's age	Surprised to be seen as old(er)	Different from other old(er) people	Favourable comparisons	Others as "really" old
Kjersti (f, 66, Norway; 44 years in Sweden)	XX				X		X				I					X
Lars (m, 73, Norway; 49 years in Sweden)	I				I		I	X			X		X	X	I	X
Sinikka (f, 66, Finland; 46 years in Sweden)	X			X	X	X		X				X		X		
Terhi (f, 79, Finland; 61 years in Sweden)	X				X	X		X		X			X		X	
Fred (m, 65, England; 44 years in Sweden)					I		I			I	X		X			X
Jane (f, 66, England; 36 years in Sweden)		X									X		X			I
Adriana (f, 68, USA; 41 years in Sweden)													X	X		
Audrey (f, 71, USA; 28 years in Sweden)		XX			I			X				I		X		
Agnieszka (f, 70, Poland; 40 years in Sweden)	XX				X			I	X					X		
Natalia (f, 69, Poland; 36 years in Sweden)					X					X	X					
Alexandros (m, 60, Greece; 42 years in Sweden)	I		X	X	X		X									
Jannis (m, 55, Greece; 40 years in Sweden)	XX								X							

	Seen as old(er)? Direct responses		Presenting oneself as not old(er) yet							Inside vs. outside			Presenting oneself as old(er) but different			
	No	Hmm...	Chronological age	Retirement status	Still active, vigorous	Physical appearance	Not using cane or walker	Still interested in life, curious	What do you mean, old(er)?	Humour	Young inside, old(er) body	Not looking one's age	Surprised to be seen as old(er)	Different from other old(er) people	Favourable comparisons	Others as "really" old
Maria (f, 72, Chile; 33 years in Sweden)	XX					X						X				
Rodrigo (m, 65, Chile; 35 years in Sweden)	XX				X			X								X
Luka (m, 56, Bosnia; 19 years in Sweden)		X			X			X			I					
Safet (m, 63, Bosnia; 18 years in Sweden)	X				X			X		X						
Mayuree (f, 63, Thailand; 38 years in Sweden)		X				X				X	X	X	X			
Yongyuth (m, 71, Thailand; 44 years in Sweden)	X					X				X	X	X				
Orhan (m, 73, Turkey; 46 years in Sweden)	X	X	I	X	X	X	X	X	X			X			X	I
Zeynep (f, 70, Turkey; 47 years in Sweden)	X				XX	X	X					X			X	
Mustafa (m, 58, Kurdistan; 27 years in Sweden)																
Sayid (m, 60, Kurdistan; 20 years in Sweden)			X	X	X											X
Amir (m, 56, Iran; 32 years in Sweden)	X	X	X	X				X			X					
Nima (m, 57, Iran; 24 years in Sweden)	X		X		X			X			X		X			

Notes: XX=emphatic, X=explicit, I=implicit

see Chapter 3). It sometimes also seems to be a matter of disidentification in the sense that one may seem to regard oneself as simultaneously belonging and not belonging, similar in some ways but different in others (cf. e.g. Medina 2003, see Chapter 3). All of these will be addressed throughout this chapter. First however let us examine how interviewees respond to my direct question regarding how they think that others define them when it comes to old(er) age.

Seen as old(er)? Direct responses

While answers to the question of how the identity category of old(er) age is negotiated best can be found by way of examining the empirical material as a whole, it is quite telling to start by looking into interviewees' direct responses to the question about whether there are any situations where they think they are considered as old(er) by others. The reason why this is of interest is that it gives interviewees the chance to explicitly claim an identity or reject it and to present themselves in the way that they hope to be seen (cf. e.g. Goffman 1959 on impression management, see Chapter 3). This forms an interesting backdrop against the sometimes conflicting and inconsistent identities claimed, asserted or implied when *not* explicitly being asked about them. The kinds of answers examined here are only those that are particularly interesting from the viewpoint of negotiation: positive answers and/or examples were discussed in the preceding chapter (Chapter 6). As can be seen in Table 7.1 (under the heading "Seen as old[er]? Direct responses"), several interviewees are quite adamant that they are not regarded as old(er) by others when I ask them (marked with XX in the table). Consider the following answers to my question about whether there are any situations where they think that others treat them as old or older:

No, no. I think I have a, well, you're mobile, you do gymnastics, and you're...on the move.

(*Kjersti*, female, 66, Norway; 44 years in Sweden)

No. No. No, I haven't [been treated like that], I don't think so. I'm not sure that I know what it means, but...

(*Jannis*, male, 55, Greece; 40 years in Sweden)

No. Not, not in, no, not.

(*Rodrigo*, male, 65, Chile; 35 years in Sweden)

In some cases, then, interviewees immediately distance themselves from the idea that others would or could think of them as old(er), as is the case with Kjersti, Agnieszka, Jannis, María and Rodrigo (all of whom appear to also generally think that others do not regard them as old[er], see Chapter 10). While those who respond "no" are in the majority (see Table 7.1), several go on to change their minds and either proceed to offer examples, or tell me of instances where they

seem to think they are treated as old(er) in other parts of the interview, as was discussed in the preceding chapter.

Some interviewees take their time trying to think of instances. The manner in which this may be done seems to indicate that the question may be interpreted as reasonable but still difficult, as in the following excerpt from the interview with Audrey (female, 71, USA; 28 years in Sweden):

- Interviewer:* But do you find that you've been treated as, as older, so to speak
Audrey: Mmm... It, it is possible, I mean possible, it has to be (laughs a little)
Interviewer: (laughs a little)
Audrey: It is not possible, I don't think, but... I'm trying to think... Hm... Hm... I can, I can't think of anything directly, to have been treated directly as older,... There have to be situations, but it's kind of like they, they don't stand out...
Interviewer: Mhm
Audrey: Mm...
Interviewer: It's once again in your regular life so to speak
Audrey: Yes
Interviewer: So it can be anything kind of, mhm
Audrey: Yes, exactly. ... Since I have this, to, to...meet [others in a] forward [manner], then... Then I am treated in such a way that... I think that I have a way that makes – I'm not the quiet little lady in the corner, that is, so I'm treated accordingly.
Interviewer: Mhm, right
Audrey: And then I'm, my *Fjällräven*¹⁰⁶ jacket, and then my backpack, like that, and then jeans and stuff, and hair like this (referring to curly hairstyle; both laugh a little). It's not that I kind of, to stay young, it's not that, it's [just that this is] my style.
Interviewer: Mhm
Audrey: But, and it's like this, I'm treated in a different way as well than... You know, how you are dressed and how, what you look like and, it influences others' perceptions
Interviewer: Mhm, absolutely
Audrey: So eh, mm... Hm. I need to think more...

Here, Audrey takes her time to reflect, proposing at first that it is “possible”, then that “it has to be” that she has been treated as old(er). Reflecting further, she again refers to the possibility and then claims she can't think of any directly, saying that “there have to be” instances but that they don't stand out to her. In this first part of the excerpt, she seems to be claiming that she surely must be regarded as old(er) by others, thereby taking on a position as old(er). She then however goes on to argue that she has a personality and way of approaching other people that is “forward” and that she is not the “quiet little lady in the corner” and that she is “treated accordingly”. She thereby moves away from the idea that others would regard her as old(er) and goes on to add further arguments

¹⁰⁶ *Fjällräven* is a Swedish brand that produces what could be described as outdoor clothing and equipment.

to this claim. She proposes, for example, that her personal style also influences how she is regarded, and is quick to point out that she does not dress and style herself that way in order to “stay young”: it is just her (personal) style she claims. Audrey argues that these things (i.e. personality, dress and style) influence how others perceive one but still concludes that she needs to think more.¹⁰⁷ In this passage of the interview, then, she shifts from a position where she surely would be regarded as old(er) by others, to one where this would not be the case because of her (youthful) personal style, and then back to contending that she would be able to think of instances if only she had enough time to think. It seems as though she is negotiating with herself, not quite able to make up her mind about how she thinks others define her, at the same time as she seems to be negotiating with a virtual other in the form of people in society in general and their expected perception of an old(er) person.

Considering the direct responses, several interviewees distance themselves from the idea that others may regard them as old(er), even though many of them seem to think of themselves as old(er) in some situations (as was discussed in the preceding chapter, Chapter 6). Let us now look closer at how the identity category of old(er) age seems to be negotiated, and with whom negotiation seems to take place.

Presenting oneself as not old(er) yet

As was suggested in the presentation of the theoretical frame (Chapter 3), one form of negotiation can be understood as boundary work, which can be a matter of distancing oneself from those who (supposedly) “really” belong to a certain category (as suggested e.g. by Wimmer 2013). This can mean both that one talks about those others and what they are like, and that one emphasises the ways in which one is different from them. The boundaries surrounding the category in question are then (re)drawn in the process. Depending on how they seem to think of themselves and what markers they deem relevant in relation to old(er) age, interviewees could reason around why it is that they do not feel old(er) or why it is that others do not seem to consider them to be old(er) regardless of their chronological age, retirement status or physical appearance (see Table 7.1 under the heading “Presenting oneself as not old[er] yet”). Some of these boundary markers became apparent in the preceding chapter as the whens of old(er) age were discussed (see Chapter 6).

The following interview excerpt illustrates how multiple boundary markers can be drawn upon to argue why one, for instance, might not be regarded as old(er) by others, as in the interview with Orhan (male, 73, Turkey; 46 years in Sweden):

¹⁰⁷ The question of how one oneself influences how others treat or regard one is a recurring theme, as also will be seen in relation to migrancy (see Chapter 9).

Interviewer: (...) do you yourself ever find that you are treated like an older person?

Orhan: ... No. I'm not, because, as I said, as far as appearances are concerned, outside they, since I do not, like, walk with a cane, or I maybe have a little limp, but I don't have white hair, and I'm not kind of like, so I'm treated like a...well a little like a, like a regular [person].¹⁰⁸ // And I ye-, I don't have a sign [that says] "I'm retired" or yell "I'm retired!"

Interviewer: No, of course [not]

Orhan: I mean when I walk down the street. As long as I haven't...aged, parallel with my age. Actually I would be even more like, what should I say, a little disabled and so on, since I, you can't tell I'm a pensioner when I'm outside.

Interviewer: Mhm. What do you mean, if you had aged parallel with your age?

Orhan: Yeah, exactly, sev- if 73-year-old I, I don't look like a 73-year-old now. // People say that, not me. // But if I looked like a, like a real 73-year-old, actually I would be more like, how should I put it, worn out and with white hair and then very like pess[imistic]. I'm not pessimistic, I'm still like, I still have this joy in life inside of me, you can see that, anyway. Then I am, then nobody says "hey you, old man, you can take my seat", but nobody says that to me anyway. // When I take the bus I ride (laughs a little) it like everyone else.

Interviewer: Right.

Orhan: Mhm.

Interviewer: So... So you think that if, if you looked more like you were

Orhan: Yes

Interviewer: older then maybe it would be different

Orhan: It would be very different.

This excerpt exemplifies several boundary markers that interviewees draw upon to negotiate old(er) age (as seen in Table 7.1): chronological age, physical appearance, and retirement status, but also the notion of not looking one's age (which will be discussed further in a later section). Orhan starts by claiming that he is not treated like an old(er) person. The reason he puts forward is first of all that he does not use a cane, upon which he immediately concedes that he "maybe" has "a little limp" (thereby negotiating with anyone who might object to this claim), which then leads him to add another argument for not looking old(er), namely that he does not have white hair. He then claims that for these reasons, he is treated "like a regular [person]", the same as everyone else. By making these claims, he implies that walking aids and white hair mark people as old(er). The negotiation continues however as he keeps adding arguments: he argues that he also is not treated as an old(er) person because it is not readily known to others that he is retired (as would be the case if he wore a sign around his neck or walked around yelling at people that he was retired). In claiming these things, he answers to critics who would call him old(er) due to his retirement status, thereby also connecting old(er) age to retirement. He further associates old(er) age with disability, posing that he would be more disabled if he had aged

¹⁰⁸ In Swedish: *som en vanlig*

“parallel” with his age. Orhan here claims that he has (physically) aged in such a way that he does not look like a “real 73-year-old”, which “*people*” say (virtual others), garnering confirmation of his claim to not being seen as old(er). A “real 73-year-old” according to his description would be worn out, have white hair, and be pessimistic. He himself however claims he is not pessimistic but still has joy in life, which he also proposes is visible. For all of these reasons, he argues that nobody says “hey you, old man, you can take my seat”, repeating again that nobody says so. He claims to ride the bus “like everyone else”, thereby positioning himself as a part of the general non-old(er) adult population, as being the same as everyone else. This excerpt also demonstrates how interviewees may emphasise *sameness* in the process of rejecting the identity category of old(er) age, namely claiming to be just “like everyone else” (not old) and to be treated “like a regular” person. It is also an example of disidentification: on some level, Orhan acknowledges that he may be defined as old(er) due to being retired and due to his chronological age, neither of which however are visible according to him. One can see how Orhan negotiates both with himself and with virtual others in the form of people in society in general and what they perhaps would say, going back and forth between finding things that would make him appear to be old(er) (i.e. his limp, retirement status and chronological age) and finding arguments to support his claim of not being regarded as old(er) (i.e. at least not having white hair, not publicly displaying his retirement status and not having the appearance of a “real 73-year-old”).

Another way of claiming not to feel old(er) yet can be found in the following, as Luka (male, 56, Bosnia; 19 years in Sweden) tells me when I ask him directly whether he ever feels old:

Luka: No, not yet, not yet. // Not yet, I... It's just my hair that I've lost, but nothing like, my what do you call it, my fitness. That's good but, well, but maybe this, I don't know how it works for others but... They, they're always afraid that when they come to me, when they reach the age of fifty, after what's it called, over fifty, that there'll be less sex at home. // Me I...now I have to say that I'm proud, that maybe it's like a thirty-year-old man.

Luka here explicitly claims to feel “not” old(er) “yet”. He also refers to his physical body, proposing that his hair loss may make him appear old(er), but immediately claims that his fitness level has not been lessened by age. To add to this, he goes on to propose that others expect a decline in sexual activities after the age of fifty and takes pride in his claim to still have the stamina of “a thirty-year-old man”. In effect, he argues his body has changed when it comes to appearance but claims it is the same when it comes to endurance, comparing himself to others at the same time.

Where the boundaries of old(er) age are drawn appears to depend on how one conceptualises old(er) age and where one finds oneself to be located at the

present time. For instance, in the following interview excerpt, I just asked Sayid (male, 60, Kurdistan; 20 years in Sweden) whether he ever feels old and he proceeds to tell me that he has started to feel old during the past year, ever since he has started to have physical problems with his shoulders which have limited his activities and made him less fit. Then I ask:

Interviewer: Right. But what, what do you associate with feeling old, then?

Sayid: I feel that I myself, if you ask me, right now I am also not old. That's what I say, I, no, I say I am not old.

Interviewer: (laughs a little)

Sayid: I can say, when I retire, after that I'll say I, I'm old.

Interviewer: Okay, so retirement

Sayid: Yeah. // Not now.

Sayid had just told me that he has started to feel old(er), but when asked directly, he says (repeatedly) "no", "I am not old". He claims however that after retiring, he will say "I'm old", but not right now. He thereby goes from old(er) to not old(er) *yet* to pushing identifying as old(er) to the future, negotiating with himself and with a virtual other in the form of what society in general perhaps might expect, namely that old(er) age starts with retirement. This sentiment is also reflected by others who had not yet retired (such as Alexandros and Amir), which suggests that retirement status (and by implication chronological age) seems to be drawn upon as an argument in the negotiation of old(er) age.

The same argument (i.e. that one has not yet retired) is also made in relation to the question of whether or not one has experienced that others have treated one as an old(er) person, as can be seen in the interview with Alexandros (male, 60, Greece; 42 years in Sweden):

Alexandros: No, not yet. Maybe because...I'm sixty, and maybe this would kind of start above [the age of] sixty-five, right, wouldn't it? I suspect, because thus far, thus far, I don't know, [when] I'm out, thus far I feel like [that's] pensioners, you know. And maybe how you're treated is going to change then, when they know I've got a cane that I walk around with, you know, *if* I'm going to have a cane anyway and, or a walker when I'm retired. Maybe I'll be treated differently then, I don't know. Yeah that...I don't know

Interviewer: But you haven't experienced anything like that thus far

Alexandros: No, I haven't experienced that yet, no no.

Interviewer: That somebody treated you like an older person

Alexandros: No, no-one

Interviewer: No

Alexandros: Not a single time I've experienced [that]. I haven't been treated as an, as an older person so to speak, you know.

Alexandros seems to be seeking my confirmation when proposing that old(er) age would start around the age of sixty-five. He then reasons around his

experience and argues that he “suspects” that being treated as old(er) would be something that concerns “pensioners”. He claims that *later on*, when retired and walking with a cane, *then* he’ll perhaps be treated differently, but claims he doesn’t know. At the moment however he is adamant that he has “not a single time” experienced that he has been treated “as an older person”. In other words, Alexandros proposes that both retirement and whether or not one uses a cane may play a role for how one is treated (as others also do, see Table 7.1). The cane then symbolises an additional boundary marker, namely that somebody who seems frail and needs a cane to walk would be somebody who is considered old(er). Alexandros seems to be negotiating both with me (who is younger) and with a virtual other (society in general), where retirement (and the end of active working life) appears to be commonly perceived as the start of old(er) age. Reference to not being retired therefore seems to present a safe ground for claiming not to be old(er). Constructing the start of perhaps being regarded as old(er) at retirement, old(er) age can be kept at a distance.

Similarly, Terhi (female, 79, Finland; 61 years in Sweden) negotiates the possibility of being regarded as old(er) in the following way, when asked whether she thought she ever was treated as an old(er) person by others:

Terhi: Nooo, not really... It... There are, when I walk with my [Nordic] walking sticks then of course people look, yeah, but then, then I don’t think that I look that frail when I walk. Because I walk quite fast with them. But... Yes of course. And I can see, now I’ve started to feel that when I ride my bicycle that I, I’ve become stiff. // So it’s, it’s kind of come to that. So sti[ff], stiff getting on the bicycle and jumping off and stuff like that. So it’s not like it was before. So *that* I’ve noticed, I noticed last summer already that, I thought I should have, because my bicycle you know it is this high, like this (gestures to show me) // So, there are women’s bicycles that are very low like this (gestures to show me) // So I thought I’d go and change, and get one of those bicycles instead. So I’ve noticed that I’ve become stiff and then I guess it’s proof that you’re...[that it’s] age that does that. No but old, other than that, I don’t think that people behave badly towards me or anything like that, no, I haven’t noticed that.

Terhi, who is 79 at the time, first rejects the idea that anybody would see her as old(er) (“nooo, not really...”). Then she proposes that when she walks with her Nordic walking sticks that “of course people look”, but, attempting to look at herself through their eyes (and negotiating with the virtual onlookers), she claims that she does not “look that frail” because she walks “quite fast” (hence proposing that the speed at which she walks makes her unlike somebody who would be considered old(er)). She then goes on to claim that only just since last year she has started to feel stiff, “it’s kind of come to that”, feeling stiff when climbing onto and “jumping off” her bicycle, which is “not like it was before”. She explains this first by referring to the type of bicycle frame that she has, and only then goes on to propose that age could be an explanation (cf. Chapter 6 on

when one may feel old(er)). Switching from considering how others look upon her to debating how she herself feels (as the references to stiffness would suggest) can perhaps be seen as a continuation of the negotiation with these virtual others. These others will perhaps define her as old(er), even if she does not “look that frail”. To some extent she seems to confirm their verdict by going on to talk about ways in which she perhaps has started to notice that she no longer is as young as she used to be. Looking at the interview excerpt as an episode of negotiation with the interviewer, drawing upon these images can also be interpreted as a way of presenting oneself as a very active person, an image that contrasts to what people may expect to be the case for (“really”) old(er) people (cf. e.g. Higgs & Gilleard 2015 or Marshall 2015, see Chapter 2). Finally, concluding by saying that “other than that” she hasn’t noticed that “people behave badly” suggests that she associates being treated as old(er) with something negative. This however stands in contrast to what she tells me elsewhere during the interview with regards to being offered a seat on the bus (in other words, indicating that there are instances where others seem to treat her as an old(er) person after all, see Chapter 6).

Another example of how interviewees might reason around their age and how they seem to think that they are regarded by others can be found in the interview with Sinikka (female, 66, Finland; 46 years in Sweden), when asked whether she thought she was treated the same today as compared to twenty years ago:¹⁰⁹

Sinikka: ... No I don’t think that there’s that big a difference, it’s not like in the old days that you use *ni*¹¹⁰ and stuff like that, it’s still very comradely instead. But then of course, body language and the like, if you have, if you’re not quite well and you, you need help and stuff like that then that’s a different thing. But if you say, in terms of conversation and the like, then I don’t think I’ve felt, haven’t felt that ancient or (laughs)

Interviewer: No (laughs a little)

Sinikka: So that... Maybe it’s not that obvious that, that you’re retired because // a lot of the time [they] just kind of look, “okay then, when were you born”, kind of, in different contexts, and “are you still working”, like that. // So that... Now, nowadays there are so many that, many that work longer as well but, they have to ask in case you need to be reported sick or anything like that if there’s a problem // so that... It, it’s just that you can’t tell straight away by the way I look what age I am. And... Insofar it’s nice that, that it’s not that obvious (laughs) that you’re sixty-five or sixty-six. // I try to be happy and alert and stuff like that, I think that many other people probably appreciate that as well.

¹⁰⁹ The question of comparison to the past was sometimes used as a probe when interviewees could not seem to think of how they might be regarded by others in terms of (older) age.

¹¹⁰ As mentioned previously, *ni* is a polite manner of addressing someone which however no longer is in common use.

Sinikka claims that she does not think that she is treated in a different manner today as compared to twenty years earlier. By mentioning that people do not use “*n*” and “stuff like that”, she seems to imply however that if this still was in practice, she would be addressed in such a way due to her age. She goes on to differentiate between her regular everyday experiences when feeling well, and days where she may not feel well and have a different body language (and e.g. need a cane, as discussed in Chapter 6). She claims that people would treat her differently, namely as an old(er) person, when not being well. Referring to not feeling “ancient” in conversations could be seen as a way of negotiating with herself whether or not she would have been made to feel old(er) when talking to others (perhaps a general idea of not old[er] people). Thereafter, Sinikka refers to occasions such as being at the doctor’s where she may be asked about her current retirement (or work) status. When talking about this, she on the one hand proposes that being asked about her date of birth means that she is not easily identified as a pensioner (cf. Orhan cited earlier), while at the same time qualifying this claim by proposing that many people remain in the labour force at higher ages nowadays. This would mean that she is asked because she could potentially still be working, shifting between first being identified as not old(er) and then as old(er). When accounting for this type of interaction at the doctor’s office, she presents herself to me as being regarded as not looking her age, and not looking retired, which she appears to be quite happy about. In a sense she is negotiating with me as well. Finally, she claims that she tries to be “happy and alert and stuff like that”, which perhaps could be interpreted as meaning that Sinikka suggests one’s behaviour influences how others treat one. Another interpretation would be that this type of behaviour is associated with not being old. On the whole, then, Sinikka seems to be shifting between claims to being regarded as old(er) and as not old(er), and in the process seems to be negotiating with herself (amongst others) as to whether or not she is old(er) yet.

Several interviewees claim that they are not regarded as old(er) by others because they do not look their age (which will be discussed further in a later section), and it is not uncommon that they claim that it is *others* who think so (as also could be seen in the previous excerpt from the interview with Orhan). This can be seen as a form of external validation of an asserted identity (cf. Jenkins 2008, see Chapter 3), which in the interview situation is accomplished by drawing upon what (virtual) others would say. The following excerpt from the interview with Yongyuth (male, 71, Thailand; 44 years in Sweden) can be regarded as an example of this. When asked about situations where he thinks he might be treated as old(er), he says:

Yongyuth: No n- not, not. You mean among Swedes, or

Interviewer: Whichever...

Yongyuth: Yeah... It's among, among Thais, at parties, like this. It's, it...[I'm] treated like an old [person].

Interviewer: Okay. In, in what way?

Yongyuth: ... In a positive way. Like, they say, instead of standing at the end of the line you go first.

Interviewer: Okay. So it's... Are, are there other examples

Yongyuth: ... Yes... I meet people, it was at a party, a Thai party, there, there is no difference. (...) They don't believe sometimes, and then some don't believe I am old. //... There are many that we haven't seen in a couple of years, "are you retired already" or something like that. //... I usually joke with them, "yeah, I'm seventy", "no but you look just, you're forty". "Oh really"

Interviewer: (laughs a little)

Yongyuth: So, are you supposed to see this as some sort of encouragement or what, I, I think you've seen, "so I looked like I was seventy, when I was forty?" (both laugh a little) // No...

Yongyuth here first says no when I ask him about being treated as old(er), but then wonders whether I mean just among Swedes. Since the question is posed openly, independent of specific ethnic or cultural context, he then goes on to claim that he is "treated like an old [person]" at Thai parties, in a "positive way", such as being allowed to skip the line (cf. Chapter 6, section on being defined as old(er) by others). He then offers another account of a situation at a Thai party where others "don't believe I am old" (with the preamble however that "there is no difference", presumably referring to the ethnic context not playing a role). Proposing that others do not "believe" he is "old" is doubly interesting as it on the one hand would seem to offer a confirmation of being regarded as *not* old(er), while the statement on the other hand suggests that he does identify as old(er) (i.e. if they don't *believe* he is old, being "old" is something that he is). He also describes how others who have not seen him in a while appear surprised that he is "retired *already*". Finally, he claims that he jokes with people in such situations, negotiating his age with a sense of humour as he questions being told he looks forty by way of asking whether that would mean that he looked seventy when he actually was forty. Yongyuth thereby claims that he sometimes is treated as old(er), that others sometimes "don't believe" he is old(er), and then again that others appear to regard him as younger, an assessment which he however questions. Over the course of this excerpt from the interview, he shifts between different positions and negotiates with himself, with me, and also virtually with the people in the social encounters he tells me about.

Another way of claiming that one does not feel old(er) *yet* is to claim that one still is active and still curious about things (see Table 7.1). Rodrigo's (male, 65, Chile; 35 years in Sweden) response to the question of whether there are situations or contexts where he feels old is an example of this:

Rodrigo: (sighs) No but... No, I don't feel old. When I feel old I'll come to a standstill. And I, I s-, I haven't stopped, I am not going to come to a standstill.
// So you can, you can come back in a few years and ask me

Interviewer: (laughs a little)

Rodrigo: But not now.

Rodrigo claims he does not feel old(er), proposing that feeling old(er) would mean coming to "a standstill". Instead, he argues that he has not stopped, whereby he again claims to be *not* old(er). He then argues that he is "not going to" come to a standstill, proposing that he will not even feel old(er) in the future. At the same time, he tells me to "come back in a few years" and ask him again, which in turn suggests that he expects he might feel old(er) in the future after all. Rodrigo pushes the possibility of feeling old(er) into the future and negotiates with both himself and with me. This idea of not feeling old(er) *yet* is in line with earlier examples where interviewees claim that they are not old(er) yet but expect changes in how they themselves feel and in how others will define them in the future, such as when reaching retirement. In fact, as can be seen in Table 7.1, self-descriptions as still (very) active and vigorous seem very common in this sample (also cf. Hurd 1999 regarding the link between "not old" status and activity).

Taking another look at Table 7.1 in relation to the examples discussed thus far, it becomes clear that multiple boundary markers frequently are drawn upon, which is why several of them have been discussed together here. Some interviewees respond to my questions about old(er) age by way of suggesting that they do not know what I mean, as for instance Jannis (male, 55, Greece; 40 years in Sweden) does:

Interviewer: But do you experience, do you ever feel, are there any situations where you feel old?

Jannis: ... (sighs) Well, I don't really know what it means... Hm... I don't, I don't really know what it means. Inadequate, is that what you mean by old or

Interviewer: No, it's up to you. What, what do *you* mean by old? What is it that you think... what would make you feel old, what would that be?

Jannis: ... Well, I guess it would be that... That you reach a point where you think that, this hasn't got so much to do with age I don't think, but rather it is about an attitude, that, for various reasons I'm here you know, and... yesterday I could achieve things, today I can't... And then kind of, then, then you're old, I think.
(...)

Interviewer: But other than that, is there anything that you associate with, with being old, or with... feeling old sometimes? Like what you think, and how you feel...

Jannis: ... (sighs) What was the question? (laughs a little)

Interviewer: (laughs a little) What you, well first I asked whether you ever felt, if you ever feel old, if there are situations where you feel old. And you weren't really sure

Jannis: (sighs) I don't know.

Jannis here first claims that he does not know what it would mean to feel old, seemingly implying that it is not anything that concerns him, presenting himself as not old(er). He then negotiates with me by asking whether I mean that old would mean inadequate. Replying that it is up to him to define what feeling old would mean to him, he then proposes that it could be that one reaches a point where one no longer can “achieve things”. He poses that this is an attitude that maybe does *not* have “so much to do with age”. When asked whether he can think of anything else he first asks what the question was again, and then claims he does not know. Jannis here most of all seems to be negotiating with me (albeit also with himself). In another part of the interview however Jannis argues that he would prefer to retire already because he claims to feel tired and worn out, and would like to make room for younger generations. One could interpret this as suggesting that he nevertheless seems to think of himself as old(er) on some level. Claiming that one doesn’t understand the question can be interpreted as a way of presenting oneself as someone who is not old(er) (yet) and that this very question therefore does not concern one and thus is something one has not yet thought about.

Another type of response or type of self-presentation in the context of negotiating old(er) age includes the use of a sense of humour. Just as Yongyuth jokes about the aforementioned encounter with others who claim he looks younger, several other interviewees indeed talk about their (older) age in a humorous manner:

Interviewer: (...) any situations where you find that you’ve been treated as older

Natalia: Yees, yes, it... First and foremost, they ask how old I am. And I, I am senile, I can’t remember. (both laugh a little)

Mayuree: Yeah well, it’s my, my sister’s grandson. He doesn’t see me, because he is you[nger], much younger than me. So he, he said this. “Why don’t you look old?” he said. I said, “it’s so cold in Sweden so I freeze in winter (laughs), I freeze myself”

Interviewer: (...) do you experience that you’re ever treated as though you were older

Safet: Not particularly. We here who met the first time, there are big differences and stuff, and we poke fun at each other. We call each other old farts and stuff like that and, I have a friend who has the same birthday as me, but is one year younger. And all the time we were, we worked at this company and stuff like that, and then (whispers) ”he’s old”

Interviewer: (laughs a little)

Safet: Yeah! And we have fun with this. (...) But, we joke around like this, about how old we are, or if we get aches here and there and stuff like that and...

Natalia (female, 69, Poland; 36 years in Sweden) claims she jokes that she is “senile” and “can’t remember”, Mayuree (female, 63, Thailand; 38 years in Sweden) claims she jokes with her nephew about freezing herself (thereby at the same time suggesting she does not look old) and Safet (male, 63, Bosnia; 18 years in Sweden) claims that he and his friends make fun of each other on the basis of age, calling one another “old” and “old farts”. The use of humour can be interpreted as displaying self-distance, identifying as old(er) at the same time as the potential threat of old(er) age as something negative is warded off (cf. e.g. Kuipers 2008 or Weaver 2010 on the use of humour).

To briefly sum up, the ways of negotiating old(er) age described in this section first and foremost suggest that interviewees position themselves in such a way that they can claim to be not old(er) *yet*, be it because they have not yet reached a certain age, have not retired yet (or, interestingly, refer to their retirement status not being visible), emphasising a high level of activity or “still” being curious and interested in life, and referring to physical appearance, either generally or with reference to walking aids. Not being old(er) yet then pushes old(er) age into the future at the same time as one may claim sameness both with one’s younger self and the general non-old(er) population. Questioning what oldness means and using humour can also be regarded as ways of negotiating old(er) age. Negotiation here mostly takes place as interviewees debate with themselves, with a virtual other in the form of what people in general seem to presume about old(er) age (and what characteristics may define someone as old[er]), and also with the interviewer. Distinguishing between one’s inside and outside is another way of negotiating old(er) age, as will be discussed next.

Distinguishing between the inside and the outside

As already suggested, several interviewees refer to their physical appearance when talking about whether or not they think of themselves as old(er) or seem to be defined as such by others (cf. Chapter 6). There seems to be some variation in the extent to which interviewees’ overall self-definitions seem to be matched or challenged by how they seem to think they are regarded by others. Some claim with certainty that others do not regard them as old(er) and that they do not yet feel old(er) themselves, suggesting unity in the duality. Some claim that they can feel old(er) at certain times but not in general, and are not (yet) regarded as such by others (see Chapter 10 for a discussion of overall identifications). One of the ways in which such differences could be expressed was through a split between how one feels on the inside and the (appearance of the) outer physical body. The distinction between the inside self and the physical body is not new to research on ageing and old(er) age, as not least the mask of ageing metaphor (discussed in Chapter 2) suggests such a distinction. As the reader may recall, the basic idea of this metaphor is that old age is a mask that conceals a true, youthful inner self, which is trapped inside of and in conflict with its steadily ageing body (see

Featherstone & Hepworth 1989). The metaphor was later refined to suggest that some may see the body as a reflection of their inner selves, or that older people may perform both youth and old age (see Hepworth 2004; also see Hurd Clarke 2001).

In the empirical material examined here, various references to the body emerge in relation to my questions about feeling old(er) and being regarded as old(er) by others. The interviewees are not asked specifically about their bodies. Rather, as was discussed earlier, it is quite common that interviewees refer to their physical bodies when asked about the types of situations where they could feel old(er), which pertains both to fitness and to activity (see e.g. Table 6.1 on “The physicality of old(er) age”, Chapter 6). As can be seen in Table 7.1 under the heading “Inside vs. outside”, several interviewees also specifically reason that they feel young(er) on the inside, while their bodies are getting old(er). This could also mean that one could propose that one is regarded as old(er) by others at some times, without necessarily thinking of oneself in that way. In turn, claiming not to look one’s age is another way of negotiating old(er) age. In other words, through the theoretical lens that regards identity as accomplished in the interplay between internal and external definitions (e.g. Jenkins 2008, see Chapter 3), the distinction between how one feels on the inside (as internal definition) and how one expects to be seen on the outside (as external definition) can be explicitly claimed to differ (presupposing, then, that the conceptualisation of old[er] age is connected to the body). All of these will be discussed in turn.

Most commonly, then, interviewees express a sense of feeling young(er) on the inside, while the body seems to have aged (see Table 7.1). These sentiments generally appear over the course of the interviews when discussing the topic of old(er) age, but not necessarily as direct responses to one particular question. The following excerpt from the interview with Fred (male, 65, England; 44 years in Sweden) illustrates how this distinction between the inside and the outside may be expressed:

Fred: (...) So that, no but this thing with age is, is very difficult, because you, on the inside you have an image of yourself. But when you look in the mirror and see how other people react then you realise that, that you are older than you feel on the inside. // And this, kind of, that you feel younger, it means that you, rather, that you don’t feel that you have aged, because you have much the same, you are s[till], still the same person inside. // And that person, personality doesn’t age in, in any way really. Even though it changes, but it’s not that the personality gets old, but rather that it changes, but that the body on the outside, so that you become... Sometimes when you look at yourself in the mirror for instance when you’re at the hairdresser’s and getting your hair cut and take off your glasses and say “oh God, what do you look like! How old you look (laughs), how awful” and stuff, “is that me”. And it’s this, kind of, that you don’t quite accept that you are as old as you are, you know.

Fred here debates with himself and looks at himself through the eyes of others. He proposes that this “thing with age” is “very difficult” because his internal self-image does not correspond to “how other people react”: looking in the mirror he “realise[s]” that he is “older” than he “feel[s] on the inside”. The fact that he expresses himself in this way, namely that the image in the mirror shows that he *is* older, suggests that he perceives the mirror image as reflecting something more true or real than the inside feeling. He claims he doesn’t feel that he has aged on the inside (i.e. does not feel old[er]) because he claims he still is “the same person inside”, a “personality” that he claims does not age, but perhaps changes without ageing. Fred then describes a situation where he looks in the mirror at the hairdresser’s and describes being appalled when noticing “how old” he looks, finding his appearance “awful” and claiming he does not recognise himself. Finally, he proposes that it could be a matter of “not quite accept[ing]” that “you are as old as you are”, again suggesting that one’s physical appearance reflects how old one *is* (which reminds one of what Cornell and Hartmann [2007] refer to as a primordialism present in ordinary people’s understandings of their identities, which is accounted for within social constructionism, see Chapter 3). Fred here negotiates with himself, telling me what goes on in his mind, which he however relates to how he expects others regard him. Describing a duality between how he claims to feel on the inside and how he thinks he is seen from the outside, Fred further expresses an element of surprise (“is that me?”), adding to the effect of feeling one way, but being seen in another, creating a distance between the two.

A similar sentiment is expressed by Jane (female, 66, England; 36 years in Sweden) in the following way:

Jane: (...) ... No but this thing about being old, it is... It is a little odd... That you, you feel so young, at the same time when you...I don’t really feel that different from when I was maybe twenty-five. And then you look in the mirror and think “who is that old lady looking back [at me]”. And I remember [that] my mother said the exact same thing to me. So she didn’t recognise herself, because she felt so much younger. And I believe that, that’s what it’s like. It’s just, on the outside, everything changes. But on the inside you feel very young. Or I feel young. But I don’t do crazy things like adolescents do.

Interviewer: (laughs a little)

Jane: Luckily. (laughs a little)

Jane describes an “odd” feeling about on the one hand feeling “so young”, claiming she does not “really feel that different” from when she was “maybe twenty-five”, and on the other hand looking in the mirror and seeing an “old lady” whom she does not quite recognise (“who is that”). She describes this as part of “being old”, thereby describing herself as old. Drawing upon what her mother used to say (since they apparently experienced the same thing) Jane

claims that “that’s what it’s like”: “on the outside” (i.e. the physical body) “everything changes”, but “on the inside you feel very young” (cf. e.g. the various inside-outside distinctions made by older women in the work by Hurd Clarke 2001). She shifts however from first proposing that that is how it is, how “*you*” feel, to claiming that it is how *she* feels. She seems to be debating with herself, qualifying her statement, and then concludes by pointing out that even if she might feel “very young” on the inside, she does not do “crazy things like adolescents do”. In doing so, she differentiates between “real” young(er) age and a perhaps more mature young(er) feeling on the inside. Again, this can be considered a way of negotiating old(er) age: Jane proposes that others may regard her as old(er), but on the inside she still claims to feel young, allowing her to keep old(er) age at a distance.

Feeling younger could also be described in the following manner, as Yongyuth (male, 71, Thailand; 44 years in Sweden) does:

Yongyuth: (...) Again, it’s just, a Thai group that... Now we, I was at a party last weekend and the youngsters wanted me to sit with them and tell them about my life. “How did you come to Sweden”, and I tell them. Maybe that’s a way in which they think I am old. It’s, I feel more like what I’ve done, I don’t know. ... So you sit there and tell stories, “back in the old days” (laughs a little)

Interviewer: (laughs a little) ... So how did you feel about that?

Yongyuth: No, it’s not that it’s old [age]... Actually, for me, I still think all the time that I am maybe forty-five, fifty. So sometimes, it’s just sometimes, when you jump, “now I am seventy”. // Careful. Otherwise you feel... Physically it’s pretty...if you say, noticeable. When you, when you[’ve] turn[ed] seventy-one.

Yongyuth here (again) describes a Thai party where some of the younger participants want to hear about his life, which he proposes could be a way in which they “think” he is “old”. He seems to be negotiating with himself as he reflects upon how he can sit there and talk about “back in the old days”, which he finds humorous (suggesting perhaps that it strikes him as something that “old” people do, which then would appear as something new to him). When asked about what he thought, he proposes that it is not old(er) age, but rather claims that he “still think[s] all the time” that he is “maybe forty-five, fifty”. This is quite interesting considering that he in an excerpt cited earlier describes how he jokes with people who claim he looks much younger. However, he then goes on to claim that his body reminds him, such as when jumping, that he has “turn[ed] seventy-one”. This excerpt displays a certain complexity concerning both how interviewees can define themselves internally and seem to think they are defined by others. This general sentiment of feeling younger on the inside could be expressed in various ways by different interviewees:

The body generally ages before...before you yourself do.
(*Kjersti*, female, 66, Norway; 44 years in Sweden)

CHAPTER 7

Yes, I don't feel old at heart or anything, no.
(*Lars*, male, 73, Norway; 49 years in Sweden)

The brain is young, the body is old.
(*Natalia*, female, 69, Poland; 36 years in Sweden)

In all of these citations, interviewees make claims to a distinction between two different sides: for Kjersti, there's the body and the one hand and "you yourself" on the other, Lars talks about how he feels (not old) "at heart", and Natalia distinguishes between "the brain" and "the body".

Another way of distinguishing between two sides is expressed by Nima (male, 57, Iran; 24 years in Sweden) in terms of a distinction between calendar age and *emotional* age, as he tells me when I ask whether he ever feels old:

Nima: ... No... No, I, I, except, I don't think about calendar age. There's emotional age. I try to console myself with my emotional age, I am still thirty-five years old and... A lot of [the] time, but then I, as soon as I see my, my son who soon will be twenty-nine, thirty, then I have to accept that I am no longer thirty. // But there's emotional age, we can always pretend that we have a lot of time, healthy and alert and...can live a hundred years. Because sixty-five, will be better. And you've set the bar at ninety years, then you can say you have another thirty years. (...) Yeah you can live to ninety years and then, now I'm only fifty-seven, then I've got thirty-three years left. Ooh, there's so much you can do. You can move, you can travel, you can migrate to another country (laughs)

Interviewer: ... But other than that, when you think about, about old age, and you don't feel old, but what do you associate with being old otherwise?

Nima: No not personally I don't feel old, // but...according to this description, sixty-five years of age you're age, you're pension age. It's not that many years left.

Nima here negotiates with himself, sharing what appears to be going on in his mind: he claims he does not feel old(er), which he however qualifies by claiming that he does not think about "calendar age". Saying that he "console[s]" himself with his "emotional age", he however seems to suggest that there is something to be sad about (i.e. presumably on some level nevertheless thinking of calendar age, which then does not appear to make him happy). His "emotional age" of "thirty-five" however, as he reasons, is an illusion since seeing his son who is twenty-nine makes him realise he cannot be that young himself, hence he "ha[s] to accept" that he no longer is thirty. He proposes that thinking in terms of emotional age allows him to think that he will continue the same way for many years to come, "healthy and alert", with at least another thirty years to live, with "so much you can do" with all that time. When asked again he reiterates that he "personally" does "not feel old", but "according to that description" (i.e. what the virtual other of people in society in general would seem to say) the age of sixty-five is not that far away ("not that many years left"). Nima repeatedly claims he does not feel old(er), at the same time as he proposes that in relation to his

son he feels not young, and that according to other definitions, he would be regarded as coming closer to “pension age” which he then seems to associate with old(er) age. By claiming to feel so much younger one could also suppose he claims sameness in terms of age, where old(er) age (and hence difference) is something that is placed at a distance in the future. While Nima mostly negotiates with himself, he also seems to negotiate with virtual others such as younger people and perhaps people in society in general.

As has been mentioned previously, when reasoning about whether or not they are regarded as old(er) by others, several interviewees claim that this is not the case because they do not look their age (e.g. Sinikka and Orhan, as shown in earlier excerpts; also see Table 7.1). Previous studies have also suggested that claiming to be “not old” seems to be linked to claiming that one’s appearance is not that of an old(er) person (see e.g. Hurd 1999). María (female, 72, Chile; 33 years in Sweden) is quite adamant that others do not regard her as old(er), but unlike most of the other interviewees who make this claim, María seems to think of herself as old:

Interviewer: (...) do you ever feel that, that others treat you as though you are old, or as though you were an older person? You know, like offering a seat on the bus or asking you if

María: No

Interviewer: you want a seniors’ discount or anything like that

María: No,

Interviewer: No

María: that’s the way it is. No (laughs a little), no nobody that... In, usually not in Sweden, I think it’s not that many offer what do you say a seat on the bus. But it was, when I was in Chile, it was like that (...)

Interviewer: So you yourself haven’t experienced that somebody has...

María: No! Not

Interviewer: Kind of treated you as though –

María: Nonono, no

Interviewer: No

María: No, not like that. They say that, my sons, they say that I don’t represent my age

Interviewer: Oh okay

María: Maybe they say that (both laugh). Maybe but I, I don’t feel, but I say that on the inside I feel old (laughs).

This interview excerpt shows how María seems very determined to claim that others do not regard her as old: she starts to say “no” before I have stated my whole question, and repeatedly says so. She goes on to distinguish between Sweden and Chile, claiming that people much more frequently offer their seats on the bus in Chile. When asked again, she repeatedly says “no”, she has not been treated as old(er), and claims that her sons say that she does not “represent” or look her age. She then laughingly qualifies this statement by arguing that

“maybe” they say that, but that she “feel[s] old” on the inside. María here negotiates with me to convince me that others do not treat her as old(er), at the same time as she explicitly claims to think of herself as old(er), however only “on the inside”. Her self-presentation here stands in contrast to how most other interviewees tend to claim to regard the difference between the inside and the outside body: that is to say, while María claims she feels old “on the inside” and that she is *not* treated or seen as such by others, as previously discussed, several others find that they feel young(er) (or not old[er]) on the inside while their bodies have become older. Interestingly, arguing that one is not regarded as old(er) because one does not look one’s age, one in practice implies that one is old(er): if I claim others don’t regard me as old(er) because I “don’t look my age”, this means that if I did look my age, others would indeed regard me as old(er).

Some interviewees could also be ambivalent about how they thought others on the whole regard them. Such ambivalence with regards to how one thinks of one’s appearance was expressed quite explicitly in the interview with Lars (male, 73, Norway; 49 years in Sweden):

Lars: But that younger generations, your [generation] and younger than you are, say *ni*¹¹¹ to me, they have more, I think this has to do with my age. That I look a little, maybe older than I really am. No I don’t. No, I don’t know what I look like. But anyway (laughs a little)

Lars first claims that the polite form of using “*ni*” might have to do with his (older) age. He then negotiates with himself however by first claiming that this is due to him looking *older* than he “really” is (thus claiming to be young[er]), whereupon he changes his mind to claim that he does *not* look older than his “real” age (“no I don’t”). He then claims he does not know what he looks like, and laughingly moves on. Over the course of this excerpt, Lars shifts between positions as (indeed) old(er), to one where he only *appears* to be old(er), to one where he perhaps is old(er) once more.

As was discussed in the previous chapter in relation to *when* interviewees seem to think they are defined as old(er) by others (see Chapter 6), several express a sense of surprise with regards to for instance being offered a seat on the bus or train. Such a sense of surprise could also be expressed with regards to looking in the mirror (as the earlier quotes from interviews with Fred and Jane suggest). As can be seen in Table 7.1, several of the interviewees in one way or another express such a sense of surprise. As suggested earlier, this implies that interviewees may think of themselves (internally) in one way but be regarded differently by others (either in direct encounters, or by looking in the mirror). It

¹¹¹ As the reader may recall, *ni* is a polite manner of addressing the second person singular, much like the German *Sie* or French *vous* (however no longer in common use).

could also mean that they seek to present themselves in such a way in order to claim that they do not feel old(er). This distinction again implies a split between the inside and the outside.

To sum up, by way of distinguishing between the inside and outside, the older migrants interviewed could shift positions between their own perspective (or inner feelings) and how they thought they might be regarded by others. Describing oneself as feeling young(er) *on the inside* can be interpreted as a way of negotiating an external definition as old(er), whereby one may distance oneself from old(er) age. One could furthermore suppose that this distinction at the same time acknowledges that the body has become old(er) after all and that one therefore may be regarded as old(er) by others (as e.g. Fred proposes when claiming what he sees in the mirror is how old he “really” is). On some level one may also have come to learn to regard oneself as old(er), but distinguishing between the body and the inner self creates a space to claim to be *not* old(er), without having to account for a body that may suggest otherwise. Regarding oneself as old(er) on one level is also in a sense what the next section is about.

Presenting oneself as old(er) but different

Negotiation can be understood not only as a matter of distancing oneself from an identity category, but also as a matter of redefining its meanings (as suggested in terms of e.g. boundary work by Wimmer 2013, see Chapter 3). In Table 7.1, such references can be found under the heading “Presenting oneself as old(er) but different”. This is the case for some of the interviewees, not least some of those who generally seem to have started to think of themselves as old(er) (such as e.g. Lars and Audrey, see Chapter 10). They could namely argue that they are different from other older people, could compare themselves favourably to others (be it actual persons or a broad category of old[er] people in general), and describe *others* as “really” old. In some cases, describing oneself as old(er) but different seems to be intertwined with *disidentification* as one may subvert and transform the category in the process (cf. e.g. Medina 2003 & Dean 2008, see Chapter 3).

Consider the following excerpt from the interview with Agnieszka (female, 70, Poland; 40 years in Sweden), who here has just told me that she thinks about ageing in the same way as Swedes do, whereupon I inquire what it is that Swedes think about ageing:

Agnieszka: I think that it is a new generation of pensioners that, I agree, they have become healthier, they live longer, they are no longer, well, worn out, have served their time and, well, always sick. Exactly I, in this case I am exactly like all other Swedes. Am interested, am rather, am vigorous, // yes. ...

Interviewer: Mhm. Anything, anything else you think

Agnieszka: No

Interviewer: No. And...

Agnieszka: And it, in this, in this case I agree entirely with Sweden. It is a new generation.

Agnieszka here first describes a new generation of pensioners: she proposes that “they” have become healthier and live longer, in contrast to earlier generations that she describes as “worn out”, having “served their time” and “always sick”. She then claims to be “exactly like all other Swedes” “in this case”, and goes on to describe herself as “interested” and “vigorous”, which she associates with this “new generation of pensioners”. Agnieszka seems to negotiate with two types of virtual others: someone who would expect her to be different due to not originally being Swedish (which she seems to think that I do), and with somebody who would think of a pensioner (such as her) as somebody who is worn out and has “served [his or her] time”. She thereby argues to the contrary on both counts, namely claiming to be “exactly like all other Swedes” as well as “interested” and “vigorous”. This sense of a new generation reflects what has been found in previous research, particularly on the “Baby Boomers”, who are described as a new generation of older people who are perceived as more active and more demanding than previous ones (cf. e.g. Biggs et al. 2007, see Chapter 2). Claims to being part of a new generation, different from what seems to be understood as the traditional image of an old(er) person or pensioner, seems to be part of a project of transforming the identity category of old(er) age and disidentifying with it.

Another way of expressing the sentiment of being different from the general image of old(er) people can be found in the following excerpt from the interview with Audrey (female, 71, USA; 28 years in Sweden), who argues that she can be a positive role model by way of standing up for herself and showing what it can mean to be seventy-one. I had just asked about how she would describe herself to a person she’d just met (see Appendix I for full Interview guide), and followed up to inquire about whether her age seems to be something that matters in such a description:

Audrey: Oh okay, if I would tell somebody how old I am

Interviewer: Yes, or if it [feels], is something that feels important to who you are or not

Audrey: If it feels important, absolutely! Absolutely. I’m not the type of person who goes and, and tries to keep it

Interviewer: (laughs a little) Ah that’s right

Audrey: Be quiet about it. On the contrary! Because, well, first of all I think you have a, a responsibility in society, to be, that is to say, to stand up for who you are, and you can help others. Because by saying “yes, I am seventy-one years old, and this, this is what I am like”, and they can draw their own conclusions, can think // “yes wow, a lady on the go,¹¹² seventy-one” or whatever it is they are

¹¹² In Swedish: *en dam i farten*

thinking. But I think it's important. It is important, especially for younger people, because many younger people have to wonder, "what am I going to be like when I'm older". // So that when they meet representatives for this age, they can garner this [image or impression]. // And think "oh, she is, wow". "Hm, maybe it's not that bad to be seventy or seventy-one years old". Or "life isn't over when you", you know. All this prejudice about, about age, maybe it, yes, it can, it can be something. So I think that, this is my person[al], personal responsibility, I have to, and everyone's responsibility, to encourage others, because, by standing up for who you are. That's strength.

Audrey claims that it "absolutely" feels important to her to tell people how old she is. She argues that in her opinion one has a responsibility in society to stand up for oneself and who one is since this can help others (which to some extent may have to do with Audrey being open about her sexuality as lesbian). She proposes that being open about her age would allow her to serve as a positive role model, showing that it perhaps "is not that bad to be seventy or seventy-one years old". By implication, then, it would seem that Audrey contends that younger people, and society in general, otherwise would think that being that age would be "bad", and that life would be "over" (since she could show that "life *isn't* over" when one reaches that age). She describes this as prejudice about age which she argues is a personal responsibility for her to deconstruct. Audrey negotiates, in other words, with a virtual other in the form of the general non-old(er) population who she contends may be prejudiced about old(er) age. In doing so, she presents herself as a "type of person" that does not keep quiet about something that "important", as active ("a lady on the go"), as strong in character ("that's strength"), and as a representative for people her age commissioned to deconstruct negative stereotypes and prejudice. What Audrey expresses here may be understood through the framework of disidentification (cf. Medina 2003 & Dean 2008, see Chapter 3) as she seems to seek to subvert and transform (or deconstruct) the image of an old(er) person that would construct her as being quite the opposite of how she seems to view herself.

Some of the interviewees explicitly compare themselves to specific other (older) people, as exemplified through the following excerpt from the interview with Zeynep (female, 70, Turkey; 47 years in Sweden):

Zeynep: (...) And then I compare myself to others my age or who...even younger, or older so that, I look better than them, or at least have more energy. (...)

Interviewer: You mentioned that... I think you said that in comparison to others you look good, or what was it that you said? About age and

Zeynep: Ech

Interviewer: Is that, is appearance something

Zeynep: Not appearance, it is... I have friends who, Swedish friends that, there's one [who is] younger than me, some, some, at least one the same age. Always complaining "I have, I'm sick and a pain in my back" and aches everywhere, but

it was, the doctors thought, recommended that you should walk a lot, do something that, that you won't get well when you sit around all day. (...) It's, it's not about appearance but energy, that, like, we walk every day, all day, I got up at seven, and I was up, haven't sat down at all, and then it was all action with the little grandchild. Then we followed them home to her parents but the, her mother, the same age as me, but she doesn't have the energy to do anything, // nothing, and it is, [just] sitting inside. The father is act[ive], the opposite, he is active, he goes running, he goes for walks, he does gymnastics, but she doesn't go anywhere. No energy for anything. // That is, that is a little odd.

Zeynep first proposes that she compares herself to others her age, “even younger, or older” (i.e. perhaps all sorts of people close to her age), with the conclusion that she “look[s] better than them”. She then immediately qualifies this statement by adding “or *at least* have more energy”, perhaps realising that it may be more acceptable to say one has “more energy” whereas one may be criticised for claiming to “look better”. Thereby she negotiates with a virtual other in the form of people in society in general, what is acceptable and not. When I a little later follow up on this comparison Zeynep first claims that it is not about appearance, but then goes on to describe friends (which she points out are *Swedish* friends) who are younger or around the same age, who always complain about aches and pains and do not follow their doctor's advice. She herself in contrast explicitly takes pride in not complaining about any such things in another part of the interview (cf. e.g. Townsend, Godfrey & Denby 2006 regarding distinctions made by older people between “villains” and “heroes”, i.e. those who complain and those who do not). She then claims it is about energy more than appearance and talks about all the things she does in a day, comparing herself once more to somebody else: her grandchild's other grandmother, who is the same age, but has no “energy to do anything, nothing” and just sits inside all day, which she finds “a little odd”. Zeynep negotiates with me by way of presenting herself in a favourable light compared to others her age and “even younger” ones, where she herself stands out as more vigorous and youthful and not as “old” as them, or at least old(er) in a different way.

Another example can be found in the interview with Terhi (female, 79, Finland; 61 years in Sweden), who tells me the following as she goes on to reason about age:

Terhi: So I think so, but of course, now at our organisation, it is a pensioners' organisation, there are of course people who are older. But all are younger than me, I am the oldest (laughs a little)

Interviewer: (laughs a little)

Terhi: Now we got this new lady, I asked [someone] how old she was, because I thought she was approaching ninety, but she is younger than me, (laughs)

Interviewer: (laughs)

Terhi: and I thought, n-, quiet!

Interviewer: Yeah (both laugh a little)

Terhi: Yeah, that's right so... No but, it's funny, you always think that everyone else is much older than you are, you don't think of yourself as, as old as you are. You are, you simply are, that's how it is. Or how do you think that you feel that, age...

Terhi here first talks about how people at her Finnish pensioners' organisation "of course" are "older", and claims that she is the oldest and thus old(er). She then tells me that a "new lady" joined the organisation, who she thought appeared as though she was "approaching ninety". Terhi seems to find joy in discovering that this "new lady" indeed was younger than her, whereby she can claim to be in better shape herself. She tells me that she was tempted to say something but made sure to keep quiet, which she also presents in a humorous fashion. After we both laugh a little she reflects that it is "funny" that one always thinks "that everyone else is much older" (as she did in this case) and proposes that "you don't think of yourself as, as old as you are", thereby claiming that she *is* "old". At the same time, she claims that she does *not* think of herself in that way: "you simply are" (which some perhaps might liken to the sense of "agelessness" that Kaufman [1986 & 2000] found in her study; also cf. e.g. Hurd Clarke 2001). Finally, Terhi turns to ask me how *I* feel about age. It seems as though she is mainly negotiating with me. Terhi here also further strengthens the image conveyed earlier, namely that she does not really think of herself as "as old as you are".

In the interviewees' processes of negotiating old(er) age, reasoning about why it is that one does not feel old(er) could create an image of what a "real" old(er) person would be like (see Table 7.1). For instance, Adriana (female, 68, USA; 41 years in Sweden) argues that pensioners' organisations keep up a traditional image of old(er) age that does not match the reality of her life or that of her peers:

Adriana: I think that now grandparents, and great grandparents, have become so much younger in their own behaviour. So that they don't have the same, except, except for pensioners' parties. Those that are organised by pensioners' organisations, they have the traditional image, white haired, curly, with flowery clothes and, coffee and six seven different types of cakes, music from, from the [nineteen-]thirties. It, it, they keep that image alive! // They haven't kept up. At least in my opinion.

Adriana argues that "grandparents" and "great grandparents" today have become "much younger in their own behaviour", in contrast to the "traditional image" of older people kept alive by pensioners' organisations. This traditional image includes pensioners with "curly" "white hair" who have parties with "seven different types of cakes" and "music from the thirties". By drawing up this image, Adriana presents herself as different from them, claiming that she

sees herself as part of those who are “younger” in how they behave. She negotiates with a virtual other in the form of people in society in general who seem to conceive of older people in such a manner that this “traditional image” represents, from which she seeks to distance herself. In contrast, those who seem “much younger in their own behaviour”, including herself, may be compared to this sense of a new generation of pensioners (as previously discussed also expressed by e.g. Agnieszka) reflected in the literature on constructions of old(er) age presented in Chapter 2 (see e.g. Biggs et al. 2007; Gilleard & Higgs 2009), again conveying a sense of disidentification hand in hand with a claim to sameness.

Another clear image of *others* as old can be found in the following, where Orhan (male, 73, Turkey; 46 years in Sweden) describes what it would mean to feel old, which he claims does not apply to him:

Interviewer: No, because you say you, you don't feel old.

Orhan: Yes

Interviewer: Mhm, and what do you think then, what would it mean to, to feel old

Orhan: Because I, yes. First and foremost if I was lonely. That is one thing. And then, the second thing, when I have fewer people around me, you know, because we are family, we have contacts, but if you are alone, then you can't just contact anyone in the same way you know. And then when I'm physically impaired, and then I don't have psychological, I don't have psychological problems, when I have physical problems, like I can't eat, or I can, I can have diabetes, I can be dependent on, some rehabilitation or care. Then I can feel old.

Interviewer: Okay

Orhan: Yes. But other than that... As long as I have joy in life inside of me, as long as I have my support, my pillar, that is my wife Mirja¹¹³ I mean, then I don't feel... Let me put it this way, that why, Laura, Mirja and I, when we go to bed, I have to say this you know. Every time we, she's not here, every time when we go to bed, she takes my hands between her hands. And we sleep. How can I feel retired?¹¹⁴ Because she loves me, still holds my hand. That means that somebody cares about me. But the day that nobody cares about me, then, when I'm retired, then I am... I need help somewhere, when I'm at a care home.

Orhan here first confirms that he does not feel old, as he previously told me, and then draws up an image of what it would mean to feel old(er): being lonely, having fewer people around, not being able to contact people, having psychological problems, being physically impaired, having various other health issues, being dependent on others and not having loved ones around. He then describes himself in direct contrast to this image: he argues he has family, has contacts, is not alone, doesn't have psychological problems, does not need any rehabilitation or care. Instead, he claims he has joy in life, has his wife (his

¹¹³ This is of course a pseudonym.

¹¹⁴ Since Orhan in fact already is retired, it is safe to assume that he here uses the word retired to mean old(er).

“pillar”) and is loved. Along with not being at a care home, all of this adds up to allow him to claim that he does not (yet) feel old(er). Orhan here then negotiates both with himself and with me, and with a virtual other in the form of people in society in general and what they might think old(er) age would entail. Hurd (1999) similarly suggests that the older women in her study describe those others as “old” who are physically dependent, lead solitary and inactive lives and/or reside in nursing homes, whilst describing themselves as “not old”.

A rather negative image of being old(er) is also drawn up by Lars (male, 73, Norway; 49 years in Sweden), as can be seen in the following:

Lars: It, well, I have trouble with this, I have trouble with this stuff about *old* you see. What is *old*? Well it can be age like you say, right. But, if I feel old, decrepit, tired, and tottering with a cane – I’m not there!

Interviewer: No

Lars: I don’t feel like that! Not me, no!

Interviewer: No

Lars here reflects upon the meaning of “old” and claims that if it means being decrepit, tired and tottering along with a cane, this does not apply to him. He claims he is “not there”, thereby posing that it is a destination he may eventually reach, and distances himself adamantly from such an image: he claims he does not feel like that, not him, no. Such images of old(er) age pertaining to others are also drawn up by other interviewees indirectly by way of claiming that they do not feel old(er) yet because they are still active and still curious about things, as discussed earlier (see e.g. the citations from the interviews with Agnieszka and Rodrigo). By implication, then, being inactive and lacking interest and curiosity is something that describes *other* old(er) people. In effect, this can be understood both as passing on the stigma to others (cf. Wimmer’s boundary work, see Chapter 3) and also reminds one of the notion put forward by Higgs and Gillearn (2015, see Chapter 2), namely that “real” old age is pushed into what they call the fourth age. Insofar as one may be describing oneself as old(er) but different from others, one may also understand this as a matter of disidentification, where one simultaneously does and does not belong to the category.

In other words, putting together the image of old(er) age drawn up by how interviewees describe *other* old(er) people, being old(er) seems to be associated with being passive, frail, sick, disinterested, tired and lonely. To some extent, it is also associated with earlier generations of pensioners. Regardless of whether or not one seems to think of oneself as old(er), there appears to be a negative image looming around pertaining to frailty, passivity and dependency. On the whole, a number of interviewees hence present themselves as old(er) but *different*, in the process constructing an image of *others* as “really” old (and e.g. frail, passive and sick), from which they at the same time dissociate themselves. In some cases, this process of claiming to be old(er) but not like other old(er) people conveyed

a sense of seeking to subvert and transform (or indeed deconstruct) traditional images of old(er) people in a process of disidentification.

Shifting along a continuum?

The purpose of this chapter has been to zoom in on the research question pertaining to how old(er) age seems to be negotiated. To sum up, three main ways of negotiating the identity category of old(er) age were identified in the empirical material: presenting oneself as not old(er) yet, distinguishing between one's inside and outside, and presenting oneself as old(er) but different. Direct responses to the interview questions about being regarded as old(er) by others were initially examined to show some of the ways in which old(er) age could explicitly be negotiated with the interviewer, as most interviewees seem to actively distance themselves from the idea that others would regard them as old(er). Claiming not to be old(er) *yet* seems to revolve around arguments pertaining to chronological age, not having retired yet (or, interestingly, referring to one's retirement status not being visible), emphasising a high level of activity or "still" being curious and interested in life, and referring to physical appearance, either generally or with reference to walking aids. Interviewees may thereby claim sameness, both to their younger selves and the general non-old(er) population. Questioning what old(er) age means and using humour can also be regarded as ways of negotiating old(er) age. Distinguishing between the inside and outside means that interviewees may shift positions between their own perspectives (or inner feelings) and how they seem to think they might be regarded by others. Interviewees describing themselves as feeling young(er) *on the inside* can be interpreted as a way of negotiating external definitions as old(er), whereby they may distance themselves from the identity category of old(er) age. One could furthermore suppose that this distinction at the same time acknowledges that the body may have become old(er) after all and that one therefore may be regarded as old(er) by others. On some level one may also have come to learn to regard oneself as old(er), but distinguishing between the body and the inner self creates a space to claim to be *not* old(er), without having to account for a body that may suggest otherwise. In other words, by claiming that one feels young(er) on the inside whilst acknowledging that others externally may regard one as old(er), one signals an internal definition that cannot easily be challenged by one's audience. Last but not least, a number of interviewees seem to present themselves as old(er) but *different*, in the process constructing an image of others as "really" old, from which they at the same time dissociate themselves: being old(er) then seems to be associated with being passive, frail, sick, disinterested, tired and lonely. As suggested elsewhere, this is in line with the type of boundary work described by Wimmer (2013) as the process whereby one redefines the meaning of a category and passes on the stigma to others (see Chapter 3). Interviewees may, in other words, claim not to be old(er) regardless of chronological age or retirement

status, as the previous discussion of negotiation has made visible, and instead refer to other characteristics that make *others* seem old(er), but not oneself. Considering that one thereby offers one's own definition of what old(er) age means, such a claim may very well be validated by others. After all it would seem to be more difficult to challenge an individual definition than one that appears to be commonly held. Presenting oneself as old(er) but different could also be a matter of disidentifying with old(er) age in the sense that one could seem to seek to transform the image of the category of old(er) people and what it might mean to be an old(er) person. This transformed image of old(er) age then seems to stand in contrast to everything that those who are regarded as "really" old stand for.

Throughout the presentation of the findings, the question of *who* interviewees seem to be negotiating with has been addressed. It seems as though they could reason and debate (in other words, negotiate) with themselves, both by way of apparently trying to make up their own minds in the process and by way of comparison to younger versions of themselves. They could also negotiate with the interviewer, debating how they seem to think I would regard them and perhaps try to convince me otherwise. Virtual others also seem to be present in the negotiations: in the form of a generalised younger other, the general non-old(er) population and people in society in general. How each of them might define old(er) people and old(er) age and how they would seem to regard the interviewee forms part of the negotiation of old(er) age.

Do there seem to be any connections between the different kinds of arguments drawn upon by the interviewees? Looking back at Table 7.1, it looks as though the explicit claim that others do *not* see one as old(er) in many cases goes hand in hand with claiming that one does not look one's age or that one refers to one's chronological age. Several interviewees seem to claim they are still active and vigorous (and often by implication not old(er) yet), which also quite frequently seems to go along with the explicit claim that others do not regard one as old(er). However, some seem to describe themselves as active and vigorous without distancing themselves from being regarded as old(er) by others. All who seem to compare themselves favourably to others also claim explicitly that they are not regarded as old(er) by others. Finally, the different arguments drawn upon do not appear to be mutually exclusive, as several interviewees seem to negotiate old(er) age with reference to all three types. In other words, some interviewees could over the course of the interviews present themselves as not old(er) yet, distinguish between their inside and outside, and present themselves as old(er) but different, suggesting shifting dynamics of identification. It seems to be more common however that interviewees present themselves as not old(er) yet and also distinguish between the inside and the outside, rather than presenting themselves as old(er) but different in addition to drawing upon one of the other two frames of reference.

What about the potential role of dimensions such as chronological age, perceived cultural distance, gender and time since migration in the negotiation of the identity category of old(er) age? Looking back at Table 7.1, it seems as though interviewees of all ages, including the very oldest in the sample, may explicitly and adamantly claim that others do not regard or treat them as old(er). At the same time, the same individuals who seem quite certain of this may still account for instances where they seem to have been treated as old(er) by others. In turn, most of those who refer to chronological age when negotiating old(er) age seem to be comparatively younger (sixty and below). Curiously, several of those who refer to physical appearance when negotiating old(er) age seem to be seventy years old and older, with the exception of some interviewees still in their sixties. All of those who claim that they do not look their age are above the age of sixty. Finally, all of those who explicitly compare themselves favourably to others are above the age of seventy. In other words, it seems as though one can find patterns with regards to some of the specific kinds of references made by interviewees, but chronological age does not seem to play into questions such as whether or not one seems to think that others regard one as old(er). With regards to perceived cultural distance, gender, time since migration, age at migration and (inter)marriage, none of these dimensions seem to play into the negotiation of old(er) age. It is left to future research to explore such questions further.

Self-defining as old(er) seems to have different meanings for different interviewees. Some seem to think of themselves as old(er) perhaps because they have passed a certain age, feel old physically or find that the end of life is drawing closer (see Chapter 6 for more on this question). Conversely, *not* defining oneself as old(er) also seems to have different meanings, as the types of arguments that are drawn upon suggest. That is to say, while some claim that they do not think of themselves as old(er) due to their chronological age and/or not having retired yet, others may still not think of themselves as old(er) despite being retired and perhaps chronologically being well beyond retirement age. However, identifications as old(er) or not old(er) do not seem to be permanent but shifting: on one level, interviewees may think of themselves as old(er), but on another, they might find themselves to be “not *that* old” after all. Conversely, they may think of themselves as not (that) old, but still at times feel old(er). The identity category of old(er) age then seems to be fluid and shifting. For some, old(er) age seems to be a destination that others have reached, that they themselves might arrive at eventually but not yet. Interviewees may claim sameness to their younger selves and the general non-old(er) population. At the same time, they may *dis*identify with old(er) age, simultaneously belonging and not belonging to the category, attempting to transform it not least by way of redefining its meaning. Both old(er) age and *not* being old(er) also seem to be constructed against the backdrop of images of what it means to be “really” old: to be passive, have withdrawn from life with no interest in what happens in the world, dependent

on others, in need of walkers or canes to get around, with an “old” appearance (wrinkles, grey hair). The oldness of others then seems to be constructed around both passivity and frailty, meaning that one’s own identification as *not* old(er) could be constructed by way of referring to one’s own activity and ability.

The findings presented here can perhaps be understood in terms of a continuum on which one may shift from one end to another (and back again), depending on situation and context. At one end stands a definition as “not old(er)”, followed by “not old(er) yet”, “not that old”, “old(er) but different”, “old(er)” and finally, at the other end, “the *really* old”. In this empirical material, the far end of “the *really* old” seems to be reserved for others and is kept at a distance: regardless of chronological age or retirement status, interviewees may claim identities as not old(er), and even for those who seem to think of themselves as old(er), several seem to define themselves as *different* from those *others* who “really” are old.

CHAPTER 8: THE WHENS OF MIGRANCY

While the previous two chapters addressed the research questions with a focus on old(er) age, this chapter and the following one examine *migrancy*. The focus of the present chapter lies on the question of when (in what situations) and in relation to whom migrancy seems to become meaningful for identification. As the reader will recall (see Chapters 2 & 3), migrancy can theoretically be understood as an identity category that is defined in contrast to the native population, through what it is not: in the case of Sweden, through non-Swedishness. In the interviews, interviewees are asked about particular situations and contexts in their everyday lives where they think that not being Swedish becomes meaningful (for their own self-definition, or how they think others think of them). As will become clear over the course of the chapter, both identifying oneself and being defined by others as something other than part of the native Swedish population could however be expressed in various ways: it could revolve around definitions as *immigrant*, as *migrant*, as *foreigner*, as member of a particular ethnic group, or indeed as non-Swede. Each of these is likely to have different meanings and different implications. The common denominator however lies in perceived *difference* from the native population resulting from migration, which is how migrancy is to be understood. As will become clear in the examination of how migrancy seems to be negotiated in the next chapter, this is not to say however that the older migrants interviewed necessarily regard themselves as different from the native population (see Chapter 9). First however let us look at when it is that migrancy seems to become meaningful.

When does migrancy seem to become meaningful?

Understanding identity in dialectic terms as the result of the situational interplay between (internal) self-definition and (external) definition by others, migrancy is understood as potentially both externally and internally defined. The extent to which it seems to become meaningful and whether it seems to do so primarily through self-definition or definition by others can however vary both between different individuals and between different situations (cf. e.g. Jenkins 1997 & 2003, see Chapter 3). The distinction between internal and external definitions however needs to be considered as primarily analytical, since both are intertwined and influence one another: for instance, one's self-definition as different from the native population may very well be evoked by the responses of others, just as their definition will be influenced by how one presents oneself (or "who you act as being", cf. e.g. Vignoles et al. 2011, see Chapter 3). For the purpose of this chapter, both sides of the coin are discussed together. How internal and external definitions however may clash, match or be challenged forms part of the

negotiation of migrancy which is the subject of the next chapter (Chapter 9). Table 8.1 (to be found on pp. 180-181) presents some of the findings pertaining to the question of when migrancy seems to become meaningful. Firstly, under the heading “Markers of difference”, we can find *what* interviewees seem to think makes migrancy become meaningful for identification (internally or externally). Secondly, “How does migrancy seem to become relevant?” covers the kinds of situations, contexts or occurrences that interviewees propose lead to the identity category of migrancy becoming meaningful. Thirdly and finally, the question of “How pervasive?” migrancy appears to be conceived by the older migrants in this study will be addressed. These three topics will be discussed in turn.

Around what markers does difference seem to be constructed?

Both the question of when an identity category becomes meaningful and the question of how it is negotiated are to a certain extent connected to a question about what it is that makes an identity pertinent. The question of *what* can be expressed in terms of boundary markers (cf. e.g. Wimmer 2013, see Chapter 3). As has been suggested in previous research, the difference between Swedes and (im)migrants seems to be constructed around markers such as place of birth, citizenship, perceived blood-ties, culture and language, as well as physical appearance (see e.g. Mattsson 2005, see Chapter 2). While not being asked directly about boundary markers (see Interview guide in Appendix I), the older migrants in this study mention several of these over the course of the interviews. Follow-up questions for the purpose of clarification could however include direct references to such markers (as will be seen in some interview excerpts). As can be seen in Table 8.1, references to language skills are most commonly made, followed by references to physical appearance, behaviour and names.¹¹⁵ As will be seen in Chapter 9 on Negotiating migrancy, perceived blood ties, citizenship and culture are mentioned by some in relation to the perceived impossibility of being considered to be Swedish (i.e. as reasons for why they may not be regarded as Swedes, as compared to why they may be categorised as different).

In most cases, the question of language refers primarily to speaking with an accent. It could however also be a matter of how well one seemed to think one could express oneself (see section on how migrancy seems to become relevant). For instance, consider what Jane (female, 66, England; 36 years in Sweden) and Kjersti (female, 66, Norway; 44 years in Sweden) reply when I ask how they would describe themselves to a friend of a friend:

¹¹⁵ To briefly remind the reader, since the markings in the table reflect what interviewees choose to tell me (see Chapter 5), the absence of a mark on a particular issue can only be understood as meaning that something simply was not mentioned by a particular interviewee (rather than claiming that e.g. one's name does not matter in how one is defined, only because one does not explicitly say so).

Jane: (...) It's not anything I have to tell anyone. It would come up eventually anyway, well since you can hear by [listening to] my Swedish that I wasn't born here.

Kjersti: ... Yes, exactly how, but anyway, I do like to kind of include my origin, that it is Norwegian. I do say that I am from Norway. If I don't start with that then you always get, because there is a certain dialect, a tone, that conveys that, "but you're not Swedish".

Jane claims that others will identify her as not Swedish regardless of whether or not she tells them, as she proposes that her pronunciation of the Swedish language generally conveys to others that she is not a native speaker and was not born in Sweden. Sooner or later, others will identify her as not being a native Swede. While Jane argues that she for that reason would not address her English background, Kjersti does the opposite. Kjersti emphasises that she *does* say she is from Norway, claiming that she'll be identified as not being Swedish because of a "certain dialect" or "a tone" that conveys it. She proposes that she will be asked about it if she doesn't "start with that", so she includes it in her self-presentation.

Also consider what Adriana (female, 68, USA; 41 years in Sweden) tells me when asked about situations or contexts where not originally being from Sweden becomes noticeable somehow:

Adriana: ... It's when, it's when I speak you can hear right away that I'm from the U[S], that I'm an English speaker. // And... I'm not quite sure whether that is good or bad. // But the principal of the English department at the university, he once said quite a while ago, that you should never lose your accent. Because then, what, I'm not sure how you say this in Swedish, benefit of the doubt,¹¹⁶ people won't expect you to follow all the rules and behave the exact same way as a Swede if you're not, if it, it's clearly audible, and... I've held on to that.

Just as many others, Adriana proposes that her accent presents a noticeable difference that leads others to identify her as a native English speaker and hence not Swedish. She goes on to claim that being identified as such is perhaps two-sided, as she contends she is not sure whether it is "good or bad". By stating this, she is perhaps (virtually) negotiating with people who might think that English speakers are held in high regard, to argue that it is not always seen as positive to be from an English-speaking country. Earlier in the interview Adriana proposes that being from the US was not seen as a good thing when she first came to Sweden during the Vietnam War, which supports this interpretation. Interestingly, Adriana then goes on to claim that *not* losing one's accent is an advantage insofar as people give one the "benefit of the doubt", not expecting

¹¹⁶ Adriana says this phrase in English during the interview.

Table 8.1: When and how does migrancy seem to become meaningful?

	Markers of difference				How does migrancy seem to become relevant?						How pervasive (migrancy)?		
	Language	Physical appearance	Behaviour	Name	Where are you from?	Odd questions and comments	The gaze and other odd behaviours	Feeling singled out	Difficulty expressing oneself	Discomfort in very Swedish situations	Ever-present internally	Ever-present externally	Overall “us” vs. “them”, not part of society
Kjersti (f, 66, Norway; 44 years in Sweden)	I				E							I	
Lars (m, 73, Norway; 49 years in Sweden)													
Sinikka (f, 66, Finland; 46 years in Sweden)	X		X	X	E				X			I	
Terhi (f, 79, Finland; 61 years in Sweden)	X				X								
Fred (m, 65, England; 44 years in Sweden)	O	not	X			X				X	X		X
Jane (f, 66, England; 36 years in Sweden)	X		X									I	
Adriana (f, 68, USA; 41 years in Sweden)	X		X	I	E		then		X			I	X
Audrey (f, 71, USA; 28 years in Sweden)	X	not	X										
Agnieszka (f, 70, Poland; 40 years in Sweden)											X		
Natalia (f, 69, Poland; 36 years in Sweden)	X				X	X						I	
Alexandros (m, 60, Greece; 42 years in Sweden)	X	X				X	X	X			X	X	
Jannis (m, 55, Greece; 40 years in Sweden)		I	X				X	X			X	X	

	Markers of difference				How does migrancy seem to become relevant?						How pervasive (migrancy)?		
	Language	Physical appearance	Behaviour	Name	Where are you from?	Odd questions and comments	The gaze and other odd behaviours	Feeling singled out	Difficulty expressing oneself	Discomfort in very Swedish situations	Ever-present internally	Ever-present externally	Overall “us” vs. “them”, not part of society
María (f, 72, Chile; 33 years in Sweden)		X			X							I	
Rodrigo (m, 65, Chile; 35 years in Sweden)					then								
Luka (m, 56, Bosnia; 19 years in Sweden)													
Safet (m, 63, Bosnia; 18 years in Sweden)	X	I		X				X					
Mayuree (f, 63, Thailand; 38 years in Sweden)					X						I		
Yongyuth (m, 71, Thailand; 44 years in Sweden)	X	X					X	X			I	I	
Orhan (m, 73, Turkey; 46 years in Sweden)	I	I	X			X	X		X		X	I	X
Zeynep (f, 70, Turkey; 47 years in Sweden)	X	X			X	X						I	
Mustafa (m, 58, Kurdistan; 27 years in Sweden)	X	I		X	X	X	X				X	I	X
Sayid (m, 60, Kurdistan; 20 years in Sweden)		X		X	X						X		
Amir (m, 56, Iran; 32 years in Sweden)	I	I		I	X	X		X			I		O
Nima (m, 57, Iran; 24 years in Sweden)	I	X	X							X	X	I	X

Notes: X=explicit, I=implicit, O=opposite, E=ethnicity, not=explicitly not, then=then (in the past) but not explicitly now

one to “follow all the rules” and “behave the exact same way as a Swede”. Adriana seems to regard this noticeable difference as an advantage that allows her to behave in a different way than native Swedes would be expected to (see later in this section for more on behaviour).

When asked about how she experiences being asked where she is from (see following section on how migrancy seems to become relevant for more on this question), Zeynep (female, 70, Turkey; 47 years in Sweden) says:

Zeynep: First of all it's physical appearance, people can tell. And secondly, I turn sentences around, that, maybe you've noticed, it's not quite, there's an accent after all. But an immigrant maybe doesn't sense [the accent], but Swedes do. Well, I guess it could be immigrants who have become used to [life in Sweden],¹¹⁷ who grew up in Sweden, they understand but, I don't think that those who, [who still are] learning the Swedish language a lot, they don't realise that I have an accent.

Zeynep proposes that her physical appearance leads others to identify her as not originally from Sweden (“people can tell”), and also refers to her language skills (in terms of both grammar and speaking with an accent) as playing a role in how others define her. However, she claims that there is a difference between how native Swedes perceive her language skills as compared to “immigrants”. She thereby distinguishes not only between natives and “immigrants” but also between those who are “used to life in Sweden” and those who still are “learning the Swedish language a lot”, where she claims that the latter might not realise she has an accent. In a sense, then, whereas “people can tell” she looks different from native Swedes, Zeynep argues that it is only native Swedes and (im)migrants who have lived in Sweden for a long time that define her as not Swedish based on the way she sounds when speaking the language. In other words, she seems to imply that in relation to recent (im)migrants, she may perhaps pass as a native speaker.

Physical appearance and language are also referred to by Fred (male, 65, England; 44 years in Sweden), but in a quite different manner:

Fred: (...) But I...most perceive me as a Swede. ... I don't look like an immigrant, particularly...so... Well, it's mostly like when I am out and on the subway or some train with English speaking friends for instance, then you notice that people kind of look askance at you and wonder what this is, what kind of a group it is, especially when you're in a group and talking and stuff, it's always kind of a bit noisier when it's a group talking, engaged in something. (...) So then you can tell that people react on the subway.

In contrast to Zeynep and others (such as e.g. Alexandros, see Table 8.1), Fred claims that most perceive him as a Swede because he does not particularly “look

¹¹⁷ In Swedish: *vana invandrare*

like an immigrant”. Rather than when speaking Swedish with an accent, it is when speaking his mother tongue in public that he claims others look askance at him and presumably identify him as not being a native Swede. In other words, by alluding to being perceived as a Swede, Fred claims that he generally can pass as a native due to his physical appearance (see e.g. Renfrow 2004 on passing, see Chapter 3). However, when publicly interacting with other Englishmen, he proposes that people identify him as different.

In the following, Yongyuth (male, 71, Thailand; 44 years in Sweden) spells out how he would prefer to be regarded and compares his experience to what he expects mine to be like, based upon physical appearance:

Yongyuth: I would be happy, as I said before that, if I were to be regarded as a foreigner who behaves like a Swede, rather than being a proper Swede. Because it is impossible, it is impossible for me. For you maybe it's no [problem]. If you sit here, somebody comes in, "ha, all are Swedish". Before. And then if they talk, ask who you are, "oh okay, you're not Swedish". // It is a very big difference. For how those who come in [regard you]. So that, for you maybe, it's possible that, or be happy if somebody "yes, okay, you are Swedish". Yes, because it, you can't, at first sight you can see, it is no, no obstacle at all, to be Swedish from the beginning. But for me it's not possible. "You're not [Swedish], mhm". So that, and I...won't be angry or anything, if they call me Swedish or you're not Swedish. I...it doesn't matter to me. // What's most important is that, you're happy here, you do as the Swedes do, you abide by the law, being a good citizen, a good member of society, that, period. No, really it...citizenship, appearance, it, it doesn't matter.

Yongyuth here describes himself as a “foreigner who behaves like a Swede” and argues he prefers being regarded in that way to being considered a “proper Swede” because he claims that it is impossible for him to be regarded as such. He compares himself to me, claiming that being considered a “proper Swede” may be possible for me but not for him. Yongyuth describes two scenarios: one where I sit somewhere and “somebody” walks in and concludes at first sight that “all are Swedish”, but finds out that this is not the case after talking to me. He argues that there is a “very big difference” in how others regard me as compared to him, and speculates that it perhaps would make me happy to be defined as a Swede, not least because he claims there is “no obstacle at all” to be regarded as “Swedish from the beginning”. In the second scenario, Yongyuth is the one sitting there and when somebody walks in, he claims it is “not possible” for the situation to be interpreted in the same way: they'll say “you're not [Swedish]”. He claims however that he will not be “angry or anything”, to be called “Swedish” or “not Swedish”, and instead claims that it “doesn't matter” to him. Concluding that being considered a “proper Swede” is impossible for him, Yongyuth argues that what matters most (or what's “most important”) is that one is happy, does “as the Swedes do”, abides by the law, is a “good citizen” and a “good member of society” (see Chapter 9 for more on such notions). In other

words, Yongyuth complexly negotiates how others define him (i.e. “impossible” to be regarded as a Swede) as compared to me, negotiating both with me and the (virtual) “somebody” in the imagined scenario. Previous research in other countries has also suggested that physical appearance may play into how membership in the native population seems to be constructed (see e.g. Kawakami 2012; Kim 2001; Lee 1996; see Chapter 4). What Yongyuth describes here is also in line with what Hübinette and Lundström (2014) write on how Swedishness seems to be constructed around Whiteness (see Chapter 2).

Several interviewees also express that their *behaviour* could make them be regarded as different from native Swedes (see Table 8.1). For instance, when I ask whether there are any particular situations in everyday life where not originally being from Sweden becomes noticeable, Audrey (female, 71, USA; 28 years in Sweden) says:

Audrey: Yes... Well, in many situations, because I talk a lot with people. And not just “I would like these two buns please”, but I can say “oh, I love the colour of your shirt!”, or, well, (...) you spontaneously feel something, I can s[ay], I can walk up to someone I don’t know and say “those shoes look really nice, may I ask where you bought them?”. And the person, I notice that most become really happy that somebody thinks their shoes look nice.

Audrey claims that she is identified as not being a native in “many situations”, because she behaves in a way that appears atypical and different from the native Swedish population: namely, talking “a lot” with people, with strangers, and paying them compliments. This type of behaviour then seems to stand in contrast to how Swedes would be expected to behave (cf. e.g. Daun 1998a on the Swedish modal personality, see Chapter 2; also see e.g. Lee 1996 for more on behaviour in relation to ethnic identifications). By way of claiming that people tend to appreciate her compliments, it seems as though Audrey seeks to explain or justify this behaviour.

Another example of behaviour seeming to make a difference could be found in the interview with Adriana (female, 68, USA; 41 years in Sweden). However, as compared to Audrey, for Adriana behaviour seemed to matter in an opposite manner:

Adriana: There are, there still are...these everyday things, like holding the doors. When you run into someone I can’t stop saying “excuse me” and it, it still, that tells me, well, I am from another culture. So that, that hasn’t changed at all. It’s the same.

In other words, Adriana proposes that it is her own behaviour that makes her feel different, rather than necessarily being defined as such by others. She also claims that this “hasn’t changed at all”, compared to what it was like when she first came to Sweden. That she then “still” is reminded that she “is” from

“another culture” further suggests that she thinks of her cultural background as something that is rather fixed (cf. e.g. Lee 1996, see Chapter 4).

Finally, names were cited with reference to identifications as non-natives. When asked whether her (ethnic) self-definition had changed over the years, Sinikka (female, 66, Finland; 46 years in Sweden) responds:

Sinikka: Well of course, but since I have a Finnish first name, I’m always perceived as a Finn kind of because, as soon as you hear my name, regardless of whether you can tell by my accent or not, how you present yourself, always... So that, insofar I am always...always a Finn.

Sinikka claims that her name always stands out as being Finnish and hence different (i.e. not Swedish), to the effect that she argues she is defined as a Finn regardless of how she presents herself or whether or not whomever she is meeting notices her accent. At another point during the interview she tells me that native Swedes used to have trouble with her name until a person with the same first name became famous in Sweden, which she claims made things easier for her.

On the whole, the boundary markers that interviewees refer to include language skills, physical appearance, behaviours and names, which reflect the boundary markers surrounding constructions of Swedishness and migrancy suggested by previous research (cf. e.g. Mattsson 2005, see Chapter 2). As will be seen, these will recur in different parts of the remainder of this chapter as well as the following one (on Negotiating migrancy, Chapter 9). Considering these examples through a “when and in relation to whom” lens, the answer would be in any situation where interaction with another person takes place, and primarily (albeit not exclusively) in relation to native Swedes. Several of these markers seem rather easily identifiable, suggesting that many may seem to be quite readily identified as non-Swedes. Some interviewees however differentiate between how they seem to think they are defined by native Swedes as compared to how (other) (im)migrants define them, sometimes proposing that (im)migrants more readily may let them pass as natives. How and to what extent these markers are and can be negotiated will be addressed further in the next chapter.

How does migrancy seem to become relevant?

When asked about situations in which they think that they may be regarded as (im)migrants (or non-Swedes) by others, as can be seen in Table 8.1 under the heading “How does migrancy seem to become relevant?”, many interviewees propose that they often are asked where they are from and account for instances where they receive what could be described as odd questions and comments. Some also describe being looked at in a certain way, and others claim that they

sometimes could be singled out due to their backgrounds.¹¹⁸ Others propose that they can feel like they are not originally from Sweden when they have trouble expressing themselves in Swedish or when they feel uncomfortable in particularly Swedish (cultural) contexts. While interviewees are asked about particular situations where they think they might be regarded as non-Swedish by others or self-define as such, all of these accounts could also come up spontaneously during the interviews (i.e. not only in response to specific questions).

To start with “Where are you from?”, being asked this question can be seen as an act of defining someone as not belonging, as has been suggested in previous research (see e.g. Cassilde 2013; Cheryan & Monin 2005; also see Koobak & Thapar-Björkert 2012). To offer an example, María (female, 72, Chile; 33 years in Sweden) says after I inquire as to why she says that she *has to* tell people she is from Chile:

María: No but, you mean, they see my, what do you say, [that] I’m not Swedish. You know, everyone, that’s why they ask me, where are you from. They always ask me, meeting Swedes or, “where are you from,” I always say, they ask me, always. And I answer.

Interviewer: Okay, so it’s something that always comes up, okay.

María: Right, they always ask me, “de, de donde eres tu” (laughs a little), that’s in Spanish (laughs a little). From where, “de donde eres tu”.

Interviewer: Oh yeah, that’s right.

María: Yes, they ask me, where are you from. They think, they think I’m from Spain, but I say not from Spain, I’m from Latin, from América del Sur, from Chile. There are many who don’t know where Chile is either. Lots of Swedes, I have to explain. (...) But then, for you it, what do you say, I thought you were Swedish, because your appearance is the same as Swedes. But I, I have a different (laughs a little), that’s why they ask me where are you from.

Interviewer: (...) (I tell her about being asked the same question due to my last name) (...)

María: But your, what is it called, appearance, you look, I see the same as a Swede.

Interviewer: Yes, right, it... There isn’t anybody who, when I walk down the street, then nobody thinks...

María: Oh right, you are White, always, right, that’s it. But not me, that’s why they have to ask, it... No. I always say, no I am Sw-, I am from Chile, always (laughs a little). That’s it.

María claims that people (“they”) “*see*” that she is “not Swedish”, that “*everyone*” sees it and they “*always*” ask where she is from, and she then “*always*” answers.

¹¹⁸ Many of the situations and interactions with others that the interviewees describe can be likened to what Essed (1991) has termed everyday racism. Everyday racism can be understood as a process that is “routinely created and reinforced through everyday practices” (p. 2), or “systematic, recurrent, familiar practices” (p. 3) that can be generalised and are inherent in culture and social order. It makes racism not be about individual people being racist or not (as racism otherwise tends to be understood) but rather approaches it from the perspective of those who come across racist practices in their everyday lives. Such practices include cultural denigration (such as e.g. defining one as uncivilised or attributing laziness), underestimation, and criminalisation, to name but a few.

Her references to the frequency of such occurrences can be deemed to be indications of definitions of her as not Swedish being very pervasive, ever-present and made relevant in relation to anyone she meets. María goes on to claim that people think she is from Spain (and hence European), whereupon she proposes she corrects them and says she is from South America, from Chile. She also claims that she has to explain where Chile is (proposing that many Swedes do not know where it is). By telling me this, she presents herself as someone who could pass as Spanish and hence European, but chooses not to. By alluding to many people not knowing where Chile is María seems to imply that her origins are perceived as very different (i.e. from a place that people don't know much about). Finally, María also negotiates with me (and I with her) by way of comparing her experiences to what she would expect mine to be like (just as Yongyuth did in the previously cited excerpt), whereupon I share my perspective. The comparison leads María to argue that whereas I may pass as Swedish when walking down the street, she is always identified as not Swedish due to her appearance. According to María, I am "White" and she is not, which is why she claims that "they have to ask" and she "always" says she is from Chile. This seems to be in line with the way in which constructions of Swedishness include the dimension of Whiteness, as some researchers have suggested (e.g. Hübinette & Lundström 2014, see Chapter 2).

Also discussing the question of "where are you from", Amir (male, 56, Iran; 32 years in Sweden) tells me:

Amir: (...) But as I said, the word Iranian, when someone asks "where are you from", I'll tell them. But it depends on how you put the question, you know. If you ask, from where, well, "what is your origin", then I find it easier to take. (...)

Interviewer: What kind of situation [would that be], when you mentioned that someone would ask what is your origin?

Amir: Well if you ask me, instead of asking "where are you from", you know, ask "what is your origin", that is easier for me. This is, well, this question shows that "I know you weren't born here, but I know you are just like any other Swede, but you have another origin than, well, us or a Swede". Because th-, but, do you ask "where are you from", that is – well it is as if I came here yesterday, or last week (laughs a little)

Amir here debates being asked where he is from: he proposes that he'll tell people he is Iranian when they ask, but that "it depends" on how the question is phrased, implying that he can be asked in a way that makes him uncomfortable and in a way that he does not mind. He then argues that he prefers to be asked about his origins rather than where he is from, that it is "easier" for him. The reason for this he argues is that asking about his origin acknowledges or "shows" that he is "just like any other Swede", despite not being born in Sweden and having "another origin". In contrast, being asked "where are you from" nullifies all his

knowledge and dismisses his own claim to being “like a Swede” (see more on this in Chapter 9 on Negotiating migrancy), making him the same as someone who “came here yesterday, or last week”. In this excerpt, then, Amir makes claims to being Iranian and being “just like any other Swede” (i.e. claiming sameness), debating with himself and negotiating with a virtual other who will ask where he is from (namely any kind of person in society in general). In doing so, Amir further differentiates himself from those who “came here yesterday”, presenting himself as different (more on this in Chapter 9).

For some of the interviewees, the question of “where are you from” could however be phrased with direct reference to the country they were from (marked with “E” in Table 8.1), as exemplified by Sinikka (female, 66, Finland; 46 years in Sweden):

Sinikka: Well there have been many times throughout life, and people have kind of chatted for a while, and then [they] suddenly ask “are you from Finland” kind of, so of course, sure, surely it happens all the time, it still happens. But then if you think it means something bad, I mean there are so many people who move here, so it’s nothing odd that it’s like that, but...

Sinikka proposes that she many times has been asked whether she is from Finland after she has been chatting with people for a while. She claims that it happens “all the time” and it “*still*” happens. These references can be deemed to be indications that she seems to think her background rather frequently is made relevant by others (“people” in general), and also that the amount of time she has been living in Sweden does not appear to have had a bearing on how others regard her (i.e. still as a Finn). The impression that one gets from her questioning whether it is something “bad” is that she does not seem to be bothered by this. By reasoning that there are “so many people who move here” and that it’s “nothing odd”, she furthermore normalises the question.

Beside the question of “where are you from”, several interviewees propose they could receive other odd questions and comments (see Table 8.1). The sense of annoyance conveyed in the interview with Amir, as seen in the recently discussed excerpt, could also be present in other interviews, especially in connection with these types of odd questions. For instance, Orhan (male, 73, Turkey; 46 years in Sweden) tells me:

Orhan: (...) Among Swedes they tend to ask you very stupid questions, and then, like, “but do you, do you like it here in Sweden” they say, but, when you’ve lived [here for] more than forty years and then, then you say, I usually say, “no, wouldn’t it be best that you asked me how many years I’ve lived here, then you won’t need to ask me whether or not I like it”. If you don’t like it here then you’re not, then you shouldn’t be or stay here.

Orhan here claims that “Swedes” tend to ask “very stupid questions”, such as whether he likes it here in Sweden. Just like Amir, Orhan refers to how long he has been living in Sweden when expressing his dismay with these kinds of (“stupid”) questions. He then claims that he “usually” says (hence implying that this happens so often that he has formed a habit as to how to respond) that it would be better to ask how long he has been living in Sweden, arguing that this question would resolve the need to ask whether he likes it or not in the first place. Saying that one should not “be or stay here” if one doesn’t like it could be interpreted as a way of presenting himself as different from others who perhaps do stay despite not liking it (or despite complaining about or criticising the country). Such a statement further positions Orhan alongside those who perhaps think that (im)migrants should return to their countries of origin if they do not like it here. The statement also draws attention to virtual others who seem to question migrants’ rights to be in a country they were not born (cf. e.g. George & Fitzgerald 2012, see Chapter 4). Orhan here (virtually) negotiates with those Swedes who ask “stupid questions”, setting them straight by telling them to ask the right questions. What this quote also suggests is that Orhan over the years has found a way of handling the various kinds of questions migrants are asked. Other studies on identity and older migrants also seem to suggest that one may be regarded as a foreigner regardless of how long one has been living in the country, as could be exemplified through comments such as these that may serve as constant reminders (see e.g. George & Fitzgerald 2012, see Chapter 4).

Also consider the following account from the interview with Mustafa (male, 58, Kurdistan; 27 years in Sweden):

Mustafa: During the time that, the most difficult times when I was driving my own cab, ninety-nine per cent of the customers who sat down in the car: “Are you Muslim?” – “No.” – “Do you like it here in Sweden?” – “Yes, of course.” – “Do you speak Swedish?” – “Yes, I do”. Words like that, every customer, be it during the day, be it during the night. He or she is drunk at...weekends for example. “Oh you’re not Swedish, do you speak Swedish?” – “Yes, I do. Where do you want to go?”. Ah okay, I help them. “Are you Muslim?” Again, “Noo, I am not”. I mean this, things like that all the time in life, you need to be...prepared and then handle all question marks. There are good and bad people everywhere.

Mustafa here proposes that “all the time in life” there are certain questions that come up: whether he is Muslim, whether he “likes it” in Sweden, whether he speaks Swedish. He claims that this means that he needs “to be prepared and handle all question marks”. In the examples he uses, he is also explicitly defined as “not Swedish”. Mustafa concludes by saying that there are good and bad people everywhere, where the “bad people” are the kinds of people such as those who attack him physically, as he tells me about at another point. Both Natalia and Alexandros also mention having grown tired of certain questions: Natalia

(female, 69, Poland; 36 years in Sweden) complains about constantly being asked why she had come to Sweden, to which she claims she responds “I swam here”. Alexandros (male, 60, Greece; 42 years in Sweden) similarly complains that when he worked as a taxi driver some time ago, every single client asked where he was from, and he claims that he eventually tried saying “Central African Republic” to quiet them down, leaving people perplexed with regards to the colour of his skin (as people would expect someone from Africa to be “Black”), thereby putting an end to their questions.

Other kinds of questions and comments could also have to do with language skills, as exemplified in the interviews with Fred (male, 65, England; 44 years in Sweden) and Amir (male, 56, Iran; 32 years in Sweden):

Fred: (...) And even after I'd been living here for ten fifteen years, I still got the question, “can you write in Swedish” (laughs a little), stuff like that, slightly condescending questions and the like.

Amir: (...) But, (sighs), what I've had to put up with you know, two years ago someone thought that I spoke excellent Swedish!

Interviewer: (laughs a little)

Amir: (sighs) Oh, okay, well, after twenty-eight years, even if you've learned fifty words per year (laughs a little) you're going to be able to speak Swedish, somewhat at least. Although we still have our accents.

Fred describes questions about his mastery of the Swedish language as condescending. Amir in turn sighs when telling me this, demonstrating exhaustion, and claims that given the amount of time he has been living in Sweden, it is only normal or natural that he speaks Swedish. This kind of comment then seems rather annoying to him, to say the least. By adding that “we still have our accents” he at the same time positions himself as a “we” together with (presumably) other (im)migrants or perhaps other Iranians.

Another way in which interviewees propose they could be defined as non-Swedish by others was described in terms of a particular way of being looked or gazed at, as several interviewees mention, and also what could be described as odd behaviours (see Table 8.1). For instance, Mustafa (male, 58, Kurdistan; 27 years in Sweden) tells me “and then when I meet someone, you can tell the way they look at you, so when you – you know”. The impression one gets from this is that there is a certain way of being looked at which one may learn to recognise with time. Orhan (male, 73, Turkey; 46 years in Sweden) quite elaborately describes how he deals with such occasions:

Orhan: Although, I see, I interpret looks, looks for me are just as important as words, like the mouth. But in this neighbourhood, when we have meetings and stuff like that you know, when I talk quite a lot, the looks bother me, even though they don't say anything. But the looks bother me. // That's why I want, I was, we

are some, two immigrants who live [here], or three at most, but I know that if I vex him, there will be a response, but I don't care. So me I, I move my gaze to those whom I'm happiest with. // I've learned that. Because it, it's not just words that bother me, I'm very sensitive, how should I put it. Well you can put it like this, I can kind of cry very easily, I can very easily become sad, and then like this, you know. Because now, when I notice that the looks are very harsh, instead of kind of causing more problems, I turn away, I look for someone who, who I'm more in sync with. So I flee away from it.

Orhan presents himself as very sensitive and claims that he can be quite bothered by the way that others look at him, arguing that it matters to him as much as what people say. He claims that there are specific contexts, such as meetings in the neighbourhood that he describes here, where he perhaps is looked at critically or in a "very harsh" way when he talks. He seems to be oscillating between on the one hand suggesting that he does not care if he vexes someone and on the other hand choosing to "turn away" rather than "causing more problems". Orhan claims that he has a strategy where he seeks out the gaze of those people he feels more comfortable with rather than letting the harsh looks of others make him feel sad, concluding: "so I flee away from it". By stating that "we" are "two immigrants" who live there he both places himself within the category of immigrant and also seems to suggest that those "harsh looks" mostly come from native Swedes (since that is what most people in the neighbourhood appear to be).

Similarly, others describe being treated differently because of their backgrounds, as described in the following way by Jannis (male, 55, Greece; 40 years in Sweden) when I ask him about situations where he can feel that he is not originally from Sweden:

Jannis: ... (sighs) Look, you can do that, it can, I can feel that every day.

Interviewer: Now-, nowadays as well or

Jannis: Mhm. ... I was at a friend's house, I do a little carpentry. Well windows and stuff at home. I was at a friend's house, a Swede. (...) And he had gotten a new tenant who knows a bit about ventilation and heating and stuff like that, so I wanted to ask him about that. (...) So we went and visited him, "hi I'm Jannis" and so on you know. So I asked him, "look, I would like to...". And he has like three or four different answers, but he does not look at me! (laughs a little) I ask the questions, but he does not look at me, (keeps laughing a little), he looks at my friend, and tells *him!* // ... That was a little disturbing I have to say. // I didn't say anything. I know that it will change. Because I'm the one who's talking to him and stuff, eventually he'll let go of this and be able to talk. But situations like that kind of happen.

Jannis goes on to describe a similar incident, and describes this type of behaviour as "maybe the worst kind of, if you want to call it racism, I don't want to but, I want to say this, it is the worst kind of fear, the worst kind of phobia, the worst

kind of ignorance there is". Jannis makes several claims in this excerpt: that he "every day" can feel like he is not originally from Sweden, that he finds it disturbing to be treated in such a way, and that he knows that this kind of behaviour passes once the other person gets to know him better. Jannis describes his friend as "a Swede" and proposes that this new tenant was more comfortable looking at his Swedish friend than at him. He claims that he chose not to say anything about how disturbing he thought this was, arguing that he "knows" this will change. By alluding to "situations like that kind of happen", Jannis suggests that things like that are a normal part of his life. This excerpt is also an example of how self-definitions and definitions by others can interplay: I ask Jannis about when he feels like he is not from Sweden, and the example he offers is one where he seems to be treated as such.

Another way in which interviewees propose that migrancy could become relevant is that some seem to think that they could be singled out in various contexts, such as for instance described by Safet (male, 63, Bosnia; 18 years in Sweden) when I ask about migrancy being made relevant by others:

Safet: There are many who, as I see it, who want to convince // you of something else. There are many. I've met lots who have gone to work every morning with a ton of brochures and stuff like that,¹¹⁹ with names and such, first they walk up to those who have dark hair and ask, "are you Christian? Would you like some [brochures]" and stuff like that. And that's fine, it's all the time, missionary work as we call it. You can find it in all religions (laughs a little), I'm telling you I'm certain of it.

Safet describes how missionaries approach him every once in a while on the street and ask him whether he is Christian. He claims that they seek out those who have "dark hair" and especially target them to try to convert them to Christianity. His claims to this being "fine" and that one can find it "in all religions" seem to normalise these occurrences. Amir (male, 56, Iran; 32 years in Sweden) similarly describes how right after he had gotten his dog, the issue of (too much) dog poo was raised in his neighbourhood, making him wonder whether his background might have something to do with it. Yongyuth (male, 71, Thailand; 44 years in Sweden) claims that he sometimes has to think twice before doing something, as he proposes that he is observed in a particular way as people (native Swedes) would be quite ready to point out if he did anything "wrong". In other words, accounts such as these ones suggest that not originally being from Sweden could be made relevant by way of being treated differently than the native-born population. This could sometimes be in the form of acts that could be described as everyday racism (see Essed 1991).

¹¹⁹ Safet here refers to the work of some (Christian) religious sects in Sweden who seek to recruit and convert new members by way of offering for instance free Bible classes or perhaps spiritual guidance, standing on the street with brochures, especially in places such as train stations where many commuters will pass through.

Another way in which some interviewees claim they could feel they are not (originally) Swedish is with reference to a limited ability to fully express themselves in the Swedish language (see Table 8.1). This is described by Sinikka (female, 66, Finland; 46 years in Sweden) in the following way when asked directly: “I’m sure there’s stuff like that, that you can’t quite express yourself accurately...”. Last but not least, some also describe feeling that they are not Swedish when they are expected to participate in particular Swedish cultural contexts, as expressed in the following way by Fred (male, 65, England; 44 years in Sweden):

Interviewer: (...) if there are any particular contexts or situations where you can feel that, that you are not Swedish so to speak. Would it be these kinds of questions of values or is there anything else as well?

Fred: I think it’s when you’re expected to behave in a certain way. ... For instance when you’re expected to, well, a crayfish party, // drinking songs, drinking lots of alcohol and singing silly [songs] and silly hats – I mean (giggling) I can’t participate in that. I don’t like crayfish and drinking alcohol and all that, singing. And if you stand on the side instead, the atmosphere becomes a bit strange, // because it kind of builds on everyone being included and being happy and participating. But if you don’t participate it’s experienced as criticism and disapproval. So I try to steer away // from those kinds of situations. Even though sometimes I’m forced to, through work and stuff. And that sort of, these kind of very Swedish rituals and that. ... Well, *Midsommar*¹²⁰ is another thing like that, kind of like... Well, you’re expected to behave a certain way, yes, well it’s in that kind of situations that I feel uncomfortable and it’s ea[siest], it is easiest to just stay away from that. Because I know that I w-, I will not like it and well, // will feel ill at ease there and...

Picking up on something he said earlier, I ask whether it would be anything else than (different) values that would make him feel that he is “not Swedish”, he responds that it would be situations where one is expected to “behave in a certain way”. He describes what could be considered to be a (typically Swedish) crayfish party, which involves drinking alcohol, wearing silly hats and singing songs. Fred giggles as he claims that he cannot be part of such an event, since he does not like any of the elements involved. He argues that attending such a party whilst choosing to stand on the side does not seem to be appreciated (the atmosphere becomes strange and it’s “experienced as criticism and disapproval”), hence his solution is to try to “steer away” from events like that when he can. Fred argues that such “Swedish rituals” make him feel “uncomfortable” or “ill at ease” and that he will not enjoy them. At another point during the interview Fred talks about how he has become “more and more aware of these differences” between

¹²⁰ *Midsommar* (Midsummer’s Eve) is celebrated every year on the Friday between June 19 and 25. It is an age old tradition which also is celebrated in Finland. Nowadays it generally involves eating certain foods with family and/or friends, consuming alcohol and (traditionally) dancing around the *midsommarstång*, a maypole decorated with flowers.

England and Sweden over the years, becoming “more aware of these kind of more subtle things the older you get”, which he describes as strengthening a sense of “alienation” as he generally seems to feel different from the native population.

In the following, Nima (male, 57, Iran; 24 years in Sweden) quite elaborately describes how he seems to feel, after first suggesting that while one can integrate legally by way of learning all the rules and what is expected of one, it is not that simple when it comes to emotions:

Nima: Nobody can give that to me, the emotional feeling of feeling comfortable. To associate myself with nature, with walking, free time – no, I’m the one who decides on that. And there I’ll never, // never I can say that I can be, not to ask anything. You can mimic, you can adjust, okay, life Monday to Friday, and then every once in a while go out after work¹²¹ with colleagues, or some quiz walk outdoors¹²² or, some other walk, or buying a house, and to, well, the kind of things you do! But the honesty of the feeling, no, I want to be with [my] mother who is in, in the last months of her life. (...) When I walk on a sidewalk or go for a walk, I feel, that there are people who I associate with, I identify with them. I don’t need to talk. And it’s, it’s a sign, as soon as there’s a fellow countryman, who I meet, automatically the language becomes Persian. Both the countryman and I know Swedish, and I can get by, but (snaps his fingers), there’s something that says “now, change channel”. And it, I have noticed that, I can socialise with neighbours and colleagues every once in a while, but I prefer not to speak Swedish at home. I don’t want to think in Swedish. This is emotional. The remainder becomes like an actor. I have a manuscript, we go through make-up, we read our role-play, like a stage. I play a Swede for eight hours at work.¹²³ But as soon as time is up, I remove my wig, make-up, and the manuscript, now I go backstage and rest. That’s there. (...) And she, my sister says to mom, “mom, can I have some coffee”. Still. I miss that. “Mom, can I have some coffee” (laughs a little). You turn into a child. With [your mother]. But here it is completely different. What I call emotional integration, it is difficult to... Because, you want to forget that question. These question marks or questions don’t exist for Swedes.

Nima argues that the emotional aspect of integration cannot easily be acquired: “nobody can give that to me”. He proposes that there will always be a part of him that will “ask” something. While one can “mimic” and “adjust”, and “play a Swede for eight hours at work”, Nima argues that there still remains a feeling deep inside that he would rather be with his mother in the last hours of her life, missing the feeling of being able to ask her for some coffee and turning into a child in the process. Nima also describes how he imagines it would feel to walk

¹²¹ The expression used here is quite simply “after work”, an Anglicism used to refer to an activity where one goes out to a bar or restaurant straight after work, mostly with colleagues (but perhaps also with friends).

¹²² The Swedish word used here is *tipspromenad*, an activity where one goes for a walk and answers quiz questions that are placed at different locations along the way, for example in a forest.

¹²³ In the Swedish original he states his vocation rather than “work”, but this has been generalised for reasons of anonymity.

down the street and meet people he “associate[s]” and identifies with, in contrast to what he suggests in another part of the interview about feeling that he does not belong when walking down the street in Sweden. The way in which he describes meeting a countryman, namely “changing channel” and going “backstage to rest”, seems to suggest that although he can get by quite well, doing “the things you do” (just like any other Swede), he is “never” as comfortable in a Swedish context as he is in an Iranian one. He compares his life to that of a native Swede and proposes that some of these “questions marks” simply “don’t exist for Swedes” (cf. e.g. George & Fitzgerald 2012 on the particularities of identity issues in old age for migrants, see Chapter 4). In other words, Nima paints a vivid picture of the complexities of different feelings and identifications in the context of migration.

All in all, what has been described thus far are the various situations that the older migrants interviewed claim that they could either themselves feel that they are not originally Swedish, or situations where they seem to think that others define them in such a way. Being defined as different from Swedes is described with reference to markers such as language (speaking with an accent), physical appearance, behaviour and names. Interviewees claim that others seem to define them as different by way of asking where they are from, being asked other odd questions and comments (such as whether one speaks Swedish, whether one likes living in Sweden or perhaps whether one is Muslim). Some also propose that they could be looked at in a certain way and that others could treat them differently (such as not looking at them when answering their questions). In terms of internal definitions of migrancy, the most explicit references seem to have to do with a perceived inability to express oneself properly in Swedish, and that one could feel different in the face of particular “Swedish” cultural contexts. The impression given is that migrancy seems to be experienced as rather pervasive, however this need not be the case, as will be discussed in the following section.

How pervasive does migrancy seem to be?

The kinds of situations and contexts in which the identity category of migrancy seems to become meaningful that have been described thus far are taken from everyday life and can seemingly occur at any time. Just as with questions about old(er) age (see Chapters 6 & 7), interviewees are asked whether there are any particular situations in which they (strongly) feel that they are not originally Swedish. The phrasing of the question seems to come as a surprise to some, as they do not always seem to think of this in terms of something that only occurs at some times and not at others. The question of pervasiveness hence seems worth exploring. The last three columns of Table 8.1 illustrate how pervasive interviewees seem to perceive the identity category of migrancy. For instance, Nima (male, 57, Iran; 24 years in Sweden) responds to my question as follows:

CHAPTER 8

Interviewer: But otherwise, when you think in terms of your normal daily life today, if there are any particular situations or contexts that you, either you yourself feel strongly that, that you aren't from Sweden originally, or that it becomes apparent that you have another origin

Nima: Yes but my origins are with me all the time, are with me, are there.

Interviewer: All the time?

Nima: All the time... At home, when (laughing a little) listening to the news, I think, those thoughts are there, they don't disappear, they grow stronger with time, it gets stronger with time, unfortunately...

Nima contends that his (Iranian) origins are with him "all the time", regardless of what he does, such as being at home and listening to the news. "Those thoughts", presumably thoughts about Iran and not being originally Swedish, they are there, they "don't disappear" and indeed Nima claims it "unfortunately" gets "stronger with time". This sentiment is also expressed by Kjersti (female, 66, Norway; 44 years in Sweden) for instance, who tells me that "over the years you feel more and more homesick and, yearning back to your roots, your origin. It grows stronger with time." Kjersti then describes Norway as her "roots", "origin" and a home to yearn for.

When asked whether there were any particular situations where he could be reminded of his non-Swedish origins when he first came to Sweden, Alexandros (male, 60, Greece; 42 years in Sweden) tells me the following:

Alexandros: Yes but it, that, you're reminded of that, and you still are, you know, every day, in one way or another. Every day during those forty-two years you're reminded of it.

Interviewer: Could you, could you give some examples or tell me a little

Alexandros: Yes but there are both, what do you say, both good situations and what do you say, (...) both well-meant, you know, or badly meant and, so, every day you're reminded. ... In every single discussion for example, as soon as you start a discussion, about anything, regardless of what it is, either it is "yes you should know this better since you're from Greece", or somebody else who says "that's none of your business because you weren't born here". It's kind of like that, one is well-meant, you can do a little better, the other is badly meant, because it's none of your, you shouldn't talk about Swedish politics for instance because you're not born, you are not Swedish. Yes, in that way.

Interviewer: And it's like that even though you've lived here for forty-two years.

Alexandros: Yes. And it's true, I think every single, every single day, almost every day, every day you're reminded.

Interviewer: Wow. And wh-, who says things like that?

Alexandros: Everyone.

Interviewer: Everyone...

Alexandros: (laughs) But as I said,... Both, and I want to emphasise this, so that, both well-meant, and badly meant. And most of the time it is well-meant.

Alexandros claims that every single day during the forty-two years he has been living in Sweden, he has in one way or another been reminded of his non-Swedish background. He distinguishes between references to his ethnic background as Greek, which he claims are referred to in a largely positive manner (more on this in Chapter 9), and references to not being born in Sweden, which he argues exclude him negatively, defining him as “not Swedish” (rather than Greek). When I ask who says these things he responds “everyone”. Needless to say, the constant references to “everyone” reminding him “every single day” lead me to suggest that Alexandros seems to perceive migrancy as very pervasive (cf. e.g. George & Fitzgerald 2012 on continued reminders of foreignness, see Chapter 4).

Also consider the following quotes, which appear at various parts during the interviews (rather than in relation to a specific question):

Once a foreigner, always a foreigner.
(*Agnieszka*, female, 70, Poland; 40 years in Sweden)

As I said earlier, once an immigrant, always an immigrant.
(*Orhan*, male, 73, Turkey; 46 years in Sweden)

It, one doesn't forget, I, I can't become Swedish. And a Swede can't become a Kurd. It... But, one can take a little of the culture, for instance Swedish culture. But not all.
(*Sayid*, male, 60, Kurdistan; 20 years in Sweden)

All of these quotes reflect a sense of permanence or pervasiveness when it comes to identifications as foreigners, (im)migrants or non-Swedes that goes beyond particular situations.

In expressing more of an overall sense of migrancy (rather than identifying particular situations), some also express feelings of not being a part of society. For instance, Fred (male, 65, England; 44 years in Sweden), after earlier having described his struggle with and resistance to Sweden during the first few years in the country when he could not find work and felt disadvantaged, suggests that:

Fred: But now I've kind of more...accepted that I'm not Swedish. I, I will never be Swedish. I am here in this society but I'm not a part of it (laughs a little).

Here, Fred contends that he has “accepted” that he is “not Swedish” and “never” will be. While he lives his life here, he claims he is “not a part” of society. This is similar to what the Irish who have been living in the UK for a long time seem to suggest in the study by Leavey and colleagues (2004), expressing that they are settled but do not belong (see Chapter 4). In contrast, Amir (male, 56, Iran; 32 years in Sweden) claims:

Amir: No but I don't feel, as I said, even though I have a weird name I don't feel in that way that people – I used to tell people all the time, as long as you contribute to society, do the right thing, it's okay. I don't feel like an immigrant, I feel like (laughing a little) part of Swedish society. As I said, even though I do know that many label me as an immigrant.

Amir argues that even though he may have “a weird name”, he does not “feel like an immigrant”. Despite “know[ing]” that “many” label him as an “immigrant”, Amir argues that he feels like a “part of Swedish society”. As was suggested in the discussion of constructions of migrancy (cf. e.g. Peralta 2005, see Chapter 2), immigrants tend to be presumed to live outside of society. In other words, Amir rejects the label of “immigrant” and claims a place for himself in society, which he attributes to “contribut[ing]” and doing “the right thing” (more on this in Chapter 9). Another way of not feeling part of society is expressed by Adriana (female, 68, USA; 41 years in Sweden), who says “I feel like the eternal tourist” when I ask whether her overall ethnic identifications have changed over the years. With regards to feeling as though one was part of society or not, some other interviewees (such as Mustafa and Orhan) express that they experience a feeling of “us vs. them” in society, that is, that there is a clear distinction between “us Swedes” and “them immigrants”. This is in line with how constructions of migrancy and Swedishness have been described in the scholarly literature on the topic (cf. e.g. O'Dell 1998, see Chapter 2).

In other words, while this may not be the case for all interviewees, several convey a sense of pervasiveness surrounding their identifications as (im)migrants or non-Swedes. As can be seen in Table 8.1 and in the preceding discussion, some are rather explicit about the sense of pervasiveness (as e.g. Alexandros and Nima, see previous quotes), while others convey it in a more implicit manner (as e.g. Kjersti, suggesting her tone when speaking conveys she isn't Swedish, see beginning of this chapter). The sense of pervasiveness also seems to be more *internal* for some (namely Fred, Agnieszka, Mayuree, Yongyuth, Sayid and Amir), more *external* for others (namely Kjersti, Sinikka, Jane, Adriana, Natalia, Maria and Zeynep), while yet others appear to experience it both internally and externally (namely Alexandros, Jannis, Yongyuth, Orhan, Mustafa and Nima). How overall internal and external definitions seem to relate to one another will be addressed further in Chapter 10.

Perpetual reminders?

On the whole, the answer to the question of when (in what situations) and in relation to whom migrancy seems to become meaningful for identification is neither simple nor straightforward. Most of the time, migrancy seems to become meaningful as a consequence of the various markers surrounding the boundaries between the category of Swedes on the one hand and (im)migrants on the other: language, physical appearance, behaviour and names. In one sense, it seems to

be particular situations where any kind of difference (i.e. in terms of ethnicity *per se* or not being Swedish) becomes meaningful. In another sense, it seems to be at just about any time. In terms of when and in relation to whom interviewees seem to think they are defined as different, or seem to think of themselves in such terms, it seems to be mostly in social encounters with strangers. While the *who* most of the time seem to be members of the native Swedish population, it seems as though other (im)migrants also could make migrancy relevant. Some of the interviewees further distinguish between other (im)migrants who also have been living in Sweden for a long time and more recent (im)migrants. Different kinds of questions and comments also seem to lead to both (internal) self-definitions and (external) definitions by others as (im)migrant or non-Swede, including the question “Where are you from?”, comments on one’s language skills, seemingly being looked at in certain ways, perceiving that one is singled out, finding limitations in one’s ability to express oneself, or in particular typically Swedish cultural contexts. Finally, some seem to express a sense of pervasiveness and permanent presence of migrancy to the extent that they seem to suggest that migrancy always is meaningful, be it internally, externally, or both.

Put differently, then, in terms of *who*, it could be any stranger, regardless of background, and it could be in any kind of situation that others could define one as being different from native Swedes in general (as the next chapter on Negotiating migrancy, Chapter 9, will shed further light on). However, as can be seen in Table 8.1, not all of the older migrants interviewed here seem to perceive migrancy as being very pervasive in their lives. Both the question of pervasiveness itself (in the columns to the right) seems to suggest this, as does the absence of references made by some of the interviewees under the other two headings (such as Lars, Rodrigo or Luka). To add to this, answering the question of when and in relation to whom runs the risk of presenting a static image of the identity category of migrancy. That this however is not (necessarily) the case becomes clear in the discussion of how migrancy seems to be negotiated (Chapter 9), to which we shortly will turn.

What about the relations between the different kinds of whens presented in this chapter? Looking closely at Table 8.1, there seems to be a relation between the sense of pervasiveness interviewees seem to experience and the markers they propose may play a role for being defined as different from native Swedes. It appears as though an external sense of pervasiveness comes along with interviewees’ language (or accent) conveying that they are not originally Swedish, especially implicitly, and to some extent also physical appearance. Since language is the primary way of communicating with others in social situations, claiming that speaking conveys to others that one is not Swedish suggests that others generally may tend to define one as not Swedish.

Do dimensions such as chronological age, perceived cultural distance, gender or time since migration seem to play into the whens of migrancy? For the

older migrants interviewed here, chronological age, gender, time in Sweden, age at migration and (inter)marriage do not seem to play into the question of when migrancy may become meaningful. The only exception seems to be that all who propose that difficulty in expressing themselves in Swedish could lead them to feel different seem to have been living in Sweden for more than forty years. What about perceived cultural distance? There seem to be patterns with regards to perceived cultural distance when it comes to the different ways in which migrancy seems to become meaningful for identification, as comes to light when examining Table 8.1 more closely. The table is ordered in such a way that the interviewees are listed by perceived cultural distance (cf. Table 5.1 in Chapter 5), from the “closest” to the most “distant”. For instance, while most interviewees refer to language skills as a marker of difference, it seems as though it is mostly migrants from countries perceived as more culturally “distant” who refer to physical appearance, namely from Greece, Chile, Thailand, Turkey, Kurdistan and Iran. As the reader may recall, the very notion of perceived cultural distance includes an element pertaining to physical appearance (see Chapter 5). Constructions of Swedishness also include an element of Whiteness as scholars have come to suggest in recent years (e.g. Hübinette & Lundström 2014, see Chapter 2). Conversely, some of the migrants from countries that seem to be perceived as culturally “closer” make a point of *not* looking (that) different, which suggests that they may pass as Swedes until they start to speak. Behaviour similarly seems to be referred to predominantly by those who seem to be perceived as culturally “closer”. While it seems as though interviewees from any country claim they tend to be asked where they are from, it appears to be primarily individuals from culturally “closer” countries who make reference to being asked more specifically whether they are from the country they are from (i.e. “are you from Norway?”, rather than “where are you from?”). Both descriptions of “the gaze” and accounts of being singled out also seem to be found primarily among those from more culturally “distant” countries and who also are male, which often seems to be connected to the perception that physical appearance plays a role for how others seem to define one. In other words, while migrancy seems to become meaningful for identification regardless of country of origin, how it may do so seems to differ depending on perceived cultural distance.

Whereas the question of *when* for old(er) age to a large extent seems to be defined in relation to one’s own self-definitions (see Chapter 6), migrancy to a somewhat larger extent seems to be ascribed by others in social situations, as the findings discussed thus far seem to suggest. In other words, external markers such as language skills, physical appearance and names, being asked where one is from, receiving other odd questions and being treated differently, all may be regarded as external definitions at the first instance. These types of *whens* seem much more common than the ones pertaining to for example behaviour,

discomfort in particularly Swedish contexts or difficulty expressing oneself. Having said that, as could be seen in relation to the discussion of pervasiveness, many nevertheless seem to perceive migrancy as rather pervasive also internally (not just externally). Let us now turn to the question of how migrancy seems to be negotiated (Chapter 9), which also will shed further light on questions such as the relation and interplay between internal and external definitions.

CHAPTER 9: NEGOTIATING MIGRANCY

The preceding chapter focused on the question of when (and in relation to whom) migrancy seems to become meaningful, both in terms of how the older migrants interviewed here seem to define themselves and in relation to how they seem to think others regard them. Per definition, it examined when such identifications (as *immigrant*, *migrant*, *foreigner*, *non-Swede*, or *ethnic*) seem to become meaningful. In contrast, the present chapter focuses on how the identity category of migrancy seems to be *negotiated*. As was discussed in the presentation of this dissertation's theoretical frame (Chapter 3), identity negotiation can be understood as the process whereby individuals may present themselves to others in a certain way, being defined by others, responding to others' definitions and perhaps presenting themselves in a new way, in the dialectical process of internal and external definition. Negotiation can then be understood as a process of boundary drawing where one may place oneself on either side of various boundaries (such as native vs. immigrant, European vs. non-European), claiming a desirable identity and distancing oneself from undesirable ones (cf. Wimmer 2013, see Chapter 3). Examining the negotiation of migrancy is then as much a matter of exploring when and how one may regard it as meaningful as it is a matter of exploring how it may be rejected or dismissed (cf. Chapter 7, also see Chapter 3).

How does migrancy seem to be negotiated?

The presentation of findings here is divided into four sections: first we will look at how the older migrants interviewed respond directly to the question of whether there are any situations or contexts where others seem to define them as non-natives (just as we did with the same question for old[er] age, see Chapter 7). This is of interest since it presents perhaps the most direct and explicit negotiation of migrancy as externally ascribed. Thereafter, two different ways of negotiating migrancy will be examined: one where migrants seem to negotiate migrancy by way of emphasising similarity to the native population, and one where they seem to negotiate migrancy by way of defining themselves as different from other (im)migrants. Finally, perceived limits to the possibility of claiming a native identity will be examined. These four different sections are reflected in Table 9.1 (see following pages). References to the table will be made throughout the chapter.

Table 9.1: How does migrancy seem to be negotiated?

	Seen as (im)migrant? Direct responses				Emphasising similarity to native population						Emphasising difference from other (im)migrants						Limits to claiming a native identity?				
	No	Like everyone else	Don't care, doesn't matter	Used to it now	Depends on personality	Lifestyle	Citizenship	Rules and regulations	(Sometimes) one of them	Swedification	Time in Sweden	Being from ____ is seen as positive	Ethnicity as a resource	Different from countrymen	No ambition of becoming Swedish	Others who try to become Swedish	Compared to those who come today...	Could never claim to be Swedish	Cannot change appearance	Upbringing in backbone	Cannot learn culture the same way
Kjersti (f, 66, Norway; 44 years in Sweden)	X	X										X									
Lars (m, 73, Norway; 49 years in Sweden)					X		not					X								X	
Sinikka (f, 66, Finland; 46 years in Sweden)	X	X				X			X				I	X		I	X				X
Terhi (f, 79, Finland; 61 years in Sweden)										X				X			X			X	
Fred (m, 65, England; 44 years in Sweden)	X	X				X			X	I		X	X		X	X	I				X
Jane (f, 66, England; 36 years in Sweden)	X					X				I		X			X						X
Adriana (f, 68, USA; 41 years in Sweden)						X				I		now	X								
Audrey (f, 71, USA; 28 years in Sweden)			X		X							X			X			X			
Agnieszka (f, 70, Poland; 40 years in Sweden)		X					X								X	X					
Natalia (f, 69, Poland; 36 years in Sweden)	XX	X			X	X	X							X			X			X	
Alexandros (m, 60, Greece; 42 years in Sweden)						X	not				I	X	X		X	X	X			I	
Jannis (m, 55, Greece; 40 years in Sweden)			X	X							X	X	X		now	X	X	X			

	Seen as (im)migrant? Direct responses					Emphasising similarity to native population					Emphasising difference from other (im)migrants					Limits to claiming a native identity?					
	No	Like everyone else	Don't care, doesn't matter	Used to it now	Depends on personality	Lifestyle	Citizenship	Rules and regulations	(Sometimes) one of them	Swedification	Time in Sweden	Being from ____ is seen as positive	Ethnicity as a resource	Different from countrymen	No ambition of becoming Swedish	Others who try to become Swedish	Compared to those who come today...	Could never claim to be Swedish	Cannot change appearance	Upbringing in backbone	Cannot learn culture the same way
Maria (f, 72, Chile; 33 years in Sweden)								X													
Rodrigo (m, 65, Chile; 35 years in Sweden)	I		X							I											
Luka (m, 56, Bosnia; 19 years in Sweden)	X	X																X			
Safet (m, 63, Bosnia; 18 years in Sweden)			X		X																
Mayuree (f, 63, Thailand; 38 years in Sweden)		X	X		X	X				X		X							X		
Yongyuth (m, 71, Thailand; 44 years in Sweden)							X	X	X			X			X			X	X	X	O
Orhan (m, 73, Turkey; 46 years in Sweden)			X			X					X			X					X	X	X
Zeynep (f, 70, Turkey; 47 years in Sweden)	X			X			X		I	XX				X	X	X			X		
Mustafa (m, 58, Kurdistan; 27 years in Sweden)			X	X				X			I			X		X		X			
Sayid (m, 60, Kurdistan; 20 years in Sweden)														I				X			X
Amir (m, 56, Iran; 32 years in Sweden)						X	X			X	X		I							X	
Nima (m, 57, Iran; 24 years in Sweden)								I		X						X					

Notes: XX=emphatic, X=explicit, I=implicit, O=opposite, now=not before, not=explicitly not

Seen as an (im)migrant? Direct responses

Just as with the negotiation of old(er) age (see Chapter 7), let us again begin by examining interviewees' direct responses to my question about how they think they are regarded by others. Focusing on migrancy, the interview question in this case pertains to whether there are any situations or contexts where interviewees think that they are regarded as (im)migrants or non-Swedes by others, or where not originally being from Sweden somehow becomes relevant. What makes this particularly interesting to look at, again, is that it gives interviewees the chance to explicitly claim an identity (or dismiss it) and to present themselves in the way that they desire to be seen (cf. e.g. Goffman 1959 on impression management, see Chapter 3). While we best can find answers to the question of how migrancy seems to be negotiated by examining the empirical material as a whole, the direct answers form an interesting backdrop against the sometimes conflicting and inconsistent identities claimed and displayed when *not* explicitly being asked about them. As can be seen in Table 9.1 under the heading "Seen as (im)migrant?", while some interviewees adamantly claim that non-native identities never are ascribed to them or that they are treated just like everyone else, others contend that they are used to it now and hardly think about it anymore (which implies that it does seem to happen). Yet others reason that how one is treated by others depends on one's personality. Let us look at some of the different types of responses in turn.

Here is what Kjersti (female, 66, Norway; 44 years in Sweden) says when I ask about situations or contexts in everyday life where it somehow could become relevant that she's not originally from Sweden:

Kjersti: ... No. ... I can't think of any.

Interviewer: Mhm. ... Are there any situations where you yourself can feel that you're not originally Swedish?

Kjersti: ... No, I guess they are too close to one another as well, these countries. ... No I haven't got any example.

Kjersti takes her time to think and concludes that she can't think of any examples. She proposes that the two countries, Norway and Sweden, are "too close to one another". However, in another part of the interview she talks about how the two countries have "much in common in all their differences",¹²⁴ a statement which can be interpreted as suggesting that there are quite some differences after all. To add to this, Kjersti proposes in relation to another interview question that she tells people she is from Norway since she claims her dialect conveys that she is not Swedish (see Chapter 8). This allusion can be deemed to indicate that she may be regarded as different by others. In the above excerpt she then negotiates with the interviewer to claim sameness to the native

¹²⁴ In Swedish: *mycket likheter, i all sin olikhet*

population, on the grounds that the countries are “too close to one another” for difference to become relevant.

To offer another example, Agnieszka (female, 70, Poland; 40 years in Sweden) responds to my question in the following way:

Interviewer: (...) but I wonder how you experience, what it is like today meeting Swedes, how you are treated?

Agnieszka: Mm just like everyone else. I don't think there's any difference.

Agnieszka quite simply claims that she doesn't think there is any difference in how she is treated as compared to native Swedes. Instead, she claims she is treated “just like everyone else” and thus the same. However, this stands in contrast to what she seems to convey in other parts of the interview where she talks about life in Sweden as a foreigner in a way that suggests otherwise (such as e.g. claiming that “Swedes are racists after all” or telling me to read a book about the art of being an immigrant¹²⁵ which she argues describes her experiences well). She also negotiates with me at another point by saying “but are you a foreigner, then you are a foreigner of course. So it can, you know this yourself. About this”. The impression one gets from this is that she includes me in the category of foreigner and proposes that we have a shared understanding of what this would mean.

Rodrigo (male, 65, Chile; 35 years in Sweden) responds to my question about situations where having another origin might matter in the following way:

Rodrigo: Well but once again, it's (laughs a little), what I – if I was a social person, very social, then it would be problematic, but I'm not. // I read books every Saturday and Sunday. I sit at home and read, that's what I want to do. Or go and take care of my grandchildren. That's another thing I like to do. Everything else d-, doesn't interest me. So it, it (laughs a little), well [it's a] very protected life. Which means that I don't get in contact with anything that can be problematic. (...) Well, of course, if I would, if I go, go out and take a walk and meet some Swedes who don't know me, they, they'll surely guess that I'm still a cleaner. That's very possible. But... To me it doesn't matter. (...) So it, no, but unfortunately, I don't go to parties, I don't dance, I, no, I don't go to the theatre or the stage or anything. Instead, me and my wife we enjoy each other's company a lot and we do just, very simple [things], [we're] very austere in our way of life. (laughs a little) And it's true, really (laughs a little), really!

Rodrigo here seems to interpret my question as implying something that would be “problematic”. He claims however that nothing problematic ever happens since he is not a “social person”. Instead of finding himself in social situations where migrancy might matter, he argues that he leads a “very protected life”,

¹²⁵ *Konsten att vara invandrare [The Art of Being an Immigrant]* by Andrzej Olkiewicz (published in 2008 by Genista Publishing, Stockholm).

mostly sitting at home, reading books or taking care of his grandchildren. Interestingly, Rodrigo proposes however that “some Swedes who don’t know” him will “surely” categorise him as a cleaner when seeing him walk down the street, a scenario he deems to be “very possible”. Considering the context in which Rodrigo offers this example, the categorisation as “cleaner” seems to be equal to that of “(im)migrant”. He goes on to reason however that it “doesn’t matter” to him. He then resumes the line of argument pertaining to what it is he does not do (go to parties, dance, go to the theatre) and his “austere way of life”. In other words, Rodrigo argues that he does not have any particular experiences where migrancy may become meaningful for how he is defined, at the same time as he proposes that Swedes who don’t know him “surely” define him as a cleaner or an (im)migrant. This suggests a certain taken-for-grantedness with regards to such a categorisation. Rodrigo here negotiates with himself, with me (especially when emphatically claiming that what he says “really” is “true”) and with virtual others (those Swedes who don’t know him and may categorise him as a cleaner).

Some respond to my question by claiming that they just don’t care how others regard them, as for instance is the case with Jannis (male, 55, Greece; 40 years in Sweden):

Interviewer: (...) are there still today any kind of situations or contexts where it, where you are reminded or that it becomes relevant?

Jannis: I don’t think that I see it any more. ... Because I don’t care. And I don’t think they’re as crude as they were back then. Or at least I don’t perceive it like that perhaps, crude or anything like that you know. Instead I just kind of... They are very fleeting, I simply don’t care, I just don’t give a damn. About what people think, you know, how you’re treated and stuff like that. I guess I’m treated, there is no, I can’t say that today, today it is different kind of. ... Maybe also because of my age, I don’t know... But... No, I can put it this way, my experiences, around me, that, youths, young immigrants are still treated very poorly.

Both when claiming that he does not “see it any more”, and that he “can’t say today it is” “different”, Jannis compares his experiences today to how it used to be. He refers to some of his less positive experiences he told me about earlier in the interview, about when he first came to Sweden (including e.g. racism in various contexts). He claims that such instances are “very fleeting” these days but contends that young immigrants still are treated “very poorly”. He also debates with himself: today they’re not “as crude” he contends, at first, going on to qualify this by way of posing that he perhaps just perceives them differently. Later he proposes that his age might play into this. He also repeatedly claims emphatically that he does not care what others say. Such emphatic claims to not caring can be interpreted as implying that he thinks that others categorise him as an (im)migrant. He then seems eager to brush this off as not having any bearing on him. Overall, Jannis seems ambivalent at the same time as the way he debates

not caring would seem to suggest that others define him as an (im)migrant (which he also suggests in other parts of the interview, see Chapter 8). Jannis however presents himself as unaffected by such definitions.

Others propose that they are used to being regarded as different now, as can be seen in the following example from the interview with Zeynep (female, 70, Turkey; 47 years in Sweden):

Interviewer: (...) that you're not from Sweden and the like, I was just wondering what, what does that mean? Well in, in your life so to speak

Zeynep: ... No it doesn't matter actually. It is, I'm used to, I think it is, I almost expect that, well, people will ask. (...) And then sometimes children come, "where are you from", yes. And it, if I say I'm from Turkey, then, the child who has gotten a positive impression of me, or the opposite, maybe children, well, it is like – and it's almost [that I'm] proud to say, I am from Turkey. So, maybe, because [they have had] good contact with [me], maybe can think that "oh but maybe the Turks aren't so bad after all" (laughs a little)

Zeynep claims that it doesn't matter to her whether she is asked where she is from (see Chapter 8 for more on this question) and that she is used to it now. Zeynep's argument that she is used to it now, an argument that other interviewees also allude to, seems to imply that it occurs so often that it has become a normal part of everyday life, nothing that one thinks about any more. Zeynep goes on to turn being asked about her background into something positive, proposing that she can contribute to a more positive image of Turks in Sweden as kids who meet her may come to think of Turks as "not so bad after all". She thereby implies that Turks seem to have a rather negative image in Sweden and that she is different from others (cf. section on Emphasising difference later in this chapter). Zeynep then claims to be "*almost* proud" to say that she is from Turkey, which implies an ambivalence: she seems proud, but does not quite seem to dare to be.

Also consider how Mustafa (male, 58, Kurdistan; 27 years in Sweden) responds to my question about situations or contexts where others may remind him that he is not originally from Sweden:

Mustafa: Now it is so normal for me. Now it is so normal. I don't think that...my name isn't Magnus for instance. My name isn't this this and that. But my life is here, that's decided, the kids are educated, done here, then my neighbour in my home country could also, come and quarrel, or treat me, one or another, it's the same. But of course, it's not just ten, fifteen [or] twenty years, [it's] *thirty* years. We say like this, if you come out and breathe, there's a nice saying in Swedish, "there is no place like home."

Mustafa claims it is "normal" to him *now* that he is not regarded as Swedish, which suggests that he does seem to think that others regard him as a non-Swede.

He claims that not having a Swedish sounding name isn't anything he thinks about (cf. section on Markers of difference, Chapter 8). In another part of the interview, however, Mustafa argues that somebody named Mustafa doesn't seem to have the same rights as somebody named Magnus, which in turn suggests that this is something he seems to think about. Mustafa's references to his children having grown up here (in Sweden) and that it has been thirty years now, as mentioned in the present quote, and that his "life is *here*, that's decided", further could be regarded as claiming a place for himself within the country, regardless of what others may think. Proposing that he perhaps would have the same kinds of issues with neighbours in his first home country as he has in Sweden today finally implies that moving may not make a difference.¹²⁶

Finally, some interviewees reason that they have not had any particular experiences where not originally being Swedish has become meaningful because of how they themselves are as persons (cf. Rodrigo, cited earlier), as for instance proposed by Lars (male, 73, Norway; 49 years in Sweden):

Interviewer: (...) situations or contexts where you either feel that you're not Swedish or that it, that somebody else points that out to you or that you strongly feel that you're Norwegian or anything like that

Lars: No, I actually haven't come across that that much. But maybe it is because I...am considered to be a happy chap if you say so. I think so. I know, I know myself that I am in a very favourable position. I feel tremendously privileged to...be allowed to be healthy.

Lars' answer implies that he only seems to associate situations where being Norwegian or not being a native would become meaningful with something negative (which however is not the intention of the question). He proposes that this could have to do with being a "happy chap". His allusion to not having come across that "*that much*" implies however that he *has* come across it. Posing that he knows he is "in a very favourable position" can perhaps be interpreted to mean that he regards it as an advantage to be from Norway as compared to another country, but this is not very clear since he goes on to talk about being healthy.

These various direct responses to the question about situations where migrancy may be made relevant by others suggest that answering such a question is not always straightforward. Turning back to Table 9.1, one can see that there can be contradictions not only in how an interviewee claims to be regarded in different parts of an interview, but also in the process of responding to a direct explicit question: for instance, Zeynep starts by saying no, only to go on to say

¹²⁶ It is not entirely clear whether Mustafa here refers to also having a minority status as a Kurd in his home country of the Iranian part of Kurdistan, or whether he generally refers to conflicts one might have with neighbours regardless of ethnic or migratory background.

that she is used to it now. Going beyond direct responses, how do the older migrants seem to negotiate the identity category of migrancy?

Emphasising similarity to the native population

As has been implied thus far, several interviewees seem to suggest that they quite frequently are reminded of their non-Swedish backgrounds (i.e. that migrancy becomes meaningful, as discussed in Chapter 8), while others claim that they are not regarded as different from native Swedes. Regardless of how one seems to think one is regarded by others, one of the ways in which migrancy may be negotiated is by emphasising similarity to the native population or indeed claiming sameness. In terms of what was described in Chapter 3 as signalling to others that one is an A by alluding to what B-ness and C-ness are presumed to entail, one could say that the emphasis on similarity can be a way of claiming to be *like* an A whilst acknowledging that one may not be granted full membership in the category of A (i.e. knowing that one's identity claim will not be validated by others, cf. e.g. Jenkins 2008, see Chapter 3). Considering boundary work as one form of negotiation (see e.g. Wimmer 2013 discussed in Chapter 3), the boundaries surrounding the category in question are then redrawn in the process.

Depending on how they seem to think of themselves and what markers they deem relevant in relation to how an (im)migrant or a Swede may be defined, interviewees could draw upon different arguments when reasoning about why it is they do not think of themselves as different or why it is that others don't seem to consider them as such. As can be seen in Table 9.1, this may include references to lifestyle, citizenship, adherence to rules and regulations, claiming that native Swedes sometimes do consider them to be one of them, and references to the amount of time they have been living in Sweden. In addition, several interviewees make references to having become "Swedified" over the years. References to "Swedification" however are not always made for the purpose of explicitly emphasising similarity, but could rather be mentioned in other parts of the interview, such as for instance in relation to the question pertaining to changes in ethnic identifications (see Interview guide, Appendix I). Such (implicit) cases are marked with an "T" in Table 9.1. All these different kinds of references will be discussed in turn in the following.

One way of negotiating migrancy is to emphasise the ways in which one seems to think that one is similar to native Swedes, regardless of place of birth or whether or not one may be regarded as a Swede by others. This is expressed by some in terms of having the same lifestyle as an average Swede, as exemplified in the following excerpt from the interview with Amir (male, 56, Iran; 32 years in Sweden):

Amir: (...) As I said, I never feel one hundred per cent Iranian when I'm there. And still of course after thirty years in Sweden I don't feel one hundred per cent

Swedish either. // I used to joke with my friends there, we talk a lot about integration and, (...) and (sighs) I used to joke, say that I – I’ve got a house, I use snuff, I’ve got a dog.

Interviewer: What did you say, you

Amir: I have, I use snuff, // I’ve got a house, and I’ve got a dog. // Then I must be integrated. // And I’ve had a Volvo twice. No but this, even though this is all fun and games, it can also be a little sign that one feels at home here.

Amir starts by claiming that after all those years in Sweden, he can feel neither entirely Iranian nor entirely Swedish. At the same time, he jokes that he has a house, uses snuff, has a dog, and has owned a Volvo (a Swedish car), all of which are things that by many may be considered to be typically Swedish (“*Villa, vovve, Volvo*”, which is a saying in Swedish, i.e. “house, dog, Volvo”). Amir jokes that he then “must be integrated”. One can imagine that Amir here negotiates with virtual others representing people in society that demand that (im)migrants must integrate, almost suggesting that one could not become more integrated than living up to the “*Villa, vovve, Volvo*” ideal. Elsewhere in the interview Amir also claims that he has been wanting to join a hunting club but has not been successful in finding one that will take him on as a member, which he proposes may have to do with his migratory background.

Others could also speak of living “like a regular Swede” (Orhan, male, 73, Turkey; 46 years in Sweden, married to a Finn), like a “Swedish couple” (Adriana, female, 68, USA; 41 years in Sweden, married to a Scotsman) or as Mayuree (female, 63, Thailand; 38 years in Sweden) puts it:

Mayuree: Yes, I don’t feel as though I was an immigrant, because, I don’t feel it. I have lived like a Swede. Adj[usted], kind of, in all...kind of, I have actually, think, I pay taxes, I – I mean that, I feel like a Swede, I work and pay taxes, and then I’m in the trade union. // So I...don’t feel like an immigrant you know, I do everything that a Swede does.

Mayuree, who is married to a Swede, claims that she does not feel like an immigrant because she has “lived like a Swede” and claims she has “adjusted” to life in Sweden. It almost appears as though she then seems to look for further arguments, as she claims she “*actually*” has done all these things like pay taxes, work and be a member of the trade union. She then reiterates her claim to not feel like an immigrant (“you know”) and claims she does just the same things as Swedes do. In effect, Mayuree claims sameness to the native population and distances herself from the category of immigrant. In another part of the interview, Mayuree also explicitly claims that she does not consider herself as an immigrant: her husband sometimes complains about *svartskallar*¹²⁷ but Mayuree

¹²⁷ The Swedish word *svartskalle* (plural: *svartskallar*) is not easily translated into English. It is a derogatory term used to describe “immigrants” (cf. Chapter 2). Its literal translation is “black” (*svart*) “head” (*skalle*) (referring to hair colour).

suggests that she does not take offence since she does not feel that this categorisation concerns her. In that way, Mayuree distances herself from the idea of difference by way of claiming that she lives her life in the same way as everybody else in Sweden, claiming sameness in doing so.

Another way of negotiating migrancy is to emphasise one's status as a Swedish citizen. Several interviewees draw upon their Swedish citizenship in various ways when discussing how they think of themselves and how others define them, such as for instance Natalia (female, 69, Poland; 36 years in Sweden):

Natalia: They say, if I, there are many who ask me, do you feel Swedish. Aach, Swedish! I've adjusted to Sweden, will never return to Poland, but I, if I feel Swedish, maybe I feel more Swedish than Pol[ish], no, I don't think so! Never, never become proper [Swede] – first of all, when it comes to, for instance, when I speak Swedish with an accent, they ask where are you from. And then, well, “aren't you Swedish” – “yes, I'm Swedish, I have Swedish citizenship”. But when I have an accent, with the language, you know, then they say right away, “oh you're not Swedish” you know. It's, but it's true, not just, not just me. My friends experience the same thing.

Natalia here seems to debate with virtual others, those “many” people who ask her whether she feels Swedish, to whom she replies that she has adjusted to Sweden and has no intention of returning to Poland. She starts to say that she maybe feels more Swedish than Polish, but hesitates and changes her mind to instead claim that she will never become a proper Swede. She goes on to negotiate with those virtual others, as “*they*” ask where she is from when speaking with an accent (see discussion of markers of difference in Chapter 8). Then “*they*” ask “aren't you Swedish”, thereby defining her as different. Her attempt to claim to be Swedish based on citizenship however seems to be dismissed, as the accent and “with the language”, “*they*” say right away “you're not Swedish”. She then goes on to negotiate with me, trying to add further strength to her argument by suggesting that “it's true” and it is not just her: her friends “experience the same thing”. Natalia here negotiates with a virtual other in the form of a native Swede who will not accept her as a Swede (more on this later in this chapter), regardless of citizenship (also cf. Kawakami 2012 regarding citizenship and national belonging, see Chapter 4).

On a related note, some interviewees refer to abiding by the law, or following all rules and regulations, when asked questions pertaining to migrancy. For instance, Mustafa (male, 58, Kurdistan; 27 years in Sweden) expresses the following after I ask him if he thinks that his experiences as an (im)migrant to Sweden would have been different if he had come from a different country. He reflects that experiences can differ depending on where one migrates to, and goes on to say:

Mustafa: Otherwise, the gaze, well it... It hasn't changed at all. I have to say, I have solved this thought for myself perhaps, well, I don't care. Soon thirty years, that's a life[time] that you struggle. Should I sit on Sundays, "ahh (sighs), why doesn't he or she think like that, like me". Of course, people think in different ways, [I] don't think like a Swede, no of course not, I'm not Swedish. But laws and regulations, I feel Swedish. // That's clear to me. Otherwise it's not, I don't feel sad when I go to the reception and say...meet an unpleasant person. It can happen. He or she is so tired, maybe they just had a quarrel with someone, that's acceptable to me.

Mustafa contends that he has come to terms with the way things are, that the way people look at him has not changed, regardless of how long he has been living in Sweden. However, instead of just sitting there and lamenting that others don't think the same way, he proposes that after a lifetime of struggle, he accepts that different people think differently. Crucially, he argues that he doesn't think like a Swede, "no of course not, I'm not Swedish. But laws and regulations, I feel Swedish". He thereby goes from saying "I'm not Swedish" to "I feel Swedish". In a sense, one could say that he claims to be Swedish when it comes to laws and regulations, but not in an ethnic sense, as he seems to suggest he may never be accepted as a Swede. Last but not least, Mustafa claims he does not get upset when someone treats him poorly, explaining the other person's behaviour by proposing that they may be tired or have quarrelled with someone. This negotiation takes place in relation to a virtual other in the form of people in society who won't accept him as a Swede, who look at him with a certain gaze (cf. Chapter 8) and perhaps accuse him of breaking the law. Mustafa therefore emphasises that he *does* abide by the law and various regulations. In other words, he claims to be the same as native Swedes in that sense and at the same time different from the (negative) image of other (im)migrants who presumably do not abide by the law (see section on Emphasising difference later in this chapter).

Also consider what María (female, 72, Chile; 33 years in Sweden) says when I ask about situations where not originally being from Sweden becomes apparent when meeting Swedes, or where she herself feels so strongly:

María: ... No but I'm just saying that I accept all, what do you say rules and laws there are in Sweden. I'm not against that, I don't criticise either. // But I think about this,... No... And I also have to accept that I will stay here until, until I, I pass away. When I, I'll pass you know. All, all old people have to think about that as well.

The excerpt suggests that it seems important to María to emphasise that she accepts all "rules and laws" in Sweden and that she does not criticise anything (cf. sentiments expressed by the older migrants in the study by George &

Fitzgerald 2012, see Chapter 4).¹²⁸ She thereby negotiates with a virtual other in the form of a native Swede who seems to have an image of (im)migrants as criminals (*not* following the rules and laws) who should return to their countries if they do not like it in Sweden. Finally, María also mentions that she has to come to terms with staying in Sweden for the rest of her life, which she sees as something that “all old people have to think about”, thereby indirectly describing herself as old. Curiously, María here seems to be in dialogue with the types of “stupid” questions and comments described in Chapter 8.

Despite the claims by some that they could never be considered to be a Swede (as will be discussed further at a later point), some of those who claim they could not be defined as Swedes by others could nevertheless mention instances where they may come to be seen as something other than an (im)migrant, or sometimes be considered to be “one of them” (i.e. native Swedes). For instance, Yongyuth’s (male, 71, Thailand; 44 years in Sweden) tells me the following story:

Yongyuth: There’s a, we’ve got a neighbour who lives here. His father lived here before, too. And there was another neighbour in the first house over there, who died and then sold his house. The first neighbour was a little, that... “imagine an Assyrian family would buy that house” (laughs a little). “What will happen”. This, this is a, this is him talking to me. I think it means that, “what, so he – he accepts me as a Swede”, or somehow, it must be like that!

Yongyuth describes this episode proposing that the way his neighbour spoke to him implied that he regarded Yongyuth as one of them, “accept[ing]” him “as a Swede”. Yongyuth claims to be treated as a native Swede in this case by way of referring to what others have said. The negotiation takes place with me as an interviewer on the one hand, by way of telling me the story, and on the other hand with himself, as he reasons aloud how this must mean that his neighbour accepts him as a Swede. By referring to what (virtual) others say or how others behave, one may seek to validate one’s claim to be someone who belongs and hence not an (im)migrant (when the latter is understood as being excluded from Swedishness, cf. e.g. O’Dell 1998, see Chapter 2).

While this was not always in relation to the questions about particular situations pertaining to identities as (im)migrant, several interviewees express that they have become “Swedified” over the years. To start with the perhaps most extreme example, when asked how she herself feels about her ethnic identity and whether this has changed over the years, Zeynep (female, 70, Turkey; 47 years in Sweden) tells me:

¹²⁸ Towards the end of the interview, María also goes out of her way to state that she is grateful to Sweden for having made her safe when coming here as a political refugee. The same sentiments were expressed by Luka, Safet and Mustafa, who also all came to Sweden as refugees.

Zeynep: Yes, I did, it has. It... I feel, here in Sweden I feel Turkish, it is, I do. But, an adjusted Turk. And sometimes proud of knowing Sweden better than the Swedes // But, in [a particular city in] Turkey, I don't feel that I am a Turk. I have become too removed [and lost touch].¹²⁹ So, partly when it comes to the language I'm out of sync, it's like the language has developed a lot, I don't know the new terms. (...)

Interviewer: Okay. When you say that, that you don't feel Turkish when you're in Turkey so to speak, what do you feel [you are] then?

Zeynep: Well, then I'm Swedish! I, it is all, then they say Swedish, it, I have become Swedified, and my husband says so too that I am, I've become Swedified. And, here I am, in [Sweden] (...), sometimes, it can be... I guess it's friends who sometimes expect that, well, they can tell that I have become Swedified, but not entirely.

Zeynep here expresses pride in knowing "Sweden better than the Swedes" and goes on to claim that she *is* "Swedish" when in Turkey and that "they say Swedish" (i.e. others seem to define her as such) there as well. This sentiment of being regarded as Swedish when visiting one's country of origin was expressed by several interviewees: Jane, Alexandros, Mayuree, Yongyuth and Amir claim the same thing. This can be regarded as a way of negotiating the identity category of migrancy: one may not be accepted as a Swede in Sweden, but by claiming that others consider one to have become Swedish when visiting one's home country (or claiming to feel Swedish oneself in that context), one can still claim a Swedish identity since such a claim then is confirmed by others (in Zeynep's case, she claims that "they" in Turkey, her husband, and friends who all say she has become Swedified). While proposing that she feels Turkish in Sweden, Zeynep plays this definition down by way of arguing that it has been too long since she lived in Turkey so that she has not been able to keep up with language development. At the same time, she claims that she has "not entirely" become Swedified.

Others could describe a sense of Swedification in terms of having adapted certain behaviours. For instance, Nima (male, 57, Iran; 24 years in Sweden) talks about how Iranians who have left their country have changed in different ways depending on which country they have migrated to. In the following excerpt, he offers an account of a conversation with a countryman who has migrated to North America:

Nima: (...) I said "that's right, in the Nordic countries you have to be quiet, don't yell, and nobody asks. If a bus has forty seats, you can see that people are sitting by themselves. You should never go and sit down next to someone. Why? Because, yes, you are a stranger. I also have a feeling that I don't want to sit next to anyone. I'd rather be alone!" That is the effect of having been influenced. Gradually. And we, we're not immune to that feeling. And that is why I can sit at

¹²⁹ In Swedish: *jag har kommit ifrån mycket*

home with my book, five, six, ten hours, but in this other, my home country it is difficult, only at the library maybe. Reading, enjoying solitude. That is my own time, I don't want to bother and not share with anyone. That is why, I mean, from different directions you're influenced.

Nima describes his own feelings in such a way that it almost seems to surprise him that he indeed also would prefer to sit alone. He contends that he can sit at home with a book for several hours, which would be “difficult” in his “home country”, or “only at the library maybe”, to read and enjoy solitude. In terms of negotiation, by telling this story, Nima can tell me about how he has become Swedified in a way that cannot easily be challenged or denied by native Swedes. That is to say, he can make a claim to a behaviour that most would agree seems more Swedish than Iranian (cf. e.g. Daun 1998a or Arnstberg 2010 on Swedishness, see Chapter 2). This allows him to present himself in this way, which is different from how he seems to expect he would have been like if he had remained in Iran or had moved to another country.

A sense of Swedification could also be expressed in the following manner, as Jane (female, 66, England; 36 years in Sweden) tells me when asked about how she would define herself when it comes to her ethnic or cultural identity and whether anything has changed from when she first came to Sweden until today:

Jane: Okay I – well. // Not so much that I am aware of, but for example we go back to England sometimes and meet my brother and he just says “oh, you’ve become so Swedish.” // It really isn’t quite as bad, but I understand that I have become...I have adjusted, but maybe it’s also got to do with age. Maybe I also would have if I had...stayed in England. But I don’t stand out any more, I really don’t. ... So [in that way] I’ve changed. But I still feel, well, but I’ll never feel Swedish! // A Sw[ede], well at bottom I don’t have this culture. Even though, now I’ve lived here for more than half of my life. And I’ll...probably stay here, I see no reason to go back, but... I won’t be Swedish. And it, it’s a little bit because I associate Swedish with a little..., well it sounds so cruel to say boring, but, (sighs a little), there aren’t as many eccentrics or individuals in the same way as there are in England. // ... I have a dad who was rather eccentric and my brother as well, so I understand that he thinks I am boring now...

By claiming that her brother tells her she has become “so Swedish” when she visits him in England, Jane can claim to have become Swedified (and thus Swedish) as this is confirmed by somebody else. At the same time, she presents this as meaning that she has become boring and reasons that the way she has changed also could have to do with age and the amount of time that has passed. Jane also claims that she has “adjusted”, that she no longer “stands out”, which is something she talks about earlier in the interview (in terms of feeling different and also behaving differently as compared to native Swedes). At the same time, she exclaims that she will “never feel Swedish”, which she in part explains by

way of referring to a lack of cultural knowledge, despite having spent half a lifetime in Sweden. Jane here negotiates by way of referring to what others have said (to some extent claiming external validation by doing so), reasoning with herself (and me) that she never will feel Swedish (regardless of time) and posing that she associates being Swedish with being boring. In a sense, she oscillates between being told she has become Swedish, distancing herself from such a definition (since it is boring and undesirable) and yet resigning to stay in Sweden, seeing no reason to go back, but still saying “I won’t be Swedish”. Both a resistance against Swedishness and an acceptance of not becoming Swedish can be gleaned in this interview excerpt.

Another way in which one could say similarity was emphasised (or difference was challenged) was with reference to how long one has been living in Sweden (which already has been visible in some of the interview excerpts cited thus far). This often also includes references to how long one has been living in Sweden as compared to how old one was when one left one’s country of origin (cf. the recently cited interview with Jane). For instance, Jannis (male, 55, Greece; 40 years in Sweden) says when asked about being reminded of having a different background than native Swedes:

Jannis: (...) There are so many things that remind you that... But it’s not like that now. For me.

Interviewer: Okay. What is it like now then?

Jannis: Because I have lived here for so long, ... I know my rights, I know my obligations, nobody can bully me. ... Regardless of who I am facing, so to speak. ... Because I have the knowledge, I am verbal (laughs a little) ... So I quite simply don’t need to take any s**t any more. If I have something to say I’ll say it. ... And I think that’s the case for most, at least those who, you know, who have lived here for a long time and so on...

Jannis first claims that he still is reminded of his background by many things today, but claims that there is a difference compared to when he first came to Sweden. Jannis argues that having lived in Sweden for such a long time has provided him with the knowledge needed to stand up for himself and speak his mind, hence he claims that “nobody can bully” him and that he doesn’t need to “take any s**t any more”. It almost appears as though he is (virtually) negotiating with his bullies. Younger generations become a point of comparison here: as Jannis suggests at another point during the interview (cited earlier), “younger immigrants” are still treated “very poorly” today, and in the above quote Jannis proposes that what he describes to be the case for him also applies to others who have lived in the country for a long time, thereby constructing a “we” identity for this category. Orhan (male, 73, Turkey; 46 years in Sweden) expresses similar sentiments. Talking about how he always has stood up for himself and the kinds of questions he could come across (cf. Chapter 8), he goes on to tell me:

Orhan: (...) They even used to say “if you don’t like it here in Sweden”, sometimes quite a few used to say, “bugger off, go back to your country” they said, earlier. But now I usually say, “why should I go back to my country? I’ve been living here for a long time, I’ve contributed something in terms of labour, now I’m going to stay.” Not kind of run away from here again you know. // The truth is, because I have done my part, and I have the right to live in this country just like everyone else.

The notion of having to earn one’s right to be in a country through working (also reflected e.g. in the work of Bolzman et al. 2006) is clearly present here. To those virtual others who tell him he should return to his country, Orhan answers by challenging them. It appears as though he negotiates with anyone, including himself, to reason and justify his right to be here “just like everyone else”, which amounts to the argument of having done his part, having made a contribution to society, having worked, and having been in the country for such a long time. By implication, this stands in contrast to a negative image of (im)migrants as a burden to society or to the welfare state.

To sum up, the negotiation of migrancy that could be described in terms of emphasising similarity has to do with claiming that one shares the same lifestyle with the rest of the native population, being a Swedish citizen, following all the rules and regulations, sometimes being seen as one of them, having become Swedified over the years (to some extent), and finally suggesting that after all those years in Sweden, one can stand up for oneself and claim the right to be here. In a sense, one could say that this is a matter of claiming *sameness*. Claiming sameness then simultaneously seems to be a matter of rejecting the idea of difference. In all of these negotiations, one may be debating with virtual others who may question one’s right to be here, who may not accept one as a Swede, but also with oneself. While this way of negotiating migrancy emphasises similarity, another one has more to do with emphasising *difference* from other (im)migrants, which we shall inspect further now.

Emphasising difference from other (im)migrants

Emphasising similarity and emphasising difference are to a certain extent two sides of the same coin. As was suggested in Chapter 3, some regard the relations of similarity and difference as central to the dynamics of identification (see e.g. Jenkins 2008 & Lawler 2014, Chapter 3). The negotiation of an identity category can be understood in part as a matter of distancing oneself from a category one may be regarded as belonging to, and also as a matter of redefining its meanings (as suggested in terms of e.g. boundary work by Wimmer 2013, see Chapter 3). In addition, individuals attempting to cross a boundary can use categorisation strategies in everyday discourse to distance themselves from categories they do not want to be associated with, for instance by passing on the stigma to those who “really” are this or that (e.g. Wimmer 2013, see Chapter 3). Distinguishing

oneself from others can be regarded as including all of these kinds of negotiation. In some cases, when one may seem to regard oneself as simultaneously belonging and not belonging to an identity category, regarding oneself as similar in some ways but different in others, one may speak of *disidentification*. This is the case especially when the identity category in question seems to be subverted and transformed in the process of negotiation (see Dean 2008 & Medina 2003, discussed in Chapter 3).

As can be seen in Table 9.1 under the heading “Emphasising difference from other (im)migrants”, doing so could have to do with suggesting that one’s country of origin is seen in a positive light (implying that this would not be the case for some other countries), that one is different from other countrymen, using one’s ethnicity as a resource in negotiating an ascribed definition as *immigrant*, distinguishing oneself from others who try to become Swedish and do not succeed, and finally comparing oneself (favourably) to more recent (im)migrants. Each of these will be discussed in turn.

Several of the interviewees claim that they have experienced that being from their country of origin generally seems to be regarded as positive. This is the case for those in the sample who are from Norway (i.e. Kjersti and Lars), England (i.e. Fred and Jane), the United States (i.e. Adriana and Audrey), Greece (i.e. Alexandros and Jannis) and Thailand (i.e. Mayuree and Yongyuth). Curiously, both interviewees from each of these countries express the same sentiments. However, Adriana emphasises that while being from the United States generally seems to be seen as positive today, this has not always been the case. Several of these countries seem to be generally perceived as comparatively culturally close (with the exceptions of Greece, which seems to be in the middle range, and Thailand, which however is a popular tourist destination among many native Swedes).

While some generally commented on their country being seen in a positive light as compared to the countries that some other (im)migrants are from, others claim to have been able to use their ethnicity in terms of what one could call a resource. This is the case for Alexandros (male, 60, Greece; 42 years in Sweden) who describes the following situations:

Interviewer: But do you experience that you personally also have been treated in another way today

Alexandros: Yes, now, oh right. It, n-, until I get a, until they find out that I am Greek, that’s what I was talking about.

Interviewer: What did you say, w-

Alexandros: Until they find out that I am Greek. And [that] I’m not an...evil Muslim who, who walks around with a bomb in the back pocket and...

Interviewer: (laughs) But are there any who, has it happened that anyone thought you were an evil Muslim walking around with a bomb in your back-, well, is there

anyone who...¹³⁰ Before they, that people think that about you, or... Before they get to know you

Alexandros: ... Well yes, it, you can tell right away by, as I said, with the gaze or first meeting that you can tell, and... Yes, there was this Finnish lady actually, who...(…) So we met somewhere, and then, she was discussing, there were some other people as well who I knew, it, but she didn't know, she, maybe they never got the chance to tell her who I was. And then she said right away that, she was kind of giving me weird looks, she was one of those kind of, right until we started to talk and stuff like that, "oh so you're Greek" and that it was kind of...then it was, when I started talking Finnish with her, for instance, (...) There was another time that I also got, but then I was...then I really was in trouble because, it was almost, it almost...they tried to beat me up you know, a couple of them, just because I, they thought I was a Kurd and... And then they had said that it was Kurds who murdered Olof Palme¹³¹ you know. // And they attacked me you know. And since I am, you know, I didn't want to show off that who I am and am not and, why I do as I do, didn't want to, they asked me but I didn't care. I just answered that it was none of their business if I, who I was. Then they thought I was a Kurd who murdered Olof Palme you know. But at last they found out that, but then I started telling them off and said that "you are the ones who murdered Olof Palme, not us" (laughs a little). You, [it's just] that I guess they were some of those, what do you call it, what is it called, (...) well, anyway. But then it was like, then when I said I was Greek then too.

Interviewer: And then they just stopped?

Alexandros: Well it kind of wasn't anything

Interviewer: And walked away

Alexandros: Well but they weren't, they weren't, I wasn't a dangerous Kurd then so.

Alexandros claims that he can tell by "the gaze" if somebody seems to look at him in a negative light, categorising him as an (im)migrant (see previous discussion in Chapter 8), but claims that this may change when they find out that he is Greek. He proposes that there have been situations where others perhaps at the first instance have thought of him as an "evil Muslim" with a "bomb in his back pocket". Alexandros first describes a situation at a social gathering where a "Finnish lady" seems to give him weird looks. By saying "maybe they never got the chance to tell her who I was", he seems to suggest that her perception may have been different if others he knew had told her about him. Upon finding out that he is Greek, Alexandros claims that all suspicions disappear and they can have a friendly conversation where he furthermore can converse with her in her native language. The second episode Alexandros describes is a situation where he claims he was attacked because some people thought he was a "Kurd who murdered Olof Palme". Alexandros then first

¹³⁰ Here I am of course referring to the example which Alexandros himself just mentioned: "until they find out that I am Greek. And [that] I'm not an...evil Muslim who, who walks around with a bomb in the back pocket and...".

¹³¹ Olof Palme was Sweden's prime minister when he was assassinated in 1986.

argues that he did not want to “show off” who he was, that they asked but that he thought it was none of their business. Ultimately however he tells them that he is Greek and succeeds thereby in making a potentially dangerous situation go away, since he then no longer appears to be perceived as a threat (“I wasn’t a dangerous Kurd then”). In both of these cases, others seem to first identify him as an (im)migrant and as a threat, but his ethnicity as Greek becomes a resource that saves him not least from a physical attack. Alexandros can take advantage of his Greek background, which is seen in a positive light, and can thereby present himself as different from the stereotypical image of other groups of (im)migrants (such as Kurds or Muslims). In doing so, he virtually negotiates with particular persons in various social encounters, who in the first case seem relieved to find out that he is Greek (not an “evil Muslim”) and in the second case no longer could be bothered with him (as he was not a “dangerous Kurd”). Ethnicity could however also present a resource for some interviewees in the sense that one’s background was claimed to be regarded as an asset or indeed a resource in the workplace (as was the case for Fred who suggested that his colleagues sometimes asked for his help because of his English background, and to some extent also Amir, who suggested that his own migratory background could be seen as an asset at work when dealing with recent immigrants).

Also consider the following excerpt from the interview with Zeynep (female, 70, Turkey; 47 years in Sweden), where she debates who may be considered Swedish:

Zeynep: (...) and then she said, where are you from. Yes, it, well it always comes up. Since it’s like, well, I’ve almost gotten used to hearing that now! ... No, it is... But I don’t interpret it as anything negative actually. // I think so, and then I guess it’s almost a good thing that we, I’m visible. It... // It’s not deviant but still, it’s visible after all, not, that I’m not Swedish. And I notice, since I have my Bolivian friends who, they look like Indians. Then I can’t say they’re Swedish, it’s not possible. It is, even though they are, I am a Swedish citizen, but I don’t call myself Swedish. It is just citizen.

Interviewer: But, but do you mean that you have to look a certain way to be perceived as Swedish or

Zeynep: Jiaaach, there is some, some way that, I find it difficult to explain this. I think there is something...they can tell, even children actually can tell. There was a child who...asked, who I met when... Well, it is something they can tell. But I can’t say how.

Zeynep here poses that she has gotten used to hearing the question “where are you from”, which she however does not claim to consider as anything negative (see Chapter 8 for more on this question). She goes on to (once more) claim that one can tell by looking at her that she is “not Swedish” (thereby describing herself as not Swedish), which she here describes as “almost a good thing”. She describes her appearance as “not deviant” but still visibly different and compares

herself to her Bolivian friends who she describes as looking “like Indians”. This can be regarded as a process of negotiation where she in a relatively short excerpt manages to present herself as someone who is used to being asked about her background, someone who looks like she is not Swedish, but who still does not quite look as “deviant” as some other (im)migrants, such as her Bolivian friends. By way of comparing herself to her friends, she seems to be in dialogue with a virtual other in the form of people in society in general who may or may not accept her as a Swede. Zeynep includes herself among those who are visibly different, explicitly abstaining from claiming to be Swedish despite citizenship, at the same time as she identifies *others* as more different. By arguing that she also would not call them Swedes despite their Swedish citizenship, it appears as though she colludes with the generalised Swedish public in excluding those who don’t “look” like (typical) Swedes from claiming to be Swedes (cf. e.g. Hübinette & Lundström 2014, see Chapter 2). Following my final question about the connection between appearance and being regarded as Swedish, she contends that it is difficult to explain but something even children can tell, although she “can’t say how”. Zeynep, in other words, shifts between normalising the question about her background, saying that others who “look like Indians” cannot be called Swedes, to claiming naiveté with regards to how it is that “even children actually can tell” if somebody is Swedish or not.

Some of the older migrants in the study seem to describe some of their fellow countrymen in a fairly negative light, while at the same time claiming (some more explicitly, others more implicitly) that they themselves are not like that. To offer some examples, Sinikka (female, 66, Finland; 46 years in Sweden) and Terhi (female, 79, Finland; 61 years in Sweden) both talk about how most of the other Finns in the Finnish pensioners’ organisation of which they are members (unlike themselves) only speak Finnish at home and do not have much contact with Swedes. Neither of the two had been married to Finns and both described having had hardly any contact to other Finns for most of their lives in Sweden, but claimed they had become interested in meeting others of the same origin in recent years and hence joined the Finnish pensioners’ organisation (cf. the Italians in the UK who became interested in Italy only as they grew older [Zontini 2015] or the Japanese in the US who seem to “regain a Japanese identity” as they are “getting old” [Kawakami 2012:32]). As previously cited, Zeynep (female, 70, Turkey; 47 years in Sweden) proposes that her behaviour could form a positive role model to show that maybe “the Turks aren’t so bad after all”, hence implying that they have a bad reputation. Natalia (female, 69, Poland; 36 years in Sweden) and Mustafa (male, 58, Kurdistan; 27 years in Sweden) both argue that if others from the same origin do something bad it reflects poorly upon the whole rest. Natalia emphatically claims that she thinks Poles who break the law or do “something bad” should be deported since they only give all the other Poles in Sweden a bad reputation to the effect that they

will be branded the same way. Mustafa (male, 58, Kurdistan; 27 years in Sweden) tells me the following when I ask him whether anything has changed in how he is treated in everyday life today as compared to when he was new in the country, after having learnt the language, culture and all about how society works (as we had been talking about):

Mustafa: Well it can still [be like that]. I have a neighbour, he opens the door, sees me, then he closes the door right away, too. // There's the laundry room, they don't want to do their laundry until we are done and then they go and rinse, I know people like that. But all, not all of them are like that. I know what they think. It's not unfamiliar to me, this question mark. Other than that, ... No, I feel like a Swede. ... From the heart, I have to say. But, society doesn't accept, then it's completely different. I try and obey and adjust to laws and regulations, in s-, the society that I am in. Be it here or there. But I know that, [people] like that... Sometimes it happens after all, [they] go and put up a fight, go and kill each other, by younger ones, or older ones, or some Kurds who have killed their daughters, // wives, I know that, it's a big burden for the others.

Interviewer: The the others

Mustafa: The country, others and, as I say. Good and bad people are everywhere. When I hear myself, or I see, still I drive my cab on some nights during the weekends, brawls and violence, it's not good. But when I see a dark[-haired] guy that I don't know at all, but I feel scared that that guy, who is a foreigner, would beat somebody, or do something stupid, because it affects me as well.

Mustafa contends that it still can be the same, that his neighbour still seems suspicious and appears to try to avoid him. However, he claims that besides this type of treatment, he feels like a Swede “from the heart”, but “society doesn't accept” this (i.e. his internal claim is not confirmed by others, cf. e.g. Jenkins 2008, see Chapter 3). He claims that he has been abiding by the law and has adjusted to both the law and regulations, but there are others who have not done the same: honour killings of some Kurds reflect badly upon the rest.¹³² To add to this, Mustafa argues that poor behaviour of *any* “dark-haired” guy or “foreigner” will affect him. By implication, this is because Mustafa is placed in the same category. Presumably, all who are categorised in this manner will be thought of in the same way and will be held responsible for such behaviour. Mustafa argues that others see him as an (im)migrant, regardless of how he himself feels or defines himself, and regardless of his own behaviour, he will be affected when other (im)migrants behave poorly, be it another Kurd or just any dark haired foreigner. In other words, he distances himself from other Kurds and other (im)migrants who do *not* abide by the law and regulations, at the same

¹³² Also consider what Sayid (male, 60, Kurdistan; 20 years in Sweden) has to say: “Well, when I saw...good things with the Kurds I'm happy, I say I am Kurdish. But when I saw for instance one day I heard, Kurds...a Kurd killed his wife. I don't want to say I am Kurdish. ... Because, you can't say decide and say, I am like that, no. And in that way, I am not Kurdish. But in this way, I am Kurdish.”

time as he claims to be Swedish at heart (i.e. emphasising similarity). In the end, however, he contends that his own feelings and how he defines himself won't matter since society does not accept him as a Swede. Again, Mustafa also seems to be negotiating with a virtual generalised other in the form of a native Swede who won't accept him as anything but an (im)migrant.

Claiming that one has no ambition of becoming Swedish, which several interviewees express (see Table 9.1), can in a sense also be seen as a way of negotiating migrancy: having no ambition of becoming Swedish, if one is not accepted as a Swede by others, this is of no consequence. That is to say, regarding identity as (situationally) accomplished in the interplay of internal and external definitions (cf. e.g. Jenkins 2008, see Chapter 3), an internal definition (which is necessarily social) signaling to others that one does not seek to become an A, is a way of pre-empting the external definition that will not validate one's claim to be an A. But how do interviewees express such notions? Fred (male, 65, England; 44 years in Sweden) tells me the following:

Fred: (...) There are quite a few immigrants who, who have kind of jumped right into this and tried to become as Swedish as possible. And I haven't had that ambition. And I have kind of accepted that, okay, there are a lot of things like that that I don't understand but, I have no ambition of, of becoming accepted, of becoming Swedish. And I think that in the beginning there, the first years, I wanted to be accepted, I wanted to receive an acknowledgement of having a good [university] degree and, that I was good at something kind of. I thought it was pretty ungrateful of Sweden to, here you get someone with a complete education who hasn't cost you a penny // for Sweden, and still you get this punch in the face you know. (...) But now kind of, I don't have any ambitions like that any more, instead I, I'm happy with who I am now, my identity, and...I, I kind of have no ambition to understand Tranströmer or sort of Swedish poetry or, like, Gustaf Fröding whoever he is, well, yes, stuff like that. It, what all Swedes know I guess. But I kind of don't make a big deal out of it and don't become aggressive but kind of, have found a way of handling it.

Fred describes his initial struggles when first coming to Sweden, unable to find work and seemingly experiencing a lack of recognition of his university degree that he had worked hard to get. In this excerpt, he oscillates however between claiming that he has not had the ambition of trying to become "as Swedish as possible", and proposing that he *did* want to "be accepted" during the first years. He also moves between describing it as "ungrateful" and "a punch in the face" to not be given entry to the labour market despite higher qualifications and a "complete education" which did not cost Sweden "a penny", and arguing that he doesn't have "any ambitions like that *any more*" (thereby implying that he nevertheless did have such ambitions before). Instead, he claims he is "happy" with who he is and makes a point of having "found a way of handling" the differences entailed by not quite knowing all the things that "all Swedes know".

Curiously, he rejects Swedish poets whom he can name at the same time as he adds “whoever he is”, claiming that he does not know them although he clearly does at least know them by name. Fred’s claim that he has no ambition of becoming Swedish could be interpreted as a spiteful reaction to not having been accepted before. This is at the same time interesting when considering that he otherwise tells me that people generally do not seem to identify him as anything but Swedish, unless he perhaps speaks English in public (as discussed earlier, see Chapter 8).

While most of the interviewees distance themselves from the idea of trying to become Swedish, Jannis (male, 55, Greece; 40 years in Sweden) tells me that he earlier had tried to become as Swedish as possible, but eventually gave up:

Jannis: (...) I talk the way I talk, I am who I am, I make my mistakes and don’t care. Not in the least. When I write and make mistakes, it bothers me. It, I don’t like it at all, you shouldn’t write incorrectly. But you can hear when I talk, yes, I am *svartskalle*.¹³³ If I speak slightly incorrectly, what the hell does it matter. It doesn’t bother me anymore. Actually.

Interviewer: But there was a time when you tried not to

Jannis: Mhm, I tried to be more Swedish (sighs) than... Yes, I was going to relinquish...my, my identity, quite simply...

Interviewer: What... How did it come to that, that you tried that, and what made you give up, so to speak?

Jannis: ... Because I could tell, I think, that... (sighs) No matter how much I tried (laughs a little) it didn’t help. // ... And then you don’t have to pretend.

Jannis goes on to talk about adoptees he knew who he described as having even bigger problems than him because they really wanted to become Swedish but weren’t accepted. Jannis claims that he does not care at all if he makes mistakes when speaking, that one can hear that he is *svartskalle* when he talks, and that this does not bother him anymore (but did bother him when he was younger). In contrast, he contends it bothers him greatly if he writes incorrect Swedish. When asked why he changed his mind about trying to become Swedish, he proposes that he could tell that he wasn’t accepted as a Swede and hence gave up, “then you don’t have to pretend”. He describes the attempts of becoming Swedish as “relinquish[ing]” his “identity”. The negotiation process here seems to occur (virtually) in relation to native Swedes who won’t accept him as a Swede regardless of how hard he would try, leading him to embrace being a *svartskalle* since that seems to be what others define him as. Similarly to Fred, Jannis claims that he today has found a strategy of handling things that were more difficult in the past, namely to just accept and simply not to care what anybody thinks.

¹³³ As the reader may recall, the Swedish word *svartskalle* is a derogatory term used to describe “immigrants” (cf. Chapter 2).

On the flipside, when discussing questions of Swedishness and non-Swedishness, several interviewees also make comparisons to *other* (im)migrants who are described as having attempted to become Swedish and failed, which could be regarded as a way of presenting oneself as “smarter than them”, knowing that one cannot succeed, as implied in the following statement by Agnieszka (female, 70, Poland; 40 years in Sweden):

Interviewer: But when you, when you personally say “once a foreigner always a foreigner”, what

Agnieszka: It is al[ways], it is always like that.

Interviewer: What do you associate with that

Agnieszka: Besides, you don’t want to become Swedish, I don’t want to leave myself.

Interviewer: No. But what do you associate with that, or what does it mean?

Agnieszka: It depends on how you int-, how you interpret. It’s open for interpretation.

Interviewer: But how do you experience it. What is your interpretation

Agnieszka: (sighs) ... Yes... It also depends on who you are. Some do everything to become Swedish. And feel, well, hurt or how can you put this that, that, well, if they ever, if you ever point out to them that you are, well you are not Swedish, I would answer right away that I am not Swedish. Because it is my identity as you say. Being a...a foreigner who, who is a Swedish citizen.

Agnieszka here argues that she wouldn’t want to become Swedish since she wouldn’t want to “leave herself”. She makes a clear distinction between those (others) who try to become Swedish and are hurt when told that they are not Swedish, and herself, who she claims would always say straight away that she is not Swedish. Instead, she claims she is “not Swedish” and defines herself as “a foreigner who, who is a Swedish citizen”. Agnieszka thereby refers to herself as both “not Swedish” and as “a foreigner”, apparently negotiating with a virtual other in the form of native Swedes in general who she claims never would accept any foreigner as a Swede. She also negotiates with me: I always have to try to dig deeper to encourage her to tell me her understandings, while she seems to be hiding behind general claims such as “it’s always like that” or “it’s open for interpretation”.

To offer another example of how one may speak of others’ attempts to become Swedish, Alexandros (male, 60, Greece; 42 years in Sweden) claims that he has met many people from different countries over the years and that many who have said “I’ll acclimatise and become Swedish” ended up getting psychological problems:

Alexandros: And I have multiple examples. The psychological problems, they break down because, (...) they try to distance themselves from this you know, now we’re talking about Greece, about Greece kind of, “oh but I’ll try to become, I, I was just eighteen years old of course when I came to Gre[ece], to Sweden, I

have lived thirty years in Sweden and eighteen years in, eighteen years in Greece, what, I am, of course I am Swedish. Of course I am Swedish of course I am Swedish of course I am Swedish.” And then they turn thirty-two, and they discover that they, they are not Swedes. They are never treated that way. I saw just the other day, they have tried to distance themselves from, from Greek culture, tried to oh what is it called, embrace Swedish culture, and Swedish culture doesn’t want them, because they are not Swedes. Then they’ll break down. And I have had several, I have several examples of people like that.

Alexandros describes the psychological problems that he seems to think others have had because they thought they could become Swedish but eventually realised they could not. He argues they “break down” when they “discover” that “they are not Swedes”, that “Swedish culture doesn’t want them, because they are not Swedes”. By saying these things, Alexandros portrays their distancing from Greek culture in a negative light. In contrast, as will be seen shortly, Alexandros himself claims that regardless of how long he has been living in Sweden or who he is married to or who his children are, he is Greek. These negotiations around the topic of *others* trying to become Swedish and failing to do so ultimately appear to centre on a notion of Swedishness as exclusive, which is in line with the constructions of Swedishness and migrancy discussed in Chapter 2 (see e.g. Daun 1998a). The notion of exclusiveness also includes the idea that there are limits to the possibility of claiming to be Swedish, which will be discussed further in a later section of this chapter.

Finally, a common point of reference for the older migrants in this study, who all have been living in Sweden for at least eighteen years (but mostly much longer, see Sample description in Chapter 5), are those (im)migrants who come to Sweden today (or who at least have come to the country later than themselves). This type of comparison appears to be common when considering previous international research (see e.g. Butcher 2008 for Australia and Pyke & Dang 2003 for the United States). To offer an example, Natalia (female, 69, Poland; 36 years in Sweden) tells me when I ask whether she is treated any differently today compared to when she first came to Sweden:

Natalia: Noo there is no difference. No, my acquaintances, m-, most of those who I socialise with, Swedish, they treat me as a Swede. They know that I am Polish you know, but they treat me [like a] S[wede] all the time. And they say “yes, it’s good, it, you have adjusted, to Sweden, you worked, paid your taxes and, compared to, nowadays who come to Sweden, they’re on welfare” you know. But kind of like that, they say that you know. But also they treat me like, just like a Swede. Exactly the same. Almost no difference at all. Because many recognise me you know. Quite long.

Natalia refers to what she claims others say of her, emphasising what she has done in her life as compared to those who come today who are presumed to live

on welfare. Here, Natalia claims that “*most*” treat her as a Swede “all the time”, although they “know” she is Polish. She also claims that they praise her for having adjusted, worked and paid taxes, comparing her to those who come today and (presumably) live on welfare. By emphasising that “*they* say that you know”, in this negotiation with virtual others, the others offer external validation of her claim. She then shifts from claiming that they treat her “just like a Swede”, “exactly the same”, to qualifying it to say there is “*almost* no difference at all”. The reason for this she proposes is that many recognise her and have known her for a long time, thereby implying that she may not be described in quite the same way by someone who does not recognise or know her. This implication also distinguishes between friends and strangers, where friends or people who have known one appear to “accept” one when strangers might not (cf. citation from interview with Yongyuth presented earlier).

Terhi (female, 79, Finland; 61 years in Sweden) similarly argues that those who come today get everything served to them on a platter, while she and others who came to Sweden during the early 1950s had to work hard to make a living she claims. Sinikka (female, 66, Finland; 46 years in Sweden) also compares herself to more recent (im)migrants, but in a slightly different manner:

Interviewer. How you yourself feel

Sinikka: How I feel personally, yes... Well compared to, to those who come here today, who are Muslims and the like, then I feel very Swedish, and I can sort of hardly perceive myself as an immigrant. I can call them immigrants even though I am one myself. Because I am, I perceive myself as a representative of Swedishness, because it is kind of, a car and a house and a dog, I guess that's just about it (laughs a little). *Villa vovve och Volvo*, as people say¹³⁴ (laughs a little) // ... So insofar I perceive myself as very Swedish. And I think that those who live around here for instance, they probably, for instance the family [who lives] above here is from, I think they are from Lebanon or some place like that, another country, but...surely they think that I'm a Finn kind of, I've never introduced myself to them or anything. Or what is it called, Swedish I mean.

Sinikka explicitly compares herself to those who come to Sweden today, “Muslims and the like”, demonstrating how identity is situationally defined: while she does not generally think of herself as Swedish, when compared to recently immigrated Muslims, she claims she feels “very Swedish” and even becomes “a representative of Swedishness”. Compared to them, she claims she can “hardly perceive” herself as an immigrant, at the same time as she seems to describe herself as belonging to the category (“even though I am one myself”). Sinikka seems to be negotiating or debating with herself, reasoning around who she might call an immigrant, but also virtually with other (im)migrants, who she

¹³⁴ *Villa, vovve och Volvo*, “house, dog and Volvo” is a saying in Swedish. Also mentioned by Amir, see previous citation.

proposes would see her as Swedish. She also seems to be negotiating with a virtual generalised other in the form of native Swedes by way of trying to claim to *not* be an (im)migrant,¹³⁵ distinguishing herself from those who would seem to “really” be (im)migrants, namely those who come to Sweden today (i.e. haven’t lived in the country as long) and are Muslims, or perhaps from “Lebanon or some place like that”. Sinikka then both claims to be defined as Swedish by some and implies that she also is an immigrant, but not like others: in comparison to *them*, she becomes a “representative of Swedishness”.

To sum up, the distinction between oneself and other (im)migrants discussed here can be based upon references to interviewees’ own ethnic origins which are presented in a favourable light compared to others. Their ethnicity can seem to be a resource in negotiations in everyday life and interviewees may present themselves as different from other countrymen, especially if a negative image seems to be associated with their country of origin. Interviewees may also emphasise that they have no ambition of becoming Swedish, not least (it would seem) if they seem to perceive it as impossible for any non-native-born to become accepted as such. It also seems as though several appear eager to distinguish themselves from those who come today, be it on grounds of length of time having lived in Sweden, or the country one might be from. On the whole, one could say that talking about other (im)migrants and distinguishing oneself from them in the process can be regarded as a way of distancing oneself from the category, claiming not to be like “them” and thereby presenting oneself as different and *not* an (im)migrant. One may then be passing on the stigma to others who are thought to “really” belong to a category (cf. Wimmer 2013, see Chapter 3). At the same time, one may very well regard oneself as part of the general category, not least since one seems aware that others seem to regard one as an immigrant regardless of how one defines oneself. In a sense, this may be termed *disidentification* as one may simultaneously belong and not belong to the category: by describing the ways in which one is different one may then contribute to a process of subversion and transformation of the category (cf. Dean 2008 & Medina 2003, see Chapter 3). Last but not least, let us now turn to the question of perceived limits to the possibility of having one’s claim to being Swedish confirmed.

Limits to claiming a native identity

What has been discussed thus far are the various ways in which the identity category of migrancy seems to be negotiated by way of emphasising similarity to

¹³⁵ As was mentioned in the discussion of migrancy and the category of immigrant in the Swedish context in Chapter 2, it should perhaps be noted that while it seems as though Western migrants might tend not to be included in the category of immigrant by virtue of being included in the category of “White Westerners” (cf. Mattsson 2005), it seems as though Finns were considered to be *immigrants* not least when they first started to migrate to Sweden (cf. Daun 1998a). Sinikka proposes in other parts of the interview that when she first came to Sweden, being from Finland wasn’t anything one wanted to advertise, and she also chose not to speak Finnish with her children.

the native Swedish population and distinguishing oneself from other (im)migrants. Negotiation then seems to occur as interviewees debate with themselves, with the interviewer, or with a virtual other in the form of native Swedes (or a generalised idea of what native Swedes would seem to think). In the process of negotiation, they claim identities they desire (e.g. to be “just like everyone else”) and reject the ones that they argue do not apply to them (e.g. “those who come today”, “Muslims and the like”), drawing upon a range of arguments to convince themselves, me, and those virtual others of why this would be the case. There have been glimpses of a sense of pervasiveness of migrancy both here and in the previous discussion of the question of when migrancy seems to become meaningful (see Chapter 8). What this section seeks to address pertains to the perceived limits to the claims one could make. While all interviewees seem to negotiate various internal or external definitions of migrancy, several nevertheless express that they sense a barrier to ever being able to fully claim to be Swedish and receive a validation of such a claim, be it in terms of their own feelings or in how they seem to think they are regarded by others (cf. e.g. Jenkins 2008 on the internal-external dialectic, see Chapter 3). This could also be conceptualised as meaning that some of the boundary markers pertaining to Swedishness seem to be perceived as non-negotiable (cf. e.g. Mattsson 2005 on the boundaries of Swedishness, Chapter 2; e.g. Wimmer 2013 on boundaries in Chapter 3). As can be seen in Table 9.1 under the heading “Limits to claiming a native identity?”, this could be expressed by proposing that one could never claim to be Swedish, that one could not change one’s appearance, that one’s upbringing was deeply rooted, and finally that one could not learn everything (e.g. Swedish “culture”) the same way (not having grown up in the country).

Several interviewees explicitly claim that they either could not or would not be able to claim to be Swedish, as exemplified in the following excerpt from the interview with Audrey (female, 71, USA; 28 years in Sweden):

Interviewer: But are there also any contexts where you would identify yourself as, as Swedish?

Audrey: No, there’s the limit.

Interviewer: Okay

Audrey: Yes. I have two identities, American, French. But not Swedish. No, there, there’s the limit. And I feel that strongly.

Interviewer: Okay

Audrey: As a limit. No! No.

Audrey had previously lived some years in France and expressed an amicable relationship to the country. She reasons that identifying as American and as French is enough, arguing that claiming to be Swedish would cross a line: “no, there’s the limit”, which she claims to feel “strongly”. Nevertheless, in the remainder of the interview she proclaims her love of the Swedish language and

her personal interest in the country and culture. For Audrey, the explicit reason for not claiming to be Swedish seems to be her own strong inner feelings. Luka (male, 56, Bosnia; 19 years in Sweden) similarly tells me:

Interviewer: (...) what would you say about yourself, about who you are

Luka: Oh okay, well it, I will say that I am Bosnian, I can never say that I am Swedish or anything, my identity comes first, that I don't want to, to become anything else, it is just, I am Bosnian and I am a Muslim, that's always how I see it.

Luka explicitly claims that he “can never say that I am Swedish”, at the same time as he places being Bosnian first, followed by defining himself as a Muslim. He claims that he doesn't want to “become anything else”. Both Audrey and Luka seem to be negotiating both with themselves and with a virtual other in the form of a general idea of a native Swede.

Sayid (male, 60, Kurdistan; 20 years in Sweden) argues that not least his name makes it impossible to claim to be Swedish:

Sayid: Yeah I think, but there is one thing, I remember. Swedes, too, when you talk to them, you say you're Swedish: What's your family? What is your family name? In Sweden, there are some families that are Swedish. You know them. If you say for instance you're Laura Svensson, they say that's Swedish! Laura Petersson, that's Swedish! Laura Eriksson, that's Swedish! But Laura what do you say, another language, another name, they say that's not, where are you from. They ask you. How can you say, I am, my name is Sayid, last name Mukri,¹³⁶ how can I say that I am Swedish. ... That's all I can say, how should I put it. What's the name, does the name exist in Swedish, no. In all of Swedish culture that name does not exist. How can you say you're Swedish. ... You're not Swedish. You live your whole life in Sweden you're not Swedish. But you know [the] Swedish [language]. You know Swedish culture. You understand the law in Sweden. But you're not Swedish.

Sayid argues that there are certain names that sound more Swedish than others, that are part of Swedish “culture”, and that different names are not accepted (cf. discussion of markers of difference in Chapter 8). He also claims that regardless of how long you live in Sweden (“your whole life”), how well you know the language, Swedish culture, or understand the law, you're still “not Swedish”. He seems to be negotiating with a virtual other in the form of native Swedes in general who seem to have a self-perception that does not include people who do not fit these criteria. He argues that it is impossible to claim to be Swedish when in a position such as he is. This excerpt suggests that Sayid seems to perceive the boundaries of Swedishness to be insurmountable for him (cf. e.g. HübINETTE & Lundström 2014 and Mattsson 2005, see Chapter 2).

¹³⁶ This is of course not his real last name.

Several interviewees attribute such limits to physical appearance, as seems to be the case for instance with Yongyuth (male, 71, Thailand; 44 years in Sweden):

Yongyuth: Regardless of how well I like it here in Sweden, I still can't become Swedish. I can't be Swedish. Properly Swedish. Because of...physical appearance. And it means that, me myself, and the others, in society as well, cannot accept me right away, bam. ... Because appearance is like this. But maybe after a while, when you spend some time with each other and work together, then, okay, they accept.

Yongyuth's quote exemplifies an ambivalence that can be found in negotiating how one seems to think one is defined by others: his physical appearance makes him seem non-Swedish at the first instance, but once people get to know him, Yongyuth proposes that they "accept" him. In addition, Yongyuth claims that his appearance puts a limit to the possibility of being regarded as a Swede, as he also at another point tells me (see earlier citation). In this excerpt, he negotiates with himself (it doesn't matter how well he likes it here in Sweden), with native Swedes as virtual others (they will accept you after a while), and with me (explaining what this means). Being "properly Swedish" then would require looking different than he does, which he cannot do anything about. In saying this, he further distinguishes between "proper" Swedes and somebody like him who may be accepted once people (i.e. native Swedes) get to know him. At another point during the interview when Yongyuth's wife briefly joins us he however jokes about perhaps being "like Michael Jackson" and changing his appearance, whereupon we all share a laugh. The dimension of physical appearance where Swedishness is constructed around notions of Whiteness has been suggested by others (cf. e.g. Hübinette & Lundström 2014 or Mattsson 2005, see Chapter 2). Criteria for belonging to the native population also seem to be racialised or linked to physical appearance in other countries, as not least the findings from other studies on identity among older migrants seem to suggest (where the older migrants in Kawakami 2012 and Kim 2001 seem to be excluded from "Americanness" based on physical appearance, just as those in Lee 1996 seem to be excluded from "Japaneseness", see Chapter 4).

Interviewees' perceptions of not being able to come to be regarded as Swedish in many ways also seem to have to do with stable notions of ethnicity, both by way of Swedishness being perceived as exclusively reserved for native-borns, and by way of interviewees' own ethnicities of origin being perceived as very important. This has already become apparent in some of the earlier quotes (see e.g. Luka on being Bosnian). As can be seen in Table 9.1, several interviewees contend that their upbringing has had a big impact or seems deeply rooted, expressing that their ethnicity was "in their bones", as exemplified through the following interview excerpts:

Well... I have to say that of course I have...become quite well immersed in Swedish society and, I feel more or less like, am not, I am, I am n-, I am still a Norwegian citizen. That sits deep you see.¹³⁷
(Lars, male, 73, Norway; 49 years in Sweden)

"Of course I am Greek". Sure, I've lived in Sweden forty-two years, my children are Swedes and Greeks, my, my wife is Swedish and, my friends are Swedes, but I am Greek! It doesn't matter how many years I've lived here, I'm Greek!
(Alexandros, male, 60, Greece; 42 years in Sweden)

So it's... As I said, it depends on how you put, what, how, which question you get, whether you are Iranian or not. At the same time, Iranian, being Iranian, that is nothing to be ashamed of you know, // it is...Iranian-Swedish (laughs a little) I don't know! (laughs a little) It is very difficult, I understand that it's identity you're after, if you – this is, as I said, it's quite deep in your bones you know, this cultural [bit], society. I mean, you've lived there for twenty-three years after all.
(Amir, male, 56, Iran; 32 years in Sweden)

Lars proposes that while he has found his place in Swedish society, he has held onto his Norwegian citizenship, claiming that it is something that "sits deep". Alexandros argues that it does not really matter if he has lived here for forty-two years, is married to a Swede and has Swedish friends, he'll be Greek anyway. Amir claims that being Iranian is "deep" in his "bones", that the twenty-three years in Iran have left their mark. At the same time, he tries on a definition as "Iranian-Swedish", which he however laughs off. A strong internal definition pertaining to one's ethnicity of origin then appears to form part of the perceived impossibility of becoming Swedish.

Finally, some interviewees argue that they could not ever become fully Swedish because they could never learn Swedish culture the same way as those who had grown up in the country.¹³⁸ Sayid (male, 60, Kurdistan; 20 years in Sweden) for instance proposes that you can learn a little bit of culture, but "not all" (see quote cited earlier). Consider the following excerpt from the interview with Orhan (male, 73, Turkey; 46 years in Sweden):

Interviewer: And when you think then, in order to feel Swedish, what does it take then?

Orhan: First and foremost I don't speak flawless Swedish. That's one. And then the second, you know Laura, regardless of how much I fight, I will never become one hundred per cent Swedish, because when I watch TV, Mirja (Orhan's wife) and I, sometimes there are these, you know theatres, or well, debates and so on. When I watch, she laughs about something, although I sit quietly. Then she

¹³⁷ In Swedish: *det sitter hårt inne ser du*

¹³⁸ Only Yongyuth (male, 71, Thailand; 44 years in Sweden) in a sense argues the opposite: "But for, for me I think that, everything that happens here, histories, traditions, anything, you can learn, can't you? // So there's nothing that you, you're lacking. There is, lacking on the inside, in knowledge, but there's the possibility to pick up. So you, you don't have a negative feeling on that side."

explains to me, I always laugh or have fun after two minutes or three minutes. // Then I can tell, I'm not, I'm not even, I am still lacking...small gaps here and there you know. And then, when I came, when I came here I was twenty-five, twenty-six years old, I had a, a whole identity, Turkish identity. So that's not easy to erase. // That is still here. But those who, the children who are born in Sweden, they can get by, they, despite their foreign appearance, but their language skills, lifetime, they can say they are Swedish, but not me. ... But not because I think that it is a, it is something that, an insult to me, it is more like a disadvantage to me, I can't say that, it doesn't come from the inside. Yes.

Orhan first proposes that he does not feel Swedish because he does not speak the language flawlessly. He then uses watching TV as an example to argue that he still lacks the bits and pieces of cultural knowledge that would allow him to fully appreciate Swedish programmes. To add to this, in line with the sentiments discussed just before, Orhan claims he had a “whole identity” when he came to Sweden, which is “not easy to erase”: he claims it is “still there”, even if he in other parts of the interview proposes that he no longer can claim to fully be one hundred per cent Turkish after all those years. By way of discussing children who are born in the country and arguing that they can “get by” “*despite* their foreign appearance” and that *they* can say they are Swedish, he implies that *he* cannot. Orhan goes on to claim that not being able to say he is Swedish is *not* an insult and *not* a disadvantage because feeling Swedish “doesn't come from the inside”. Orhan appears to be negotiating with a virtual other in the form of people in society in general who would suggest that some non-native born people would consider it an insult not to be accepted as Swedes. For him however he claims this is not the case, since he argues that he does not feel Swedish. It also seems as though he is negotiating with himself as he goes along, thinking of various reasons for *not* feeling Swedish. The relevance of both internal and external definitions becomes quite apparent here as Orhan reasons and debates about both his own perspective (not feeling Swedish) and how he expects others to react (not seeing him as Swedish), and in turn responds to their expected reaction (not being insulted).

What this section has addressed is that some of the older migrants interviewed propose that they regard it as an impossibility to claim to be a Swede and/or to be regarded as one: some of the boundaries of Swedishness then seem insurmountable. As has been suggested, some propose they could never claim to be Swedish, be it because of their own inner feelings, because they cannot change their appearance, cannot change their upbringing (and adapt all cultural knowledge in the same way as native Swedes) or propose they think of their ethnicity as deeply rooted and central to how they think of themselves. Language skills and names are also included in such references to why one may not be defined as a Swede by others (cf. section on Markers of difference in Chapter 8). What these findings suggest is that for some of the older migrants included in

this study, while able to emphasise the ways in which they are like the native population (claiming sameness) and able to distance themselves from certain other (im)migrants (thereby at times also disidentifying with the category), actually claiming to be Swedish and receiving validation of such a claim seems to be considered an impossibility. While some claim that they can pass as Swedes in some situations (as e.g. Fred does), and some claim that there isn't really any difference in how they are regarded by native Swedes (as e.g. Agnieszka does), others seem to think it would be impossible to ever be regarded as a Swede (as e.g. Yongyuth) or to ever attempt to claim to be Swedish (as e.g. Sayid).

Similarity and difference: Two sides of the same coin?

The purpose of this chapter has been to examine the question of how the identity category of migrancy seems to be negotiated. The various ways in which the older migrants in this study seem to negotiate migrancy have been examined, firstly, by way of scrutinising the direct responses to the question about how they think they are regarded by others, where some contend they are not regarded as any different, while yet others in contrast propose that they indeed are used to it now (implying that this is a very common occurrence). Further examining the ways in which migrancy seems to be negotiated has brought two main patterns to light: on the one hand emphasising similarity to native Swedes, and on the other hand distancing oneself from other (im)migrants (and emphasising how one is different from them). *Emphasising similarity* to the native population could mean that one could claim that one's lifestyle was the same as everyone else's, that one is a Swedish citizen and follows all the rules and regulations, that one sometimes seems to be regarded as a native Swede by others, having become "Swedified" and referring to how long one has been living in the country. In effect, this could be a matter of claiming sameness and rejecting the idea of difference. *Emphasising difference* from other (im)migrants could mean that one could claim that one's country of origin is seen in a positive light, proposing that one's ethnicity could be a resource, claiming that one is different from other countrymen, that one has no ambition of becoming Swedish, talking about others who attempt to become Swedish (and fail) and comparing oneself favourably to those who migrate to Sweden today. Presenting oneself as different from others then could be a matter of passing on the stigma to others as "really" belonging to the category of immigrant. Insofar as one may simultaneously suggest that one does not belong to the category of immigrant (by way of not being like those others) and also belong (by way of claiming that others always will see one as such), it could also be a matter of disidentification. One could then claim to be just like everyone else, transforming the category in the process. What seems to go hand in hand with identifications as different is the perceived impossibility of being identified as a Swede, that is, perceived *limits to claiming a native identity*. Several interviewees argue that they could never claim to be (native)

Swedes, be it due to their appearance, the apparent deep rootedness of their upbringing or that they could never entirely adapt to (or learn about) the country's culture in the same way as a native or speak the language flawlessly. Negotiation seems to take place in relation to oneself (both by way of making up one's mind in the process, and by way of comparison to earlier/younger selves), in relation to the interviewer, and in relation to virtual others. The virtual others here mostly seem to be people in society in general, mostly (albeit not exclusively) native Swedes. Interviewees seem to debate with what these virtual others would seem to think both in terms of who can be regarded as a native, who is regarded as an (im)migrant, and what an (im)migrant is expected to be like.

How do the different ways of negotiating migrancy discussed here seem to relate to one another? As can be gathered when turning back to Table 9.1, all of these different ways of negotiating migrancy do not seem to be mutually exclusive. One can both emphasise similarity and distance oneself from other (im)migrants (which most of the interviewees seem to do). These two ways of negotiating migrancy could be regarded as two sides of the same coin. At the same time, one may consider it impossible to claim to be Swedish: again, most of the interviewees make some reference to this being the case (see Table 9.1). That these different types of claims (i.e. presenting oneself as similar to the native population, different from other [im]migrants or arguing that one can never be regarded as a native) do not seem to be mutually exclusive is also in line with the conceptualisation of identity as situationally accomplished (cf. e.g. Jenkins 2008, see Chapter 3). Thus, interviewees could seem to regard themselves as "just like everyone else" in some situations and contexts, but as *different* in others.

What about the potential role of dimensions such as chronological age, perceived cultural distance, gender and time since migration for the negotiation of the identity category of migrancy? As was the case for the *whens* of migrancy (see Chapter 8), chronological age does not seem to play into the negotiation of migrancy in any particular way. Neither does age at migration seem to play a role. Examining the role of time in Sweden, the only aspect that appears to stand out is that most of those who propose that their upbringing is in the backbone happen to have been living in Sweden for a comparatively long time, namely 44 years or more. Similarly, with regards to (inter)marriage only one aspect stands out, namely that the great majority of references to being different from other (im)migrants seems to come from interviewees who are married to or in partnerships with Swedes. When it comes to gender, it seems to be more common among female interviewees to claim that others do not regard them as different from the native population, and that they are treated like everyone else. On the other side of the coin, again, mostly male interviewees argue they could never claim to be Swedish, with only one female exception explicitly making this claim. It seems necessary however to remind the reader once more (cf. Chapter 5) that the present sample happens to be composed in such a way that female

interviewees are overrepresented among the countries perceived as culturally “closer”, and male interviewees among those perceived as more culturally “distant”. This means that we cannot exclude the possibility that these patterns may have to do with perceived cultural distance as much as with gender.

What about perceived cultural distance, then? Turning back to Table 9.1 (which is ordered by perceived cultural distance from “close” to “distant”), it seems as though while most types of responses span across the whole spectrum, some of the columns seem to suggest tendencies towards one end or another. For example, as perhaps may be expected when considering how Swedishness seems to be constructed (see Chapter 2), all of the interviewees who argue that they could not be regarded as Swedes due to their physical appearance seem to be from countries perceived as more culturally “distant”. The same seems to be the case when it comes to referring to one’s adherence to all rules and regulations when emphasising similarity. In contrast, claiming that one’s country of origin is seen in a positive light seems to be more common among interviewees from countries perceived as more culturally “close”, with the exception of Thailand (which one however may say seems to be a very popular tourist destination among native Swedes). Comparison to (im)migrants who come today also seems to be more common among interviewees from countries perceived as more culturally “close”. In other words, taken together, it seems as though the dimension of perceived cultural distance does play into the negotiation of the identity category of migrancy.

On the whole, we could see that despite proposing that they cannot claim to be “proper” Swedes, what the older migrants interviewed nevertheless may be able to claim is that they are “like” them, the same, or *similar*. This also seems to be in line with arguing that while others may look upon them as (im)migrants or as not Swedish, they are not like (those) other (im)migrants, but different. The interviewees can then draw upon lifestyle, cultural knowledge, knowledge of and adherence to rules and regulations, as well as time in Sweden in order to present themselves as somebody who isn’t really that different from the native population. The other side of the coin entails claims to not being like (other) (im)migrants, not like those who receive negative publicity in the press, namely that they respect the law, do not pray five times a day, do not condone honour killings, and/or have worked hard to make a living in their new country (unlike those who come today and supposedly live on welfare). Several of the constructions of Swedishness and migrancy as discussed in Chapter 2 seem to loom large in the interviewees’ own constructions and negotiations not least with virtual others. While all of the older migrants interviewed talk about the ways in which they are like the native Swedish population and different from other (im)migrants, the perception that they could never claim to be Swedes seems to be more definite for some than for others. In other words, some explicitly claim they would never ever be accepted as Swedes, while others similarly reason that

they would never at the first instance be defined as Swedes by others specifically because they could not change their appearance. Bringing all of these perspectives together, one can easily see how several of the interviewees seem to *disidentify* with the category of (im)migrant: suggesting that they continue to be considered immigrants and will not be accepted as Swedes, at the same time as they may think of themselves as being “just like everyone else” or “Swedish at heart”, in effect they subvert and transform (and indeed deconstruct) the very category to which they seem to be presumed to belong.

CHAPTER 10: BRINGING TOGETHER THE WHENS, WHOS AND HOWS OF OLD(ER) AGE AND MIGRANCY

This chapter aims to bring together the findings pertaining to both of the research questions, namely when (in what situations) and in relation to whom old(er) age and migrancy seem to become meaningful for identification, and how these identity categories seem to be negotiated. The chapter first of all seeks to combine the empirical findings pertaining to the identity category of old(er) age on the one hand and the identity category of migrancy on the other hand. In doing so, questions that do not seem to fit within the frameworks of the individual empirical chapters can be addressed. We shall take a closer look at how interviewees seem to express themselves in relation to categories such as old(er) people and various identities pertaining to migrancy. We shall also look at the interviewees' overall identifications pertaining to old(er) age and migrancy over the course of the interviews as a whole, both in terms of how they generally seem to define themselves (internally) and how they generally seem to think they are defined by others (externally). Finally, this chapter will also seek to bring together both identity categories to examine all the different ways in which overall internal and external identifications with regards to both old(er) age and migrancy seem to coincide (or not) for the older migrants studied here. These findings will then further contribute to the first aim of the dissertation, namely to empirically examine the identity categories of old(er) age and migrancy together.

The identity category of old(er) age: When, who and how?

What can we say about the identity category of old(er) age when we combine the answers to the questions of when, who and how? The findings presented thus far suggest that for the older migrants included in this study, old(er) age seems to become meaningful for self-definitions (internally) through the physicality of old(er) age on the one hand and through the passage of time on the other. References to (externally) being regarded as old(er) by others pertain to situations where interviewees propose they may receive benefits or respect or be disrespected on the basis of old(er) age. The identity category of old(er) age then seems to become meaningful rather fleetingly. Three main ways of negotiating old(er) age were identified in the empirical material: presenting oneself as not old(er) yet, distinguishing between one's inside and outside, and presenting oneself as old(er) but different. These could include both claims to sameness (with a younger version of oneself or the non-old[er] population), describing others as "really" old (thereby passing on the stigma), and disidentification with old(er) age, as the category could seem to be redefined and transformed when claiming to be old(er) but different.

What it might mean to be old(er) however, as could be gleaned through the references made to feeling old(er) or not, seems to differ between individual interviewees and between different situations. Some seem to associate old(er) age with having passed a certain age, feeling old(er) physically or conveying a sense of the end of life drawing closer. Conversely, *not* seeing oneself as old(er) could also seem to have different meanings: “younger” chronological age and/or not having retired yet, or still being active and curious regardless of age or retirement status. Both oldness and not being old(er) also seem to be constructed against the backdrop of what the interviewees seem to associate with what “really” being old means: namely to be passive, have withdrawn from life with no interest in what happens in the world, dependent on others, in need of walkers or canes to get around, with an “old” appearance (wrinkles, grey hair). Their own non-oldness could then be constructed around not being like those “really old” others. Identifications as old(er) or not seem to be shifting rather than permanent: on one level, some interviewees seem to think of themselves as old(er), but on another, they seem to find themselves to be “not *that* old” after all. Conversely, some seem to think of themselves as not (that) old, but still at times seem to feel old(er). Since identification as old(er) or not is understood here as situationally defined, the findings could be conceptualised in terms of a continuum on which one may shift from one end to another (and back again), depending on situation and context: “not old(er)” at one end, followed by “not old(er) yet”, “not that old”, “old(er) but different”, “old(er)” and finally, at the distant other end, “the *really* old”, which is a category reserved for others.

The situations in which old(er) age seems to become meaningful, as described by the interviewees, are instances from everyday life: be it the physicality of old(er) age (such as tiredness or stiffness), the passage of time (looking at one’s [grand]children), reminders of life’s finitude (such as peers passing away), or the way in which others treat one, either by behaving respectfully (by offering a seat) or quite the opposite (calling names). The whos in everyday life seem to be of an uncertain but likely younger age, and mostly strangers. The ways in which the identity category of old(er) age seems to be negotiated in the interviews offers glimpses of how interviewees negotiate with themselves, with the interviewer, and especially with people in society in general (as virtual others) and what they would seem to presume about old(er) age and old(er) people. The interviewees seem to compare themselves both to younger versions of themselves and to the images of old(er) people that seem to be constructed at different sites.

One of the most striking findings with regards to the question of when old(er) age seems to become meaningful for the older migrants interviewed is that it appears to be much more common that interviewees suggest that they themselves feel old(er) (i.e. internally defining themselves as old[er]), as compared to suggesting that others seem to regard them as old(er) (i.e. being

externally defined). The types of situations where they nevertheless seem to suggest that they are treated as old(er) furthermore frequently seem to be described as surprising and as very rare. To add to this, expressing such situations in terms of physicality and time further adds to the impression that old(er) age seems to be perceived as comparatively fleeting by most (but not all). This fleetingness suggests that the identity category of old(er) age seems to become meaningful mostly briefly in particular situations and in relation to particular kinds of others, rather than seeming to be pervasive and more permanently meaningful for identification. As will be seen in the next section, some of the interviewees however seem to think of themselves as old(er) also more generally.

Ways of speaking and overall identifications pertaining to old(er) age

Let us now examine how interviewees seem to speak of old(er) people. Table 10.1 (see next page) presents how interviewees speak about “old(er) people” over the course of the interviews: as a group or category that they see themselves as belonging to, either on an individual level (“me”) or on a group level (“we”), or as a group or category that concerns others, that are “they” (see Chapter 3 on the role of language in social constructionism, e.g. Burr 2003). The table also includes overall identifications with regards to old(er) age which will be discussed shortly. As can be seen in Table 10.1, it seems to be much more common that the interviewees refer to “old(er) people” in an excluding manner, namely in terms of “they” and “them” (i.e. others), than in an including manner, namely in terms of “me” or “we” (cf. e.g. Jones 2006). This can perhaps in part be explained by one of the interview questions asking about how interviewees think that “older people” are regarded or treated in society in general (see Appendix I for full Interview guide). Interestingly, as can be seen when looking closely at Table 10.1, overall identifications do not necessarily seem to match how some interviewees otherwise refer to old(er) people. That is to say, some could generally seem to think of themselves as old(er) but still only speak of older people as though they were others. When it comes to the potential role of chronological age, all who refer to old(er) people in terms of “we” are above sixty years old, whereas references to “me”, “them” and “others” occur across the whole age spectrum. This suggests that chronological age does not seem to play into how the interviewees speak of old(er) people.

Let us now take a look at how interviewees on the whole seem to define themselves, and how they on the whole seem to think that others define them. Such overall identifications can be identified by looking at the interviews as a whole rather than at specific questions. As was described in the Methodology chapter (Chapter 5), one of the analytical steps entailed a reading of the interviews to determine whether interviewees on the whole seem to self-identify

Table 10.1: Various ways of talking about old(er) people and overall identifications with regards to old(er) age

	Talking about “old(er) people”				Overall identifications					
	Including		Excluding		Self-definition			Definition by others		
	Old(er) people = me	“We old(er) people”	“Old(er) people, they...”	Old(er) people = others	Old(er)	Ambivalent	Not old(er)	Old(er)	Ambivalent	Not old(er)
Kjersti (f, 66, Norway; 44 years in Sweden)							X			X
Lars (m, 73, Norway; 49 years in Sweden)	X			X	X				X	
Sinikka (f, 66, Finland; 46 years in Sweden)				X	X				X	
Terhi (f, 79, Finland; 61 years in Sweden)			X	X		X		X		
Fred (m, 65, England; 44 years in Sweden)	X					X		X		
Jane (f, 66, England; 36 years in Sweden)		X	I		X			X		
Adriana (f, 68, USA; 41 years in Sweden)	X	X			X			X		
Audrey (f, 71, USA; 28 years in Sweden)	X	X		X	X				X	
Agnieszka (f, 70, Poland; 40 years in Sweden)			X			X				X
Natalia (f, 69, Poland; 36 years in Sweden)						X				X
Alexandros (m, 60, Greece; 42 years in Sweden)	X			X		X				X
Jannis (m, 55, Greece; 40 years in Sweden)	I			X			X			X
Maria (f, 72, Chile; 33 years in Sweden)					X					X
Rodrigo (m, 65, Chile; 35 years in Sweden)			I	X			X			X
Luka (m, 56, Bosnia; 19 years in Sweden)			X	X			X			X
Safet (m, 63, Bosnia; 18 years in Sweden)	X	X		X	X				X	
Mayuree (f, 63, Thailand; 38 years in Sweden)			X			X			X	
Yongyuth (m, 71, Thailand; 44 years in Sweden)						X			X	
Orhan (m, 73, Turkey; 46 years in Sweden)							X			X
Zeynep (f, 70, Turkey; 47 years in Sweden)				X			X			X
Mustafa (m, 58, Kurdistan; 27 years in Sweden)	X			X	X			X		
Sayid (m, 60, Kurdistan; 20 years in Sweden)			X			X		X		
Amir (m, 56, Iran; 32 years in Sweden)				X			X			X
Nima (m, 57, Iran; 24 years in Sweden)			X	X			X			X

Notes: X=explicit, I=implicit

as old(er) or to distance themselves from such a definition. Likewise, interviews were examined to see whether or not interviewees on the whole seem to think they are regarded as old(er) by others. Interviewees may propose that they feel old(er) in some situations, such as when feeling stiff or having less energy, but otherwise repeatedly talk about all the reasons they may not (yet) feel old(er), in which case their overall self-definition would appear to be *not* old(er). Likewise, interviewees may mention occasions where they (to their apparent surprise) may have been offered a seat due to being considered old(er), yet at other times explicitly claim that they do not look their age, in which case their perceived overall definition by others could be described as ambivalent. While all cases are not clear cut, the overall identifications presented here reflect the dominant tendencies and what the interviewees themselves seem to want to convey.

As mentioned in Chapter 3, such overall identifications may be conceptualised in terms of a more general sense of who one is or how one would define oneself (internally), along with a more general sense of who one seems to think that others regard one as being. While one may have a general sense of who one is, different identity categories may become more meaningful in some situations than in others (internally or externally), or not at all. In addition to the variability of identifications that already has come to light in the presentation of the empirical findings thus far, it should perhaps also be pointed out that these overall identifications emerge from within the interview situation and to a certain extent are bound to this specific context. In other words, they emerge over the course of an interview where a younger researcher asks questions about old(er) age, which interviewees may or may not have reflected upon prior to this situation. That being said, interviewees had received information about the topic of the interviews beforehand and were likely to have some idea of whether or not they generally consider the identity category of old(er) age as meaningful for who they are.

How do the older migrants interviewed here generally seem to define themselves when it comes to the identity category of old(er) age? As can be seen in Table 10.1, several interviewees generally seem to identify as old(er), some seem ambivalent and others seem to think of themselves as not old(er). What about perceived overall definition by others? Some seem to think they are generally regarded as old(er), others seem ambivalent, while the remainder do not generally seem to think that they are regarded as old(er) by others (or seek to convey this image). While the understanding of identity as accomplished in the interplay between internal and external definition has informed the presentation of the findings (as could be seen in Chapters 6 & 7), what we have not yet examined more closely are the ways in which they may seem to match or clash. One way of doing so is to further examine the overall identifications since these seem more amenable for further examination than specific (fleeting) situations.

Table 10.2: Overall internal and external definitions regarding old(er) age

<div>Overall external definition</div> <div>Overall internal definition</div>	Old(er)	Ambivalent	Not old(er)
	Jane Adriana Mustafa	Lars Sinikka Audrey Safet	María
Ambivalent	Terhi Fred Sayid	Mayuree Yongyuth	Natalia Agnieszka Alexandros
Not old(er)			Kjersti Jannis Rodrigo Luka Orhan Zeynep Amir Nima

To get a clearer idea of how various internal and external definitions seem to relate to one another for the older migrants included in the study, Table 10.2 presents the combined findings pertaining to overall identifications as previously displayed in Table 10.1. It must be borne in mind that these apparent overall identifications should not be seen as permanent, as the discussion of the negotiation of old(er) age (Chapter 7) should have made clear. As can be seen when looking at the grey areas in Table 10.2, overall internal and external definitions seem to match for many of the interviewees. While nearly all combinations are to be found, what is striking is that all of those who generally seem to define themselves as not old(er) also seem to think that they generally are regarded as such by others. In other words, internal and external definitions seem to match.

What do those who share the various combinations of self-definitions and perceived overall definitions by others seem to have in common? To begin with the largest grouping, namely those who seem to define themselves as not old(er) and also seem to think that others generally define them as such (see bottom right corner in Table 10.2), while many are in their fifties, some are in their mid-sixties or in their early seventies. To add to this, several of them are also retired. These findings seem to suggest that neither chronological age nor retirement status necessarily are deemed relevant by individuals themselves when it comes

to their identifications with old(er) age, or how they generally seem to think that others define them. With regards to other potentially relevant dimensions, most happen to be male, and with the exception of one, most seem to come from countries perceived as relatively more “distant”. Both of these aspects may however have more to do with the sample composition than with gender or perceived cultural distance per se.

What about the other combinations of overall self-definitions and perceived definitions by others? Let us continue with those who do not seem to think that others generally regard them as old(er) (in the column to the right in Table 10.2). Only one seems to generally think of herself as old(er) (at the age of 72, and retired) despite not seeming to generally think that others regard her as such. This apparent mismatch however does not seem to be problematic to her: rather, she seems to find joy in claiming that others do not think she looks her age (see Chapter 7). Several interviewees seem ambivalent as to whether or not they think of themselves as old(er), at the same time as they do not generally seem to think that others regard them as such. They do not appear to have anything in particular in common as they could be below or above retirement age, male or female, and in the middle range in terms of the perceived cultural distance of their countries of origin.

Turning now to those who seem ambivalent as to whether or not others seem to regard them as old(er) (in the middle column in Table 10.2), several do seem to think of themselves as old(er), while some seem ambivalent with regards to their self-definitions as well. Among the former group, most seem to be above the age of 65 and retired, and most happen to be from countries perceived as comparatively “closer”. With regards to those who seem ambivalent on both counts, the only thing they seem to have in common is their country of origin at the relatively farther end of the spectrum in terms of perceived cultural distance. Otherwise, they seem rather different when it comes to chronological age, gender and retirement status. Again, these mismatches between overall internal and external identifications do not seem problematic: seeing themselves as old(er) whilst not being regarded as such by others seems to be perceived as flattering by most interviewees, whilst perceiving to be treated as old(er) would seem to confirm (or validate) their internal definition.

The final type of overall perceived definition by others is the general perception that others seem to regard one as old(er) (in the column to the left in Table 10.2). Among those interviewees who seem to fall into this category, several are younger than (or equal to) 65 years of age, and most are still working, with only a couple having retired. This again suggests that chronological age and retirement status do not seem to play into whether or not interviewees seem to think that others generally regard them as old(er). While several seem to originate from countries perceived as culturally “closer”, some also seem to come from ones that are perceived as more “distant”.

Distinguishing among the different kinds of overall self-definitions to be found among those who generally seem to think they are regarded as old(er) by others, none generally seem to think of themselves as *not* old(er), although several seem ambivalent. The remainder seem to match their self-definitions as they generally seem to think of themselves as old(er) as well. Among those who both seem to think of themselves as old(er) and seem to think that others generally regard them as such, we can find both interviewees who are still working and retired ones, both from countries perceived as culturally “closer” and a more “distant” one, and both interviewees in their late fifties and ones who are in their mid- to late sixties, while none are in their seventies. Among those who seem ambivalent as to whether or not they self-define as old(er) but seem to think that others regard them as such, there are again both interviewees who are still working and retired ones, both from countries perceived as relatively “closer” and more “distant”, and interviewees around sixty, in their mid-sixties and late seventies. In other words, for all of these combinations of overall internal and external definitions, some characteristics seem to be shared while others are not, suggesting no particular patterns with regards to the various dimensions under scrutiny here.

Let us now look at the table from a different angle, namely taking overall self-definitions as a starting point (i.e. looking at rows rather than columns in Table 10.2). While those who seem to self-define as *not* old(er) coincide with those discussed at the outset (who also do not generally seem to think that others regard them as old(er)), we have not yet looked for patterns among those who generally seem to self-define as old(er) or seem ambivalent. One noticeable pattern is that among those who generally seem to self-define as old(er), most are above the age of 60, and some are still working. Among those who seem ambivalent, several are still working and approaching retirement age. In both cases, there are again both male and female interviewees who come from a range of different countries. In other words, it does not appear as though gender or perceived cultural distance seem to play into overall self-definitions as old(er) or being ambivalent with regards to old(er) age.

Finally, time in Sweden or age at migration do not seem to play into *any* of these combinations of self-definitions and perceived definitions by others when it comes to old(er) age. (Inter)marriage seems to play in only insofar as we can see that among those who seem ambivalent about their self-definition or how they are regarded by others, most happen to be married to Swedes. While some patterns pertaining to perceived cultural distance seem to emerge within specific combinations of overall internal and external identifications, there does not seem to be any clear pattern connecting perceived cultural distance to self-definitions (or external definitions) as old(er), ambivalent, or not old(er).

Having brought together the whens, whos and hows for the identity category of old(er) age, having looked at ways of speaking about older people

and examined overall identifications, what might we be able to say about the role of chronological age and retirement status? The reason for asking specifically about these dimensions is that they seem to be very ingrained in how old(er) age seems to be constructed in Western societies (see Chapter 2). They also form a part of the frame of reference used by interviewees (see Chapters 6 & 7) and generally tend to be taken for granted (see Chapter 3 regarding taken-for-grantedness and social constructionism). Do these dimensions seem to matter for whether or not the interviewees generally seem to identify as old(er), and for how old(er) age seems to be negotiated? Yes and no. Chronological age and retirement status seem to have little bearing on specifically when old(er) age may become meaningful or how it seems to be negotiated. While there were some patterns with regards to specific types of responses (as offered by interviewees above certain ages or within a certain age range), on the whole, all types of references generally could be found across the whole age spectrum of the older migrants included in this study. The findings suggest that while several of those who are comparatively younger and still working seem to present themselves as not old(er), the same claim can also be made by interviewees well past retirement age (see Chapter 7). These two markers also do not appear to necessarily have a bearing on whether or not interviewees generally seem to define themselves as old(er): among those who *do* seem to generally self-define as old(er) or seem ambivalent, there are both non-retirees and interviewees below the age of 65. Conversely, among those who do *not* seem to think they are regarded as old(er) by others, there are not only retirees but also those who are the oldest in the sample. Chronological age also seems to have little bearing on how interviewees speak about old(er) people. To add to this, interviewees of all ages could seem quite adamant that others do not regard them as old(er), but nonetheless offer examples of particular situations where this seems to be the case.

What all of these patterns seem to suggest is that the identity category of old(er) age seems to be negotiable regardless of the seemingly objective measures that chronological age and retirement present. In other words, even though old(er) age might be constructed around the markers of chronological age and retirement, from the perspective of the older migrants included in this study, old(er) age seems to be constructed in much less definite and more flexible terms. What about migrancy?

The identity category of migrancy: When, who and how?

The findings previously presented suggest that migrancy seems to become meaningful for identification primarily through the various markers surrounding the boundaries between the category of Swedes on the one hand and (im)migrants on the other: language, physical appearance, behaviour and names. Migrancy seems to become meaningful when these markers become apparent, which may lead to questions such as “where are you from?” and other odd

questions and comments. Some interviewees seem to find they are observed through a certain gaze or claim they find themselves being singled out. While migrancy mostly seems to be ascribed through external definitions, some interviewees propose that they feel different when having difficulty expressing themselves or when finding themselves in very Swedish situations. Two main patterns of negotiating migrancy have come to light, which can be regarded as two sides of the same coin: emphasising similarity to native Swedes on the one hand (with reference to e.g. lifestyle, citizenship and adherence to rules and regulations), and describing oneself as different from other (im)migrants on the other (by way of e.g. using one's ethnicity as a resource, claiming that one is different from other countrymen, or suggesting that one has no ambition of becoming Swedish). These are not mutually exclusive as interviewees can both emphasise similarity to native Swedes and distance themselves from other (im)migrants (which most of the interviewees seem to do). These two sides can also be understood in terms of claiming sameness (with native Swedes) on the one hand and distancing oneself from the category of (im)migrants on the other. In some cases, one may also speak of disidentification as some interviewees claim that they are defined as (im)migrants despite considering themselves to be "just like everyone else", subverting and transforming the category in the process. These different patterns seem to be in line with the idea that identities are situationally defined: interviewees could regard themselves as "just like everyone else" (i.e. the same) at some times but also as *different* at others. At the same time, several interviewees seem to perceive certain limits to the possibility of claiming a native identity, claiming it would be impossible to be regarded as a Swede (be it due to their appearance, the apparent deep-rootedness of their upbringing or that they could never fully adapt to the culture). Regardless of whether or not they seem to think that they may come to be regarded as Swedes, interviewees draw upon similarities (in e.g. lifestyle) to present themselves as somebody who isn't really that different from the native population, claiming sameness whilst distancing themselves from the category of (im)migrant and disidentifying with it in the process.

What migrancy might mean could however differ both between individuals and between different situations. As could be seen in the presentation of the findings (see Chapters 8 & 9), difference from the native population could be constructed not only around the aforementioned boundary markers, but also around different ideas of difference. Such difference could then be about ethnicity per se, about foreignness in general and about identification as *immigrant*. Identifying as different from the native Swedish population could then be a matter-of-fact type of acknowledgement that no, I am not Swedish, I wasn't born here. It could be a strong identification with one's ethnicity of origin, seeing oneself as for instance Greek regardless of how long one has been living in Sweden. It could be a matter of identifying as a foreigner, as being from

another place. And it could be a matter of identifying as a non-Swede, or indeed as an *immigrant*. Likewise, at the external side of the equation, it could be a matter of claiming one is defined as a member of another (specific) ethnic group or as an *immigrant* (in general). The common denominator then seems to lie in perceived *difference* from the native population resulting from migration, which is how the concept of migrancy has been understood in this dissertation. This is however not to say that the older migrants included in this study themselves necessarily regard themselves as different from the native population.

The types of situations in which migrancy appears to become meaningful can perhaps best be described as social encounters with strangers in everyday life. Indeed, any stranger regardless of ethnic or migratory background, even though they mostly appear to be members of the native population. Some of the interviewees further distinguish between other (im)migrants who also have been living in Sweden for a long time and more recent (im)migrants. The question of *who* older migrants in this study seem to negotiate with includes multiple answers. Firstly, they negotiate with themselves, both by way of making up their mind in the process of talking about migrancy, and through comparison to earlier/younger selves. They secondly negotiate with virtual others, such as people they have encountered in social situations or a generalised other representing what society in general (or native Swedes) are thought to think (both in terms of who may be considered a native, who would be regarded as an [im]migrant and what an [im]migrant would be expected to be like). Finally, they negotiate with me in the interview situation.

One of the most striking findings pertaining to migrancy is that in contrast to old(er) age, it appears as though migrancy to a larger extent seems to be perceived as being ascribed *by others* in social situations (i.e. externally defined). That is to say, external markers such as language skills, physical appearance and names, being asked where one is from and so on are external definitions at the first instance. These types of situations seem to be drawn upon more commonly than the ones pertaining to for instance behaviour, discomfort in particularly Swedish contexts or difficulty expressing oneself (which may be regarded as more internal). Interviewees could also convey a sense of pervasiveness with regards to migrancy that was unlike the fleeting manner in which old(er) age seemed to be understood by many. Nevertheless, it is in specific situations that the identity category of migrancy seems to become meaningful for identification for the older migrants interviewed. Whilst such situations often seem to involve other people in social situations, migrancy in some cases seems to be perceived as rather pervasive also internally (sometimes in response to external definitions).

Ways of speaking and overall identifications pertaining to migrancy

Let us now first take a look at how interviewees speak of themselves over the course of the interviews when it comes to identities pertaining to migrancy,

before turning to overall identifications. Table 10.3 presents the findings on how interviewees speak of themselves over the course of the interviews, using descriptions such as non-Swede, ethnic, foreigner, or immigrant, and also how others seem to refer to them (see Chapter 3 on the role of language in social constructionism). Overall identifications can also be found in this table.

As can be seen in Table 10.3, several of the interviewees refer to themselves as “non-Swedes” (in Swedish: *icke-svenske[ar]*), all refer to themselves in terms of their ethnic origins at some point (albeit some only do so implicitly), and some explicitly refer to themselves as foreigners (in Swedish: *utlänning[ar]*). To add to this, while this is not listed in the table, several also use pan-ethnic labels such as Nordic, European or Latin-American. In Wimmer’s (2013) terms, this could be described as a form of boundary *blurring* whereby other divisions are highlighted, such as a neighbourhood identity, civilisationalism or universalism (see Chapter 3). Identifying as Nordic and European can especially be regarded as such strategies since they (unlike Latin-American) include the category of Swede, from which the individuals in question otherwise may be excluded. All of these references or labels may be understood as pertaining to difference from the native population and thus to migrancy.

With regards to speaking of themselves as *immigrants*, there seems to be some variation in the sample. Several explicitly refer to themselves as immigrants, some explicitly state they do *not* see themselves as belonging to the category, and others seem to both identify with the category and also actively and explicitly distance themselves from it. Finally, some of the interviewees use the term immigrant in a manner that implies that they think it applies to them.¹³⁹ Examining all of these identifications in relation to perceived cultural distance, there seems to be a pattern where those from countries perceived as “closer” seem more likely to refer to themselves as “non-Swedes”, and those from countries perceived as more “distant” seem more likely to explicitly use the term *immigrant* with reference to themselves (as can be seen in Table 10.3). The difference between those two labels (or categories) lies in the (predominantly negative) connotations of the term immigrant (see Chapter 2), whereas the term non-Swede appears to be more neutral (despite the negation implied by its prefix). In other words, once more it appears as though perceived cultural distance plays into how interviewees seem to relate to the identity category of migrancy.

Examining what is found under the heading “Others regard me as...” in Table 10.3, there are not as many explicit references. This is not surprising however since larger parts of the interviews are devoted to interviewees talking about themselves and their own identifications rather than talking about how

¹³⁹ That is to say, as shown in an earlier cited excerpt (see Chapter 9) from the interview with Sinikka (female, 66, Finland; 46 years in Sweden), a statement such as “I can sort of hardly perceive myself as an immigrant. I can call them immigrants even though I am one myself”, can lead to the mark of “P” in Table 10.3.

Table 10.3: References to identities pertaining to migrancy and overall identifications with regards to migrancy

	Identities pertaining to migrancy						Overall identifications						
	Self as...				Others regard me as...			Self-definition			Definition by others		
	Non-Swede	Ethnic	Foreigner	Immigrant	Non-Swede	Ethnic	Immigrant	Different	Ambivalent	Not different	Different	Ambivalent	Not different
Kjersti (f, 66, Norway; 44 years in Sweden)		X				I		X				X	
Lars (m, 73, Norway; 49 years in Sweden)		X								X			X
Sinikka (f, 66, Finland; 46 years in Sweden)		X		I		I		X				X	
Terhi (f, 79, Finland; 61 years in Sweden)		I		I	I	I				X			X
Fred (m, 65, England; 44 years in Sweden)	X	X		not		I		X				X	
Jane (f, 66, England; 36 years in Sweden)	X	X			X			X				X	
Adriana (f, 68, USA; 41 years in Sweden)	X	X		Y+N	X		then	X			X		
Audrey (f, 71, USA; 28 years in Sweden)	X	X						X			X		
Agnieszka (f, 70, Poland; 40 years in Sweden)		X	X	I				X					X
Natalia (f, 69, Poland; 36 years in Sweden)	X	X		I	I			X			X		
Alexandros (m, 60, Greece; 42 years in Sweden)		X	X	not		I		X			X		
Jannis (m, 55, Greece; 40 years in Sweden)	X	X		X	X		X	X			X		
Maria (f, 72, Chile; 33 years in Sweden)		X		X				X			X		
Rodrigo (m, 65, Chile; 35 years in Sweden)		I		I			I	X			X		
Luka (m, 56, Bosnia; 19 years in Sweden)		X						X					X
Safet (m, 63, Bosnia; 18 years in Sweden)		X		X	I		I	X			X		
Mayuree (f, 63, Thailand; 38 years in Sweden)		X	X	not					X			X	
Yongyuth (m, 71, Thailand; 44 years in Sweden)	X	X	X	X	X			X			X		
Orhan (m, 73, Turkey; 46 years in Sweden)		X		X			X	X			X		
Zeynep (f, 70, Turkey; 47 years in Sweden)		X		I	X		I		X			X	
Mustafa (m, 58, Kurdistan; 27 years in Sweden)	X	X	X	X	I		X	X			X		
Sayid (m, 60, Kurdistan; 20 years in Sweden)		X		X			X	X			X		
Amir (m, 56, Iran; 32 years in Sweden)		X		Y+N			X	X			X		
Nima (m, 57, Iran; 24 years in Sweden)		X		X			X	X			X		

Note: X=explicit, I=implicit, then=not (necessarily) now, not=explicitly not, Y+N=yes and no

they think others describe them. Several refer to being described as “non-Swedes” by others, whereas only a few seem to imply that others speak of them in terms of their ethnic or national origins (as talking about being asked whether one is Norwegian would imply, see Chapter 8). None use the term foreigner in the interviews with reference to how others would seem to regard them. Several however refer to others regarding them as immigrants, which again predominantly seems to be the case among interviewees from countries that seem to be perceived as more culturally “distant”. One exception can be found insofar as one of the interviewees from a country perceived as relatively “closer” suggests that she was considered a *svartskalle*¹⁴⁰ when she was younger and (still) had darker hair. Again, perceived cultural distance seems to play a role. It is striking that when it comes to gender, it is predominantly among the male interviewees that one can find references to being regarded as an immigrant by others (which however once more may have to do with the sample composition, cf. Chapter 5).

Let us now turn to the question of how interviewees on the whole seem to define themselves, and how they on the whole seem to think that they are defined by others. Again, it is by looking at the interviews as a whole that one may catch a glimpse of such apparent overall identifications (see Chapter 5). Just as with old(er) age, interviews were read to determine whether or not interviewees on the whole appear to self-identify as different from the native population, and whether or not interviewees on the whole seem to think they are regarded as different by others. Interviewees may claim to be “just like everyone else” (i.e. native Swedes) at one point, while repeatedly returning to talking about feeling alienated, different and that they are not part of society, which would suggest an overall self-definition as *different* from the native population. Likewise, interviewees may perhaps claim that they are treated just like everyone else, but still mention that they tend to be asked about their background, which would suggest ambivalence. While not all cases are clear cut, these overall identifications then (again) reflect the dominant tendencies and what the interviewees themselves seem to want to convey. These overall identifications emerge over the course of the interviews and are to a certain extent also bound to this specific context. In other words, they emerge over the course of an interview where a (younger) researcher with a (German/Western) migratory background asks questions about not originally being Swedish, which interviewees may or may not have reflected upon prior to the interview situation.

As can be seen in Table 10.3, most of the older migrants included in this study seem to generally think of themselves as *different* from the native population. The only exceptions to this are one interviewee from Norway and one from Finland, who do not generally seem to think of themselves as different,

¹⁴⁰ As mentioned earlier, *svartskalle* is a derogatory term used to describe “immigrants” (cf. Chapter 2).

and one from Thailand as well as one from Turkey who both seem ambivalent about their overall self-definitions. As previously discussed, what it seems to mean not to identify with the native population can however vary greatly, ranging from matter-of-fact type of acknowledgements of not being Swedish due to not having been born in the country, to strong identifications with one's ethnicity of origin, identification as a foreigner, to identifying as an *immigrant*. With regards to perceived overall definitions by others, several interviewees seem to think that others generally regard them as different from the native population. Exceptions are on the one hand those who do not seem to think they generally are regarded as different by others, and those who seem ambivalent. With regards to patterns pertaining to perceived cultural distance, it is striking that none of the interviewees from the three countries perceived as culturally "closest" (namely Norway, Finland and England) seem to think they generally are regarded as different, but rather mostly seem ambivalent with regards to this question. Conversely, it appears to be less common that individuals from countries perceived as more culturally "distant" do *not* seem to think they are regarded as different, although exceptions are to be found. In other words, perceived cultural distance seems to play into how interviewees seem to think that others generally define them.

Continuing (once more) on the theme of how internal and external definitions seem to relate to one another, what we have not yet addressed explicitly is how they may seem to clash or match for the identity category of migrancy, and what those who identify in various ways may share in common (or not). Table 10.4 (see next page) presents the combined findings pertaining to overall identifications as previously displayed in Table 10.3. What is striking when looking at these findings is the rather great concentration of interviewees in the top left corner of Table 10.4, namely of those who both generally seem to think of themselves as different from the native population and who at the same time seem to think that others generally regard them as different. What this sense of difference means however may differ between different individuals. Overall internal and external definitions also generally seem to match for most interviewees, as the grey shades indicate.

What do the interviewees who share various combinations of overall internal and external definitions seem to have in common, or not have in common? Let us start with the largest grouping, namely those who generally seem to self-define as different and who also seem to think that others generally define them as such (see top left corner in Table 10.4). First of all, it is striking that none of the interviewees from the three countries that seem to be perceived as the culturally "closest" are included here (namely from Norway, Finland or England). This finding would seem to suggest that identification as different may not be quite as pertinent for interviewees who may be perceived as more

Table 10.4: Overall internal and external definitions regarding migrancy

<div>Overall external definition</div> <div>Overall internal definition</div>	Different (from native population)		Ambivalent	Not different (from native population)
Different (from native population)	Adriana Audrey Natalia Alexandros Jannis María Rodrigo	Safet Yongyuth Orhan Mustafa Sayid Amir Nima	Kjersti Sinikka Fred Jane	Agnieszka Luka
Ambivalent			Mayuree Zeynep	
Not different (from native population)				Lars Terhi

culturally similar. Secondly, most are male, however with several exceptions. Thirdly, while interviewees of any ages seem to be included here, most of them were at least thirty years old when they migrated to Sweden (with two exceptions). Other than that, both those who have been living in the country for a very long time and for a shorter time are included here, and all could be married to or in (former) relationships with Swedes, others of the same origins, or a person from a third country.

What about the other combinations? What is striking about those who seem to both self-define as *not* different and think they are regarded as such by others (see bottom right corner in Table 10.4) is that both are from the two “closest” countries (Norway and Finland), are among the oldest in the sample (at 73 and 79 years old, respectively), have been living in Sweden for the longest time (49 and 61 years, respectively), and were both below the age of twenty-five when they migrated to Sweden. Whilst one is married to a Swede, the other is widowed from her late Norwegian husband. These similarities seem to mirror the characteristics of those in the diametrically opposed corner, namely by way of having lived in Sweden for a very long time, being very young when migrating and coming from countries perceived as relatively “closer”.

As for the remaining interviewees who do not seem to think that others regard them as different (see top right corner in Table 10.4) but who seem to self-define as such, they do not appear to share much in common at all. One is married to a Swede, the other one to a member of the same ethnic group. One has been living in the country for a very long time, the other one for nearly the shortest time in the sample. One was 30 at the time of migration, the other one 37. One is relatively older, the other one relatively younger. Finally, one is female, one male. As was the case with old(er) age, the mismatch between overall internal and external definitions does not appear to be troublesome.

When it comes to those who seem ambivalent with regards to how others generally define them (see middle column in Table 10.4), regardless of whether they seem to think of themselves as different or seem ambivalent about that as well, they seem to have several things in common. All of these interviewees happen to be married to (or in relationships with) Swedes, all but one happen to be female, all have been living in Sweden for at least 35 years (but mostly beyond forty years), and all but one were below the age of 25 when they migrated. Several then also have been living in Sweden for longer than they did in their countries of origin. Distinguishing further between those who seem ambivalent as to how they seem to be regarded by others, what is striking is that those who generally seem to self-define as different all come from countries perceived as relatively “closer” (namely Norway, Finland and England), whereas those who seem ambivalent come from countries perceived as relatively more “distant” (namely Thailand and Turkey).

Examining the table from a different angle, namely by taking interviewees’ overall self-definitions as a starting point (looking at rows rather than columns in Table 10.4), we can see that most interviewees seem to generally self-define as different from the native population. The only exceptions (as mentioned earlier) are those few who either seem ambivalent or do not generally seem to think of themselves as different. Needless to say, among those who generally seem to self-define as different, we can find interviewees from the whole spectrum of countries from culturally “close” to more “distant”, both male and female interviewees, of any ages, both those interviewees who have been living in Sweden for less than twenty years and those who have been living in the country for forty years or more (and all lengths of time in between), ranging from those who were in their teens when migrating to those who were in their forties, and also both interviewees who were married to Swedes and those who were married to others of the same origins, or someone from a third country. In other words, it seems as though interviewees may generally self-define as different from the native population regardless of age, gender, time since migration, age at migration, and the perceived cultural distance of their country of origin.

Considering these overall identifications against the backdrop of the findings presented in Chapters 8 and 9, it is quite interesting to see that most

interviewees seem to generally think of themselves as different despite emphasising similarity to the native population in the process of negotiation. In the more shifting dynamics of negotiation, much more variation comes to light than apparent overall identifications seem to be able to convey. Just as with survey questions, overall identifications make identities appear stable and static where they in practice may be dynamic. It seems as though interviewees may generally seem to think of themselves in one way, but still (temporarily) seem to identify to the contrary at other times. Not least by way of considering both internal and external definitions such shifting and dynamic identifications could come to light.

Having brought together the whens, whos and hows, ways of speaking as well as overall identifications with regards to migrancy, does perceived cultural distance seem to play a role? This question is of interest not least against the backdrop of how migrancy and Swedishness seem to be constructed (see Chapter 2). On the whole, we could see that the identity category of migrancy seems to be meaningful for the older migrants included in this study regardless of how culturally “close” or “distant” their country of origin seems to be perceived. While the overall identifications to some extent seem to suggest that those from the countries perceived as the very “closest” fare differently when it comes to how they seem to think they are regarded by others, the findings presented in the previous chapters suggest that migrancy nevertheless seems to be rather pervasive also for migrants from these countries. To add to this, there appear to be patterns pertaining to perceived cultural distance for migrancy when we examine more specific questions within the findings discussed earlier, especially with regards to how migrancy seems to become meaningful. That is to say, we could see that interviewees from countries perceived as culturally “closer” seem more likely to, for instance, be asked specifically whether they are from their country of origin (rather than more generally where they are from), claim that their country is generally seen in a positive light, argue that behaviour influences how they are regarded by others, and claim they may pass as a native and *not* look (that) different. In contrast, interviewees from countries perceived as more culturally “distant” seem to be more likely to, for instance, argue that they adhere to all the rules and regulations when emphasising similarity, and refer to their physical appearance. Physical appearance in turn is associated with references to “the gaze”, being singled out, as well as perceived limits to claiming a native identity (see Chapters 8 & 9). Differences could to some extent also be seen in the use of labels such as “non-Swede” or “immigrant”. In other words, while all older migrants interviewed share experiences of migrancy, there seems to be some variation as to how migrancy seems to be understood and conceptualised, and what resources interviewees seem to draw upon in the process of negotiating migrancy.

Old(er) age and migrancy: Overall identifications combined

Having discussed the whens, whos and hows for old(er) age and migrancy separately, including the overall identifications and the question of how overall internal and external definitions seem to come together, it is now at last time to examine what happens when we combine the two identity categories. How do the older migrants included in this study seem to generally think of themselves, and how do they seem to think that others generally define them, when we look at old(er) age and migrancy *together*? What seems to characterise those who share similar overall identifications? Table 10.5 (see next page) brings together all the potential combinations of overall self-definitions and perceived definitions by others concerning both old(er) age and migrancy.

The column on the left hand's side displays the interviewees' overall identifications pertaining to how they seem to generally define *themselves* when it comes to old(er) age and migrancy together, while the top row displays their perceived overall definitions *by others*. While the interviewees' names seem to be scattered across the table at first sight, upon looking more closely, a pattern emerges. This is highlighted with grey. Most interviewees seem to fall into three categories both in terms of self-definitions and perceived definitions by others. With regards to self-definitions, the three main combinations are: firstly, old(er) and different from the native population; secondly, ambivalent with regards to old(er) age but different from the native population; and thirdly, not old(er) but different from the native population. In a sense, this is not surprising since it already has become apparent that most interviewees seem to think of themselves as different from the native population, at the same time as there seems to be variation with regards to old(er) age. Turning to the patterns pertaining to perceived overall definitions by others, while not quite as striking (insofar as fewer interviewees are included in these categories), again the following three combinations emerge: firstly, regarded as old(er) and as different from the native population; secondly, ambivalence with regards to whether or not they seem to be regarded as old(er) combined with being regarded as different from the native population; and thirdly, not regarded as old(er) combined with being regarded as different from the native population. Again, since most interviewees generally seem to self-define as different but also seem to think they generally are regarded as different from the native population by others, this is not very surprising.

What do those who share some of these overall identifications seem to have in common? There is only one cluster of interviewees that shares all four potential combinations of internal and external definitions, namely who generally do not seem to identify as old(er) but as different, and who also seem to think that others generally regard them not as old(er) but as different. These interviewees have in common that they all are male and come from countries perceived as comparatively more culturally "distant". Most are in their mid-to late fifties (with the exception of a 65-year-old and a 73-year-old), all but one are

Table 10.5: Overall identifications pertaining to both old(er) age and migrancy

Overall external definitions Overall internal definitions	Old(er) + different	Old(er) + ambivalent re:* difference	Old(er) + not different	Ambivalent re: old(er) age + different	Ambivalent re: both	Ambivalent re: old(er) age + not different	Not old(er) + different	Not old(er) + ambivalent re: difference	Not old(er) + not different
Old(er) + different	Adriana Mustafa	Jane		Audrey Safet	Sinikka		María		
Old(er) + ambivalent re: difference									
Old(er) + not different						Lars			
Ambivalent re: old(er) age + different	Sayid			Yongyuth			Natalia Alexandros	Fred	Agnieszka
Ambivalent re: both					Mayuree				
Ambivalent re: old(er) age + not different			Terhi						
Not old(er) + different							Jannis Rodrigo Orhan Amir Nima	Kjersti	Luka
Not old(er) + ambivalent re: difference								Zeynep	
Not old(er) + not different									

Note: *re: stands for regarding/with regards to

still working, and most have been living in Sweden for at least 30 years. As can be seen in Table 10.5, there are only three more combinations where more than one interviewee falls into the same category with regards to all combinations of overall internal and external definitions. The interviewees that seem to share each of these combinations however do not seem to have much in common.

Considering that most interviewees seem to have individual combinations of overall internal and external identifications pertaining to old(er) age and migrancy, what seems most fruitful to explore hereafter are the potential similarities and differences found among those who share overall self-definitions. One of the main reasons for this is quite simply that nearly all interviewees fall into the three aforementioned combinations of overall self-definitions (which does not seem to be the case in the same way when departing from perceived definitions by others). Firstly, then, a number of interviewees seem to generally think of themselves as both old(er) and different (see top row in Table 10.5 marked with grey). They are mostly women (with two exceptions), several of whom come from countries perceived as comparatively “closer” (with some exceptions), and mostly in their sixties and early seventies (except for a 58-year-old). There is variation in retirement status, time in Sweden, age at migration and (inter)marriage. Secondly, some seem to generally be ambivalent with regards to whether or not they think of themselves as old(er), at the same time as they generally seem to self-define as different (see grey row around the middle of Table 10.5). They are mostly men (with two exceptions), their countries of origin are mostly in the middle range to more “distant” in terms of perceived cultural distance (with one exception), are aged between 60 and 71, and have mostly been living in Sweden for at least 35 years. Retirement status and age at migration vary, but when it comes to (inter)marriage, most are married to Swedes. Thirdly, we have those who seem to generally self-define as not old(er) but as different (see grey row near the bottom of Table 10.5). They are mostly men from countries perceived as more culturally “distant” (with one exception), several are below the age of 60 or aged around 65 (with the exception of a 73-year-old), and most are still working. Time in Sweden, age at migration and (inter)marriage vary. For all of these overall self-definitions, the dimensions of gender and cultural distance however once more may more than anything else have to do with the way in which the sample is composed (as there are more women from countries perceived as culturally “closer” and more men from countries perceived as culturally more “distant” in the sample, see Chapter 5).

Taken together, for all of these various combinations, age at migration does not seem to play any particular role, with the relation between gender vis-à-vis perceived cultural distance being left for future research to explore (considering the way the present sample has been composed, see Chapter 5). Several of the other dimensions explored here, namely retirement status, time in Sweden and (inter)marriage, seem to emerge in relation to some of the individual

combinations of overall identifications, but do not seem to suggest any general patterns. In other words, regardless of how old(er) age and migrancy seem to be constructed (see Chapter 2), dimensions such as chronological age, retirement status, perceived cultural distance, time since migration, age at migration or (inter)marriage do not seem to play into how individuals themselves seem to generally define themselves and generally seem to think they are defined by others when the identity categories of old(er) age and migrancy are brought together.

Looking back at Table 10.5, it is striking that there are so many combinations of overall internal and external definitions with regards to old(er) age and migrancy that the interviewees do *not* seem to fall into, or only very few of them do. Most notably, only two generally seem to think of themselves as old(er) and different from the native population and also generally seem to think that others regard them as such. At the opposite end, none of the interviewees seem to generally think of themselves as not old(er) and not different combined with a matching external definition. The three types of categories that most interviewees seem to fall into however not surprisingly all include overall self-definitions as different from the native population, since most interviewees generally seem to think of themselves in such terms (as the findings presented in the previous section on migrancy seem to suggest). In addition, the three may be divided in terms of old(er), ambivalent about old(er) age and not old(er), reflecting the variation that could be found with regards to old(er) age. Taken together, there is great variation in how the older migrants included in this study seem to generally define themselves and seem to think that others define them when it comes to the identity categories of old(er) age and migrancy together. Few seem to generally think of themselves as both old(er) and different from the native population, and even fewer seem to think that others would regard them as such.

Returning to the construction of the category of “elderly immigrants” in Sweden as discussed in Chapter 2, one could consider this very category to be an identity category in itself that combines old(er) age and migrancy. Against this backdrop, the findings presented in this chapter seem to suggest that such an identity category that includes both old(er) age and migrancy does not seem to be regarded as generally meaningful by most of the older migrants included in this study.

CHAPTER 11: BREAKING NEW PATHS?

Let me start this final chapter by first of all revisiting the dissertation's aims and research questions as outlined in the introductory chapter (Chapter 1). Given that old(er) age and migrancy have not been studied in combination, the first overall aim of this dissertation has been to contribute to identity research by way of empirically examining the identity categories of old(er) age and migrancy together. The study has attempted to do so by answering the following two research questions:

- When (in what situations) and in relation to whom do old(er) age and migrancy (respectively) seem to become meaningful for identification?
- How do the identity categories of old(er) age and migrancy seem to be negotiated?

A second aim has been to explore what the use of a social constructionist lens may be able to contribute to our understanding of identity and the negotiation of identity categories.

The empirical chapters answered the research questions pertaining to the whens, whos and hows of old(er) age and migrancy separately. These questions were brought together in Chapter 10 along with a further consideration of questions that could not be addressed in the other chapters. Under the heading *Identity, old(er) age and migrancy*, I shall attempt to spell out the ways in which the first overall aim has been fulfilled by way of examining the empirical contribution that this dissertation seems to make by studying old(er) age and migrancy together. This will be done by discussing the findings at a greater level of abstraction on the one hand and by considering the findings against the backdrop of previous research on the other. Thereafter, I shall turn to the dissertation's second aim, namely explore what the social constructionist lens seems to have contributed to our understanding of identity and the negotiation of identity categories, to be found under the heading *A social constructionist lens*. Potential *Pathways for future research* will be considered next, including both questions that the present work has raised and an exploration of pathways that the current work seems to have opened up. Last but not least, I shall round off this chapter and the dissertation with some final reflections on *Identity?... The debate continues*.

Identity, old(er) age and migrancy

One of the points of departure of this dissertation has been that the identity categories of old(er) age and migrancy have not been studied together in identity research. This gap stems from an inadvertent mutual neglect of identity research where research on identity in old(er) age has tended to focus on non-migrants and research on identity in relation to ethnicity and migration has tended to focus on younger people (see Chapter 1). It seems as though a common denominator

in the form of studying identity among older migrants only has emerged more recently. Within this literature, as the review in Chapter 4 shows, the identity categories of old(er) age and migrancy have nevertheless not formed the focus on inquiry. Before revisiting this literature, what do the findings seem to suggest with regards to identity, old(er) age and migrancy?

In a nutshell, viewed through a social constructionist lens, the identity categories of old(er) age and migrancy seem to emerge as meaningful in some situations rather than others. Instead of necessarily permanently forming a part of the self-definitions of the older migrants interviewed, old(er) age and migrancy dynamically seem to become meaningful for identification in some situations, but also seem to be rejected and transformed in the process of negotiation. Old(er) age seems to become meaningful more fleetingly and more through (internal) self-definition, whereas migrancy seems to be understood as more pervasive and more a matter of external definition. Apparently contradictory identifications have also come to light: the interviewees could seem to think of themselves as old(er) at some times but as not old(er) at others, or as different from the native population at some times but as just the same as everyone else at others. To add to this, despite apparent overall definitions as (not) old(er) or (not) different, seemingly contradictory identifications could become meaningful at times. That is to say, interviewees may generally seem to think of themselves as not old(er), but still feel old(er) at some times. Likewise, they may generally think of themselves as different from the native population, but still feel just the same as everyone else at other times. Most importantly, the dimension of external definition seems to play an important part insofar as interviewees attempt to look at themselves through the eyes of others over the course of the interviews. Some of the interviewees express that they feel not old(er) internally but that others may regard them as old(er) nonetheless, or that they feel “Swedish at heart” but that others always will regard them as *immigrants*. Social constructions of old(er) age and migrancy at a societal level (as discussed in Chapter 2) seem to come together with individual negotiations, drawing attention to the shifting ways in which socially constructed identity categories may be negotiated. At the same time, there seem to be limits to the identities that could be claimed insofar as some claims seem to be perceived as impossible to be confirmed by others. In the intriguing interplay between internal and external definitions, the dynamics of situational accomplishments become apparent. Depending on how old(er) age and migrancy seem to be constructed, some individuals more than others seem to repeatedly be subject to external definitions that may not match how they otherwise think about themselves. However, such external definitions can become part of their own self-definitions in various ways. Processes of disidentification have also come to light as some of the older migrants interviewed could claim that they were old(er) but different, or suggest that they were the same as everyone else despite the *immigrant* label. In other

words, rather than being stable and innate to the individual, the identity categories of old(er) age and migrancy from the viewpoint of the individual seem to be dynamic, shifting and situated in a social context.

Having said all that, let us attempt to consider the findings against the backdrop of previous studies on identity and older migrants. Let us start by revisiting the body of literature discussed in Chapter 4. As we could see over the course of the empirical chapters, some of the sentiments expressed by the older migrants in other studies seem to be reflected in the current work as well. Such sentiments pertain to questions that do not necessarily always seem to directly concern questions of identity per se. They thus include sentiments such as expressing that one's home no longer exists (cf. George & Fitzgerald 2012), that one may be settled but not quite belong (cf. Leavey et al. 2004), that one argues for one's right to be in the second home country (cf. Bolzman et al. 2006) or that one perhaps still feels one is from another culture after many years (cf. Lee 1996). In terms of identity categories however, what about *old(er) age* in this body of research? As suggested previously (see Chapter 4), most studies seem to take migrants' older ages as a given or include them by virtue of time lived (or life experience), thus not addressing any questions regarding the identity category of old(er) age per se. Those works that seem to consider old(er) age seem to do so in terms of ethnic differences (see e.g. Gardner 2002; Maynard et al. 2008). This dissertation differs from the previous studies insofar as the identity category of old(er) age is examined specifically in a manner that does not seem to have been attempted within this literature before.

What about *migrancy* in previous studies of identity and older migrants? As the review of this literature suggests, while none of the works set out to examine migrancy, several studies include findings that may be said to reflect experiences of migrancy (see Chapter 4). For instance, some studies suggest that the older migrants may continue to be seen as foreigners regardless of how long they have lived in the country (see e.g. George & Fitzgerald 2012), may have experienced (everyday) discrimination especially immediately after migration (see e.g. Bartholomew 2012)¹⁴¹ or seem to be excluded from being defined as members of the native population regardless of for instance citizenship or how long they have been living in the country (see e.g. George & Fitzgerald 2012; Kawakami 2012; Kim 2001; Lee 1996). To add to this, some studies have also drawn attention to the fluidity of identities: for instance, Gardner (2002) suggests that the older Bengali men in her study "in some situations [they] may fix their identities as 'Bangladeshi' or 'Muslim', appearing to adhere to a pre-given set of traditions and essentialized cultural norms, while in others they identify themselves as something more hybrid or complex" (p. 11). Several studies also

¹⁴¹ Some of the studies address discrimination and discuss "migrant identities" primarily in connection to the period immediately after migration: for instance, Bartholomew (2012) and Maynard and colleagues (2008).

suggest that older migrants may have multiple identifications, namely both with their “new” country and their country (or ethnicity) of origin (see e.g. Kawakami 2012 or Lai 2012). Maynard and colleagues (2008) also suggest that the women in their study (of various ethnic origins) may be defined as “immigrant”, “Muslim” or “Irish”, labels described as not necessarily matching how they would define themselves. All of these findings seem to resonate well with the findings presented here. The present study then seems to add to such works by way of specifically focusing on migrancy and shedding light not only onto the multiplicity of identifications but also the dynamic fluidity of different self-definitions and definitions by others. While most previous studies of identity and older migrants seem to focus upon self-identity, ethnicity or perhaps the migratory life course, migrancy has not explicitly been examined.

As compared to previous works on identity and older migrants, the present study differs not only by focusing on migrancy rather than ethnicity (or self-identity), but also by using a sample of migrants of multiple origins and incorporating the notion of perceived cultural distance in both the sampling strategy and in the analysis. As was stated in Chapter 4, the large majority of works on identity and older migrants have studied older migrants of singular origins, with an over-representation of studies including three particular ethnic groups (namely Jews from the former Soviet Union, Chinese and Koreans). Those that include multiple groups tend to make comparisons to find cultural and ethnic differences rather than exploring shared experiences of migrancy. Only one study seems to have included migrants from twelve different countries in a similar manner (namely George & Fitzgerald 2012). In other words, this dissertation also differs from others by way of including migrants from a range of different origins.

By way of not only studying interviewees from just one particular country of origin, this study has been able to place the spotlight on shared experiences of migrancy. While the intention clearly has not been to assume that all have something in common in terms of sharing an “immigrant culture” (see Chapter 5), what has been suggested is that the ways in which the interviewees may define themselves and seem to be categorised as different from the native population may be shared, albeit in various ways. It is then in the making of difference rather than the cultural contents that the main interest lies. The added dimension of perceived cultural distance has furthermore allowed us to examine how perceived cultural similarity and difference may play into negotiations of migrancy (and, indeed, old[er] age). That is to say, we could explore both how interviewees seem to think of themselves as similar or different from the native population and how they seem to think that others regard them in terms of similarity and difference. The sampling strategy employed here has in other words allowed us to catch a glimpse of how interviewees of different ethnic backgrounds seem to define themselves and seem to think they are defined by

others with regards to the identity categories of old(er) age and migrancy, both in specific situations and more generally. The findings seem to suggest that interviewees could both feel different internally and seem to think that they are externally defined as different regardless of how culturally “close” or “distant” their countries of origin may be perceived to be. However, while some seem to be able to pass as natives in everyday life, others seem to think they are regarded as different more frequently and pervasively.

What about previous research referred to in this dissertation that has *not* specifically focused on older migrants? In Chapter 2, I suggested that the various constructions of old(er) age and old(er) age identities as well as migrancy vis-à-vis Swedishness could aid in rendering the empirical findings more intelligible. I also pointed out that such writings do not seem to have been based on older migrants, raising the question of whether older migrants seem to construct old(er) age and migrancy in a similar manner. Insofar as such constructions indeed could be reflected in the interviews, this turned out to be the case. In relation to the question of *when* old(er) age and migrancy seem to become meaningful, we could see that the overall constructions of these identity categories as presented in Chapter 2 to a large extent seem to be reflected in the ways in which the older migrants in this study seem to relate to these categories. Such constructions could then come to light both in how the older migrants in this study seem to conceptualise when they might feel old(er) or what might make them feel that way (namely e.g. the physical body or the passage of time) and when their non-Swedish backgrounds might become meaningful (namely e.g. through various boundary markers), be it internally or externally. At a greater level of detail, we could also see that some of the specific notions expressed by interviewees could be found in other studies (such as feeling old only at times of illness, or continuing to be seen as foreign after a long time). Similarly, in the chapters on the negotiation of old(er) age and migrancy, we could see that various constructions of old(er) age and migrancy (as well as Swedishness) seem to loom large both in how interviewees describe other people, how they seem to regard themselves vis-à-vis those others, and in what comes to light through the virtual others they seem to be negotiating with. What all of this means is that the older migrants included in this study do seem to draw upon the same frame of reference that previous research suggests that older people in general and Swedes in general would draw upon. This is not surprising when considering that they have been living in Sweden for such a long time. It is interesting however when considering that difference often seems to be presumed, as the construction of the category of “elderly immigrants” seems to suggest (see Chapter 2).

What more may be said when considering the findings against the backdrop of the construction of “elderly immigrants” in Sweden (see Chapter 2)? As we could see in Chapter 10, there is great variation in how the interviewees generally seem to define themselves and seem to think they generally are defined by others

when we bring together both old(er) age and migrancy. Few seem to generally think of themselves as both old(er) and different from the native population, and even fewer seem to think that others would regard them as such. In other words, the category of “elderly immigrants” that Swedish scholars claim to be assumed to exist among policy makers and practitioners does not resonate well with the interviewed older migrants. To add to this, as we could see in the empirical chapters on old(er) age and migrancy, both of these identity categories seem rather fluid and shifting rather than necessarily permanently meaningful. In other words, the findings suggest that an identity category pertaining to both old(er) age and migrancy does not seem to be regarded as generally meaningful by most of the older migrants included in this study.

To add to this, in relation to the construction of “elderly immigrants” and previous research on older migrants in Sweden as discussed in Chapter 2, a few more things are worth noting. Discussions of future care needs of the elderly foreign-born population seem to presume difference and otherness. As Torres (2016) suggests, the very discussions themselves seem to be explainable through the fascination with difference. Many older migrants will however have lived a significant part of their lives in their new home country (as the demographic data suggests, see Chapter 2). Several of the interviewees seem to distance themselves from other (im)migrants and the idea of difference, instead claiming sameness, suggesting they are just like everyone else, and thereby transform the category of (im)migrant in the process. In light of these findings, the presumption of difference seems to be overstated. While the small sample included in this study does not allow for broad generalisations, we can speculate about the possibility that just like the older migrants who were included in this study, there may be others who also in many ways may consider themselves to be “just like everyone else” most of the time, but might not always be regarded as such by others. In other words, I hope that the findings of the present dissertation take a step towards the deconstruction of problem-oriented images of “elderly immigrants” as a homogeneous group that have been rampant in Sweden for decades. It has also been suggested (see Bradby & Torres 2016) that older migrants in Sweden as presumptive recipients of care with special needs have been studied from the perspective of what Sweden can do for them, rather than finding out who they are. A step (if only a small one) then also seems to have been taken through the present work, studying older migrants in their own right and as theoretically profuse sources of information with regards to the identity categories of old(er) age and migrancy, and not for the purpose of solving a social problem.

Finally, in terms of studying old(er) age and migrancy *together*, another benefit lies in the possibility of cross-fertilisation between the field of ageing and later life on the one hand and migration and ethnic studies on the other. Considering the relations between similarity and difference and the dimensions of internal and external definitions, some of the older migrants in this study seem

to define themselves as similar internally, but seem to be defined as different externally. Conversely, some seem to define themselves as different internally, but seem to be defined as similar (or indeed the same) externally. Considering not just the overall identifications (as discussed in Chapter 10), we can see that for some interviewees more than for others, how they seem to define themselves does not seem to be matched by how they seem to think others regard them. For instance, some seem to express strong feelings of alienation when it comes to living in Sweden as non-Swedes, whilst claiming that they generally pass as Swedes. Thus, one could say that while they may externally be defined as the same (or similar), their internal definitions seem to be characterised by difference. The opposite seems to be the case for others who claim they (internally) think of themselves as having contributed to society like everyone else, feeling “Swedish at heart” or being “just like any other Swede”. At the same time, they strongly seem to suggest that they are aware that others regard them as immigrants or that they never will be accepted as Swedes, in other words, seem to be defined as different.

What has been described as the mask of ageing by others (see e.g. Hepworth 2004) may also be transferred to migrancy. While the *mask of ageing* suggests that old(er) people may feel young(er) on the inside and be trapped in an old(er) and steadily ageing body, the *mask of migrancy* would suggest that (im)migrants may feel like native-borns on the inside but trapped in a body that seems to be potentially regarded as (permanently) different. For both the mask of ageing and the mask of migrancy, there are multiple combinations of how one may feel on the inside as compared to how one may be regarded from the outside. Departing from an understanding of identities as situationally defined, there may also be different combinations in different situations. The internal and external may then be in a dynamic relationship, both in terms of how one feels on the inside, how one presents oneself, and how others seem to define one as a consequence of one’s internal definitions. These may all shift in the process of negotiation.

A social constructionist lens

A partial aim of this dissertation has been to explore what the use of a social constructionist lens may contribute to our understanding of identity and the negotiation of identity categories. I would argue that the overall social constructionist theoretical frame has been illuminating in a number of ways. Let me start this discussion by revisiting essentialism and circumstantialism to examine the findings against alternative understandings, as this will shed further light onto exactly wherein the contributions of a social constructionist lens seem to lie.

As was suggested in the presentation of the three perspectives (namely essentialism, circumstantialism and social constructionism) in Chapter 3, social constructionism builds upon the other two by way of combining some of the

(best) features of both. As Cornell and Hartmann (2007) propose, a social constructionist understanding ideally takes into account that actors themselves very well may perceive their identities in essentialist terms, or may be perceived in such terms by others (see Chapter 3 for a full discussion of this; also cf. Chapter 5). Indeed, essentialist notions emerge in the findings pertaining to how interviewees seem to think of themselves (as old[er] or different or not), how they seem to think of others (as old[er] or different or not), and sometimes also how they seem to think that others regard them. Essentialist notions pertaining to the identity category of old(er) age seem very much present in the interviewees' conceptualisations of old(er) age and who may be considered an old(er) person. For instance, claiming that one will identify as old(er) in the future, once one has turned 65 and has retired (as several interviewees do, see Chapter 7), very much suggests that old(er) age is regarded as something that one *is*, as the stable and innate property of individuals who fit certain criteria. The same can be said of the description of *others* as old(er), who are described as passive, frail and dependent, portrayed as old(er) in a more permanent sense (rather than proposing that they would only see themselves as old[er], or be regarded as such, in particular situations). Both of these understandings of old(er) age as suggested by the allusions made by interviewees seem rather essentialist.

We can also find examples for migrancy. For instance, the claim that it is impossible to come to be regarded as Swedish in many ways has to do with essentialist notions of ethnicity. Firstly, Swedishness seems to be conceptualised in essentialist terms as exclusively reserved for native-borns who fulfil certain criteria, including a certain physical appearance (which is in line with how it seems to be constructed also generally, see Chapter 2). Secondly, interviewees' descriptions of their own ethnicities of origin as deeply rooted and very important also appear essentialist. This has become apparent not least in some of the interview excerpts presented in Chapter 9. Thirdly, the claims made by some of the interviewees that others regard them as immigrants could similarly be conceptualised in essentialist terms, as interviewees could claim that others would (permanently) regard them as such regardless of how they thought of themselves or how they led their lives. Not being able to change one's appearance was also mentioned in relation to this. Finally, those "other" (im)migrants from whom some interviewees sought to distance themselves likewise seem to be constructed in essentialist terms insofar as *they* seem to be (unquestionably) regarded as *being* a certain way.

From a circumstantialist perspective, the idea that old(er) age may become an asset (or indeed a disadvantage) in the workplace may be regarded as a case where old(er) age becomes a resource that one *has*, that is meaningful in particular situations where it serves a particular purpose (or is of particular utility). Old(er) age may then also be regarded as an advantage in public transportation as one may have the privilege of being offered a seat when several others will have to

stand (see Chapter 6). If one then presumes that oldness has no particular meaning independent of such contexts, such an understanding is clearly circumstantialist. Some of the findings pertaining to migrancy can also be understood through a circumstantialist lens, as for instance the example of one of the interviewees “using” his ethnicity to get out of a dangerous situation would be an example of (see Chapter 9). Similarly, some of the interviewees seem to suggest that their migratory backgrounds become a resource at the workplace (e.g. due to additional language skills or when dealing with more recent migrants, see Chapter 9).

Thus, while some of the empirical findings to some extent can be examined through essentialist and circumstantialist lenses, the social constructionist approach taken here incorporates elements of both and seems to help us see things that would remain invisible if taking only one of the perspectives as a starting point. That is to say, the social constructionist approach seems to take the best of these two perspectives: it acknowledges that actors may have essentialist views, and it uses the notion of situational definition without thereby rendering identity categories purely utility driven and devoid of meaning. By way of not presuming that the older migrants interviewed here essentially *are* old(er) or (im)migrants, this study has been able to shed light onto the processes whereby the identity categories of old(er) age and migrancy are *done*, seem to become meaningful (or not), and seem to be negotiated in the dialectic between how interviewees seem to define themselves and how they seem to think that others define them. It is for this reason that I argue that neither the context-boundedness (to specific situations and other persons) nor the dynamics of the negotiation of the identity categories through the internal-external dialectic could have come to light if it had not been for the social constructionist approach.

As was suggested in Chapter 3, politics, labour markets, residential space, social institutions, culture, and daily experience may be described as construction sites (Cornell & Hartmann 2007). All of these sites are thought to be interlinked and identity construction is thought to take place simultaneously in several of them. Regardless of whether negotiations occur in everyday life or in the specific context of the interview situation, the older migrants in this study seem to negotiate the identity categories of old(er) age and migrancy in relation to how they seem to think people in society in general think of old(er) people and (im)migrants. As described in the empirical chapters, such people in society in general figure as virtual others in the interviews. Based upon the references made by interviewees, the identity categories of old(er) age and migrancy seem to be constructed not only in daily experience (which the interview questions refer to), but also in politics (as references to e.g. older people “costing money” would suggest, or other/new [im]migrants “living on welfare”) and not least “culture” (as the image of old[er] people as passive, frail and disinterested would suggest, or the image of [im]migrants as criminals/law-breakers/not adjusting to native

ways of life). For old(er) age, these negotiations could therefore include references to *not* being disinterested in life, *not* being passive, *not* being frail and dependent, *not* having curly white hair and wearing flowery dresses, or *not* being a quiet little lady in the corner. For migrancy, these negotiations could include references to following all rules and regulations, *not* praying five times a day, *not* condoning honour killings, and/or having worked hard to make a living in their new country (unlike those who come today and supposedly live on welfare). Several of the images of old(er) age and migrancy drawn upon by the interviewees seem to be matched by what others before me have written about the constructions of these categories (as could be seen in Chapter 2, also discussed earlier in this chapter). The negotiations of the older migrants in this study then to a large extent seem to be informed by the general social context within which they take place: to state the obvious, neither the interview questions nor anything I say during the interviews would impose that the interviewees are passive and costing money, or criminals and taking advantage of Swedish welfare. In other words, situational definitions clearly seem to be informed by the general social context within which they occur, which the social constructionist approach could shed light onto.

The social constructionist approach seems to suggest that the whens, whos and hows as understood through an internal-external dialectic of identification are set in a specific social context with specific social constructions of the identity categories in question. In a context where old(er) age and migrancy were valued higher and “elderly immigrants” were not associated with problems or special needs, it seems reasonable to suppose that individuals may negotiate such identity categories differently. Conducting a similar study in another country with differing images of old(er) age and a different history of migration and ethnic relations could shed light onto the extent to which the whens, whos and hows of the identity categories of old(er) age and migrancy may differ depending on context. This offers one pathway for future research, more of which will be discussed shortly.

As was suggested briefly in the discussion of constructions of old(er) age, migrancy and “elderly immigrants” (Chapter 2) and in the presentation of the dissertation’s theoretical frame (Chapter 3), previous gerontological research on older migrants has tended to be problem-focused, and an ethnic lens often seems to have been employed in a rather deterministic and essentialist manner (see e.g. Torres 2015a & 2015b). When the role of ethnicity has been examined, it seems to have had essentialist undertones and has examined cultural differences and particularities, rather than examining the contexts where such difference seems to become meaningful. This also seems to be the case for some of the studies of identity and older migrants discussed in Chapter 4 that include perspectives on ageing and/or old(er) age. The present study has made a very different contribution to such research by using a social constructionist lens and by

focusing on migrancy rather than ethnicity. This has made it possible to focus on potentially shared experiences of migrancy as well as similarities and differences in how the older migrants interviewed may define themselves and seem to think they are defined by others. The construction of difference could be illuminated on a broader level instead of focusing on just one ethnic group (and presumably the specific meanings attached to the specific ethnicity and its cultural contents). In other words, instead of focusing on the “whats”, through the social constructionist lens we could explore the whens, whos and hows of the identity categories of old(er) age and migrancy.

Pathways for future research

Both by considering some of the questions that this dissertation has raised and by looking at some of the ways in which this study has differed from preceding ones, several potential pathways for future research can be gleaned.

To begin with, some pathways come to light when considering dimensions such as chronological age, retirement status, perceived cultural distance, gender, time in Sweden and age at migration. Firstly, while the findings seem to suggest that chronological age and retirement status do not necessarily play into identifications with old(er) age, some readers might still not be convinced. One pathway could be to conduct a similar study with interviewees who are chronologically much older. Secondly, the intention in the present study was to focus upon migrants who have been living in their new home country for a very long time. Some of the interviewees suggested that other older migrants they knew who did not speak Swedish might have quite a lot to say with regards to the questions I asked over the course of the interview. Another pathway could be to include older migrants who migrated at a rather late point in life, have been living in the country for a shorter period of time and might not speak the language. Thirdly, the dimension of gender could not really be explored in this work, but one can imagine that gender would play into the whens, whos and hows of identity categories such as old(er) age and migrancy. Another pathway could lie in a purposeful exploration of the dimension of gender in relation to both old(er) age and migrancy. Fourthly, a dimension that has not been considered at all in this work is that of class. While the interviewees had a range of different socioeconomic backgrounds, this dimension could not be explored within the frame of the present work. Another future pathway could thus be found in exploring old(er) age and migrancy with a focus on class.

To continue on the theme of what questions the present work has raised, further pathways can be found in the methodological and theoretical frame. For instance, as was suggested in the discussion of methodology (Chapter 5), focus groups seem to offer a viable alternative that is likely to bring different dynamics of negotiation to light. The use of focus groups presents an interesting pathway for future works that could seek to study negotiations of old(er) age and migrancy

on a group level. In the presentation of the dissertation's theoretical frame (Chapter 3), a distinction was made between negotiation as a short-term and a long-term process. While this study focused on short-term situational negotiations, another pathway may be found in exploring negotiations of the identity categories of old(er) age and migrancy over time.

The findings suggest that physical appearance seems to play into constructions of both old(er) age and migrancy, which in turn also comes to light in the negotiation of these identity categories. As previously mentioned, interviewees were not asked specifically about the body but references to it nevertheless emerged over the course of the interviews. Several other identity categories such as those based upon identification grounds such as gender and ability also seem to be constructed with reference to the body. One pathway for future research could be to integrate a more direct focus on the body in the negotiation of identity categories. While this to some extent seems to have been done with regards to gender and old(er) age (see e.g. Hurd Clarke 2001; Krekula 2006), this does not seem to be the case for old(er) age and migrancy.

Moving beyond questions that this work has raised, what other pathways does this work seem to have opened up? To begin with, especially in relation to work in the field of ageing and later life that is interested in questions pertaining to ethnicity and migration, the social constructionist angle may be illuminating in future research. As previously suggested (see Torres 2015a & 2015b), there seems to have been a tendency to approach questions of ethnicity in a relatively deterministic (essentialist) manner, focusing on questions of what rather than when or how. This work has attempted to do differently by asking about *when* and *how* rather than *what*. A pathway for future research may be to follow suit when it comes to the various areas of research where ethnicity is presumed to play a role. Depending on the topic of the inquiry it may also be fruitful to study migrancy rather than ethnicity.

Another pathway for future research lies in the concept of perceived cultural distance. Employing the notion of perceived cultural distance when studying questions pertaining to ethnicity and migration seems to be a fruitful way of grasping potential nuances in terms of perceived similarity and perceived difference. This seems especially pertinent when it comes to topics where relations of similarity and difference may matter, and in social contexts where difference seems to be constructed around notions of culture (i.e. where e.g. cultural racism comes to light or the difference of "others" is framed as pertaining to culture). This could concern both questions of identity per se but also questions regarding different cultural constructs of interest to research on ageing and later life.

Last but not least, I suggested at the outset that older migrants may be studied as theoretically profuse sources of information in their own right, not just with a problem focus or as presumptive recipients of care. I believe that the

present work has proved this to be the case. The cross-fertilisation of research on ageing and later life on the one hand and migration and ethnic studies on the other has been an aid in this process. The present dissertation has attempted to bridge the gap between these two fields by way of studying the identity categories of old(er) age and migrancy together, drawing upon literature from both fields in the process, and studying older migrants in their own right.

Identity?... The debate continues

In the presentation of the dissertation's theoretical frame, I suggested that research on identity has suffered from a tendency to use the term carelessly without definition, and that when it is defined, one issue is that it can mean quite different things. By studying identity through a carefully crafted theoretical frame, this dissertation hoped to make a contribution to identity research. It sought to do so by way of empirically examining the identity categories of old(er) age and migrancy together, asking about the whens, whos and hows of these identity categories. By using a social constructionist lens, this dissertation also sought to explore what this perspective may be able to contribute to our understanding of identity and the negotiation of identity categories. The framework of internal and external definitions could shed light onto the multiple ways in which the identity categories of old(er) age and migrancy seem to become meaningful and may be negotiated. By way of not presuming that old(er) age and migrancy invariably are part of older migrants' self-definitions, we could explore how those who may be categorised as old(er) and as (im)migrants themselves seem to reason about these identity categories and how they dynamically negotiate definitions that may be external rather than necessarily meaningful for how they would think about themselves.

Having completed the work on this dissertation and finalised the writing, I can see the challenges one faces when writing about identity in a new light. One main challenge lies in ensuring that one does not slip into using language that employs the term carelessly. While one might presume that the risk of carelessness diminishes when working with a clear theoretical frame, doing so presents a crucial first step but does not seem to suffice on its own. By studying the whens, whos and hows of the identity categories of old(er) age and migrancy, I hope that I have been careful enough not to let identity mean too much, too little, or nothing at all, to paraphrase Brubaker and Cooper (2000:1) one last time.

SWEDISH SUMMARY – SAMMANFATTNING PÅ SVENSKA

Identitet, hög(re) ålder och invandrarskap: Ett socialkonstruktionistiskt perspektiv

Kapitel 1: Inledning

Varför skriva en avhandling om identitet, hög(re) ålder och invandrarskap?¹⁴² Identitetsforskning rörande etnicitet och migration har huvudsakligen fokuserat på yngre medan identitetsforskning kring äldre och åldrande inte fokuserat på utrikesfödda. Som en konsekvens därav har identitetskategorierna hög(re) ålder och invandrarskap inte studerats tillsammans i identitetsforskning. Med avstamp i denna kunskapslucka är avhandlingens första övergripande syfte att bidra till identitetsforskning genom att empiriskt undersöka identitetskategorierna hög(re) ålder och invandrarskap tillsammans. Detta görs genom att försöka svara på två forskningsfrågor:

- När (i vilka situationer) och i förhållande till vem verkar hög(re) ålder respektive invandrarskap bli betydelsefulla för identifikationer?
- Hur verkar identitetskategorierna hög(re) ålder och invandrarskap förhandlas?

Ett ytterligare syfte är att utforska vad ett socialkonstruktionistiskt perspektiv skulle kunna bidra med till vår förståelse av identitet och förhandlingen av identitetskategorier.

Kapitel 2: Konstruktioner av hög(re) ålder, invandrarskap och "äldre invandrare"

Kapitlet syftar till att förklara hur några av avhandlingens centrala begrepp förstås utifrån den socialkonstruktionistiska ansatsen och därmed även ringa in bakgrunden mot vilken det empiriska materialet kan förstås. Utifrån ett socialkonstruktionistiskt perspektiv är verkligheten inte objektivt given utan skapad av människan. *Hög(re) ålder* förstås således som en socialt konstruerad identitetskategori som konstrueras på olika sätt i olika historiska, kulturella och sociala sammanhang. I västerländska samhällen har identitetskategorin konstruerats runt pensionen (som även kopplas till kronologisk ålder), samtidigt som social förändring har lett till nya och olika konstruktioner av åldersidentiteter. Det innebär att vem som betraktas som äldre eller gammal inte är objektivt given utan bunden till en viss kontext. *Invandrarskap* förstås likaså som en socialt konstruerad identitetskategori som definieras genom annorlundahet från

¹⁴² Att jag skriver *hög(re) ålder* snarare än hög ålder (eller högre ålder) beror på det socialkonstruktionistiska perspektivet som betraktar denna identitetskategori som socialt konstruerad och inte som given. Tanken är att hög(re) ålder bättre representerar den föränderliga och situationsbundna innebörden som kategorin kan ha där detta uttryck täcker hög ålder såväl som högre ålder.

majoritetsbefolkningen. I Sverige har invandrarskap således konstruerats som en motsats till svenskhet, med gränsmarkörer mellan ”svenskar” och ”invandrare” som rör språkfärdigheter, namn, beteenden och utseende. Kategorierna ”svensk” och ”invandrare” och vem som anses tillhöra dessa förstås inte som fasta och objektivt givna utan som situationsbundna och föränderliga.

För att kontextualisera studien i vidare bemärkelse diskuteras sedan *utrikesfödda äldre* i Sverige, en heterogen kategori som inkluderar både de som migrerat tidigt i livet och åldrats i sitt nya hemland och de som flyttat sent i livet. I Sverige år 2016 var 13 procent av befolkningen i åldrarna 65+ födda utanför Sverige. Denna andel förväntas öka i framtiden. De flesta är födda i Norden och övriga Europa och har bott i Sverige i mer än 20 år. Kategorin ”*äldre invandrare*” har däremot konstruerats som problemfylld och homogen i Sverige, inte minst genom att denna population främst har studerats i egenskap av presumtiva omsorgsmottagare som antas ha särskilda behov. Dessa diskussioner har utgått ifrån antaganden om annorlundahet. Hur de som anses ingå i kategorin själva förhåller sig till identitetskategorierna kopplade till dem har däremot inte undersökts.

Kapitel 3: Teoretisk ram

Identitetsbegreppet används flitigt både i vardagslivet och i olika akademiska discipliner. Det innebär bland annat att det ibland används som om alla förstod exakt vad som menas. I denna avhandling förstås *identitet* som situationsbunden och som ett resultat av ett samspel mellan interna definitioner (dvs. ens egen uppfattning om vem man är) och externa definitioner (dvs. andras uppfattningar om vem man är, eller vad man tror att andra uppfattar vem man är). Det innebär å ena sidan att det inte räcker att själv göra anspråk på en identitet utan att denna också måste bekräftas av andra. Å andra sidan innebär det också att man kan bli tillskriven identiteter som man själv inte anser vara relevanta. Att bli tillskriven en identitet har att göra med kategorisering, vilket är en av anledningarna till att hög(re) ålder och invandrarskap i denna avhandling förstås som *identitetskategorier*. Som tidigare nämnts förstås dessa som socialt konstruerade snarare än objektivt givna. Identiteter som ”äldre” eller ”icke-svensk” förstås då inte som fasta, givna och inneboende hos individen utan som att de ges mening i mötet med andra. Identiteter kan då (internt eller externt) få betydelse i olika situationer, ibland större och ibland mindre eller inte alls, beroende på sammanhanget och vem det är man möter. Identiteter betraktas då även som förhandlingsbara i samspelet mellan interna och externa definitioner.

Denna socialkonstruktionistiska förståelse av identitet väcker frågor om *när* det är olika identitetskategorier får betydelse, i förhållande till *vem* detta sker, och *hur* dessa förhandlas. Till skillnad från detta perspektiv skulle en essentialistisk ansats förutsätta att identiteter är inneboende hos individen, mer permanent betydelsefulla och att gruppstillhörigheter skulle vara objektivt definierbara.

Fokus hamnar då på *vad* olika identiteter betyder snarare än att utforska frågor om *när*, i förhållande till *vem*, eller *hur* de får betydelse eller förhandlas.

Att förhandla identitetskategorier kan förstås som en process där individen framställer sig själv som den hon vill vara, blir betraktad på ett eller annat sätt av andra, och presenterar sig själv på ett nytt sätt mot bakgrund av andras betraktelser. Det innebär också att individen gör olika gränsdragningar mellan sig själv och andra för att beskriva vilka man är lik och vilka man är olik för att på så sätt definiera vem man är och vem man *inte* är. Identitetskategorier kan även omdefinieras genom denna process. Med andra ord har identitet såsom begreppet förstås i denna avhandling att göra med dynamiska relationer mellan likheter och skillnader.

Kapitel 4: Tidigare forskning

Detta kapitel går igenom den internationella forskningen om identitet bland utrikesfödda äldre.¹⁴³ Litteraturen granskas utifrån ett hög(re) ålder och invandrarskapsperspektiv. Det innebär att litteraturgenomgången syftar till att undersöka i vilken mån denna forskning har studerat identitet i relation till åldrande och hög ålder, i vilken utsträckning etnicitet och migration har varit av intresse, och vilken roll som just hög(re) ålder och invandrarskap har haft i den tidigare forskningen. Ett ytterligare syfte är att undersöka vilka som har inkluderats i tidigare empiriska studier. Det visar sig att de flesta studierna i detta lilla men växande forskningsfält berör frågor om etnicitet och migration, men att de utrikesfödda äldres högre ålder har en ganska varierad betydelse. Många studier verkar ta sina informanternas högre ålder som given, på så sätt att de råkar vara äldre snarare än att de har studerats just för att undersöka åldersrelaterade identitetsfrågor. Andra verkar inkludera äldre på grund av deras (långa) livserfarenhet. Några få studier har varit intresserade av åldrande eller hög ålder i förhållande till identitet. I de flesta fall är det däremot framför allt etniska och kulturella skillnader i hur åldrande och hög ålder förstås som hamnar i fokus, snarare än frågor såsom när och i förhållande till vem hög(re) ålder och invandrarskap blir betydelsefulla för identifikationer (eller hur dessa förhandlas). Inga av dessa studier har explicit undersökt invandrarskap, även om några nämner erfarenheter som kan tolkas ha att göra med just detta.

Bland dessa tidigare studier finns både de som fokuserar på äldre som migrerat sent i livet och äldre som har bott i sitt nya hemland under en lång tid. De allra flesta studier fokuserar på enstaka etniska grupper, där framför allt tre olika ursprung är överrepresenterade (judar från forna Sovjetunionen, kineser och koreaner). Några få studier jämför utrikesfödda äldre från ett par

¹⁴³ Begreppet utrikesfödda äldre används här för att avse det som på engelska beskrivs som *older migrants*. Medan utrikesfödda äldre skulle översättas till *foreign-born elderly* snarare än *older migrants* så väljer jag ändå att använda mig av detta begrepp här eftersom översättningen "äldre invandrare" medför en del konnotationer som jag vill undvika (se konstruktionen av denna kategori i beskrivningen av Kapitel 2).

ursprungsländer men det är endast en studie som inkluderar utrikesfödda från ett större antal olika länder. Genom att studera utrikesfödda från flera olika länder kan blicken däremot lyftas från etnisk särart och kulturella skillnader till att undersöka gemensamma erfarenheter av invandrarskap, vilket denna avhandling gör.

Kapitel 5: Metod

Avhandlingen bygger på individuella djupintervjuer. Utifrån den socialkonstruktionistiska ramen handlar det inte om att samla in objektiva fakta kring "sanna" erfarenheter utan mening skapas i intervjusituationen mellan intervjuaren (en jämförelsevis yngre utrikesfödd kvinna) och intervjupersonen (jämförelsevis äldre utrikesfödda kvinnor och män). Det analytiska intresset hamnar därmed inte bara på *vad* som sägs utan även på *hur* det sägs.

Urvalet av intervjupersoner är teoretiskt med syfte att ge variationer i erfarenheter av invandrarskap. Ett antagande är att invandrarskap, som konstrueras utifrån föreställningar om annorlundahet från majoritetsbefolkningen, potentiellt blir betydelsefullt på olika sätt beroende på hur lika eller olika individers ursprungsländer uppfattas vara. Intervjupersonerna har därför valts från hela spektrumet av upplevt kulturellt avstånd baserat på *Mångfaldsbarometerns* frågeställningar kring ämnet. Det empiriska materialet består därmed av intervjuer med 24 personer (13 män, 11 kvinnor) som är födda i 12 olika länder, i åldrarna mellan 55 och 79, och som har bott i Sverige under en lång tid, närmare bestämt mellan 18 och 61 år (i snitt runt 37 år). Länderna de kommer ifrån är (från det som uppfattas som kulturellt "närmast" till det som uppfattas befinna sig på störst "avstånd"): Norge, Finland, England, USA, Polen, Grekland, Chile, Bosnien, Thailand, Turkiet, Kurdistan och Iran. De har flyttat till Sverige av olika skäl, några av allmänt intresse, några för att utbilda sig, några för kärlekens skull, och några som flyktingar.

Intervjuerna varade i snitt två timmar och femton minuter och transkriberades i sin helhet. Analysen skedde i flera steg och fokuserade först på *vad* intervjupersonerna sade beträffande olika teman i intervjuguiden. I den fortsatta analysprocessen uppstod sedan olika teman utifrån materialet och processen rörde sig i analytiska cirklar. Senare steg innebar att läsa intervjuerna i sin helhet för att se vilka generella identifikationer avseende hög(re) ålder och invandrarskap dessa kännetecknas av samt hur det talas om olika identiteter. Som ett sista steg undersöktes om demografiska dimensioner som kronologisk ålder, ursprungsland (i förhållande till upplevt kulturellt avstånd), genus, tid i Sverige och ålder vid migration verkar ha betydelse. Detta gjordes sist eftersom det socialkonstruktionistiska perspektivet inte förutsätter att dessa dimensioner är betydelsefulla för identiteter (utan att det i så fall är något som forskningen får visa).

Sist men inte minst ska det nämnas att det socialkonstruktionistiska greppet präglar hela forskningsprocessen i denna avhandling. Det innebär bland annat att presentationen av resultaten sker på ett sådant sätt att dessa inte framställs som "sanna fakta" som forskaren "objektivt" har samlat in. I stället handlar det om att beskriva resultaten som analysprocessen har lett till i termer av hur det *verkar* förhålla sig, hur saker och ting *framstår* eller *förefaller*, och vad resultaten *tyder på*, i stället för att uttala sig om "fakta" eller hur något ("verkligen") "är" (då sådana uttalanden inte är förenliga med ett socialkonstruktionistiskt perspektiv).

Kapitel 6: När verkar hög(re) ålder bli betydelsefull?

Detta är det första av fyra kapitel som presenterar det empiriska materialet med utgångspunkt i forskningsfrågorna. Det behandlar frågan om när hög(re) ålder verkar få betydelse för identifikationer. För den egna självdefinitionen kopplas svaren främst till kroppen och till tid. Intervjupersonerna nämner således kroppsliga förändringar i samband med att känna sig gammal eller äldre, såsom att känna sig trött, stel, att ha olika krämpor, att ha svårare för att lära sig nya saker, att vara mindre aktiv eller att saker och ting tar längre tid. Frågan om tid kopplas till den kronologiska åldern, att barn och barnbarn växer upp, att tid har gått, att livet är ändligt och till sociala förändringar. Att uppleva att andra bemöter en som äldre verkar de flesta intervjupersonerna associera med att de till sin egen förvåning blir erbjudna en sittplats eller att de får mer respekt på grund av sin livserfarenhet. Andra däremot nämner att de har fått höra åldersrelaterade glåpord eller att de känner sig osynliga som äldre. Intervjupersonernas kronologiska ålder verkar inte ha någon betydelse för huruvida de själva menar att det finns situationer där de definierar sig som äldre eller uppfattar att andra bemöter dem som äldre.

Något av det mest slående är att det verkar vara vanligare att man själv definierar sig som äldre jämfört med att hävda att andra betraktar en som äldre. Situationerna då intervjupersonerna ändå uppfattar att andra bemöter dem som äldre beskrivs som överraskande och sällsynta. Att beskriva sådana situationer med hänvisning till kroppen och tid bidrar också till att hög(re) ålder ger intryck av att uppfattas som förhållandevis flyktig av de flesta (men inte alla). Denna flyktighet antyder att identitetskategorin hög(re) ålder för det mesta blir betydelsefull i korta stunder och i särskilda situationer i förhållande till vissa sorters andra, snarare än att framstå som omfattande och mer permanent betydelsefull för identifikationer.

Kapitel 7: Hur hög(re) ålder förhandlas

Genom analysen kunde tre huvudsakliga sätt att förhandla hög(re) ålder skönjas i intervjuerna. Det första är att presentera sig själv som *inte äldre än*, vilket kunde ha att göra med argument rörande ens kronologiska ålder, att man inte har gått i pension (eller intressant nog att det inte syns att man har gått i pension), att

framhäva att man är aktiv, intresserad och nyfiken, och att hänvisa till ens utseende. Därmed kan intervjupersonerna göra anspråk på likhet, både i förhållande till när de var yngre och till den allmänna icke-äldre befolkningen. Det andra sättet att förhandla är *att skilja mellan insidan och utsidan*, vilket kunde innebära att intervjupersonerna byter perspektiv mellan hur de ser på sig själva (och känner sig på insidan) och hur de verkar tro att andra betraktar dem. Att hävda att man känner sig yngre på insidan kan tolkas som ett sätt att förhandla externa definitioner som äldre där man kan skapa ett avstånd mellan sig själv och identitetskategorin hög(re) ålder. Ett sådant särskiljande kan också förstås som ett sätt att bekräfta att kroppen har åldrats och att andra av den anledningen skulle kunna betrakta en som äldre eller gammal. Då kan man samtidigt presentera sig själv som icke-äldre utan att behöva rättfärdiga att kroppen förmedlar något annat. Sist men inte minst så innebär det tredje sättet att förhandla hög(re) ålder att intervjupersonerna presenterar sig själva som *äldre men annorlunda*, vilket samtidigt bidrar till konstruktionen av andra som "riktigt" gamla, en bild som man samtidigt tar avstånd ifrån. Att vara "riktigt" gammal verkar då associeras med att vara passiv, skröplig, sjuk, ointresserad, trött och ensam. Genom att presentera sig själv som äldre men annorlunda kan man även bidra till en dekonstruktion och omdefiniering av kategorin, där denna förändrade bild står i motsatsförhållande till vad det anses innebära att vara "riktigt gammal".

Medan vissa menar att de inte är äldre eller gamla på grund av sin kronologiska ålder eller för att de inte har gått i pension, så menar andra att de inte känner sig äldre eller gamla trots sin ålder och pensioneringen. Sådana identifikationer verkar däremot inte vara permanenta utan ganska flexibla: intervjupersonerna kan på ett plan se sig själva som äldre, men på ett annat se sig själva som inte så gamla än. Eller så kan man definiera sig själv som inte så gammal men ändå känna sig äldre ibland. Identitetskategorin hög(re) ålder framstår då som flytande och föränderlig. Resultaten skulle kunna förstås i termer av en glidande skala varpå man kan förflytta sig från ena ändan till den andra (och tillbaks igen), beroende på situation och sammanhang. På den ena ändan står en definition som "inte äldre", följt av "inte äldre än", "inte så gammal", "äldre men annorlunda", "äldre" och slutligen, på den andra ändan, "de riktigt gamla". Den bortreasta ändan av "de riktigt gamla" verkar vara reserverat för andra och hålls på avstånd. Oavsett kronologisk ålder eller om man är pensionär så gör intervjupersonerna anspråk på att inte vara äldre, och även bland de som verkar se sig själva som äldre så är det flera som tycks definiera sig som annorlunda än de *andra* som "verkligen" är gamla.

Kapitel 8: När verkar invandrarskap bli betydelsefullt?

Intervjupersonerna synes för det mesta uppfatta att invandrarskap får betydelse i förhållande till de olika gränsmarkörerna som anses vara relevanta i skiljandet

mellan ”svenskar” och ”invandrare”, det vill säga språk, utseende, beteenden och namn. Å ena sidan nämns olika situationer där någon sorts annorlundahet verkar få betydelse (i termer av ens ursprungsetnicitet eller icke-svenskhet). Å andra sidan framstår det som att det kan ske precis när som helst. Olika sorters frågor och kommentarer kan också göra invandrarskap betydelsefullt, som att bli tillfrågad var man kommer ifrån, att ens språkkunskaper kommenteras, att bli iakttagen på ett särskilt sätt, att uppfatta att man blir utpekad i olika sammanhang, att finna begränsningar i ens förmåga att uttrycka sig, eller i särskilda typiskt svenska kulturella sammanhang.

Några av intervjupersonerna menar att invandrarskap verkar upplevas som ganska omfattande och ständigt närvarande, internt, externt eller både och. Med andra ord kunde det vara vem som helst (oavsett bakgrund) och i vilken situation som helst som andra kunde definiera en som annorlunda, inte minst i sociala situationer där man möter främlingar. Däremot verkar inte alla nödvändigtvis uppleva invandrarskap på detta sätt. Medan det framstår som att invandrarskap blir betydelsefullt för identifikationer oavsett ursprungsland så verkar det upplevda kulturella avståndet ha betydelse för hur det tar sig uttryck. I jämförelse med hög(re) ålder verkar invandrarskap i större utsträckning uppfattas som att det tillskrivs av andra i sociala situationer snarare än att det i första hand ingår i ens egen självdefinition. Samtidigt tyder resultaten på att många upplever invandrarskap som ganska framträdande både internt och externt.

Kapitel 9: Hur invandrarskap förhandlas

Det är framför allt två sätt att förhandla invandrarskap som kan skönjas i det empiriska materialet: att *betona likhet med ”svenskar”* och att *ta avstånd från andra ”invandrare”*. Det första sättet kunde handla om att framhäva att man lever samma sorts liv som vilken svensk som helst, att man är svensk medborgare, att man följer alla lagar och regler, att man har försvenskats, och att man hänvisar till hur länge man har bott i Sverige. Med andra ord handlar det om att göra anspråk på likhet och ta avstånd från annorlundahet. Det andra sättet kunde handla om att framhäva att just det egna ursprungslandet brukar betraktas som positivt, att ens etnicitet kunde vara en tillgång, att man är annorlunda än andra från samma land, att man (till skillnad från andra) inte har några ambitioner att bli svensk, och att jämföra sig själv med de som flyttar till Sverige idag (och att då framstå i ljusare dager). Genom att presentera sig själv som annorlunda än andra ”invandrare” kunde man samtidigt tillskriva invandrarskap till andra som i sin tur konstrueras som ”verkliga” annorlunda. Ett tredje mönster handlar om att en del intervjupersoner menar att de aldrig skulle kunna göra anspråk på att vara svensk. Det kunde ha att göra med utseendet, uppfattningen att ens uppväxt (i ett annat land) har varit avgörande, att de aldrig skulle kunna lära sig allt om Sverige eller aldrig skulle kunna tala utan brytning.

De olika sätten att förhandla invandrarskap på verkar inte behöva utesluta varandra: att betona likhet med svenskar och att ta avstånd från andra "invandrare" kan betraktas som två sidor av samma mynt. Att inte kunna betraktas som en "riktig" svensk utesluts inte heller i och med att man ändå kan göra anspråk på likhet. Med tanke på att identifikationer förstås som situationsbundna så kan man även se hur intervjupersonerna kan definiera sig själva som lika i vissa situationer men som annorlunda i andra. Medan samtliga intervjuade kan tala om hur de är lika svenskarna och olika andra "invandrare" så förefaller uppfattningen om att inte kunna göra anspråk på att vara svensk vara mer bestämd hos vissa än hos andra. Flera menar att de skulle fortsätta betraktas som invandrare oavsett hur de definierar sig själva. Genom att däremot framhäva att man egentligen är som alla andra så kan intervjupersonerna samtidigt dekonstruera och omforma kategorin "invandrare" som de antas ingå i.

Kapitel 10: Hög(re) ålder och invandrarskap: när, vem och hur?

Detta kapitel sammanför frågorna rörande när, vem och hur för både hög(re) ålder och invandrarskap. Frågor som inte ryms inom de tidigare kapitlen tas upp här: hur intervjupersonerna talar om äldre och om olika identiteter rörande invandrarskap (såsom icke-svensk, etnisk, utlänning eller invandrare), samt hur de själva generellt ger intryck av att definiera sig och uppfattar att andra definierar dem när det gäller hög(re) ålder och invandrarskap. Hur dessa övergripande interna och externa definitioner kan sammanfalla (eller inte) är av särskilt intresse, samt frågan om huruvida de som har liknande övergripande identifikationer har något gemensamt när det gäller dimensioner som kronologisk ålder, pensionering, upplevt kulturellt avstånd, tid i Sverige, ålder vid migration eller vem man är gift eller i en relation med (dvs. med en svensk, någon från samma ursprungsland eller ett tredje land).

Det visar sig att trots att hög(re) ålder konstrueras kring markörer som kronologisk ålder och pensionering så verkar denna identitetskategori ändå uppfattas som förhandlingsbar. Kronologisk ålder och om man har gått i pension verkar således inte ha någon större betydelse för huruvida intervjupersonerna generellt ser sig själva som äldre eller tror att de betraktas på detta sätt av andra. Då invandrarskap konstrueras som motsats till svenskhet är det även nästintill alla intervjupersoner oavsett ursprungsland som generellt verkar definiera sig som annorlunda. Denna annorlundahet kan däremot röra sig om skilda företeelser, som att konstatera att man helt enkelt inte är svensk, att man identifierar sig med en annan etnicitet, att man är utlänning eller just invandrare. Upplevt kulturellt avstånd verkar ha viss betydelse för hur invandrarskap förstås, upplevs och uppfattas, och vilka argument intervjupersonerna använder sig av i förhandlingen av invandrarskap.

Sist men inte minst så förs de olika generella interna och externa definitionerna som "äldre" och "icke-svensk" samman. Det finns en stor spridning i hur intervjupersonerna generellt verkar definiera sig och hur de uppfattar att andra generellt definierar dem när hög(re) ålder och invandrarskap kombineras. Slutsatsen blir att det är väldigt få som verkar uppfatta identiteter som "äldre" och "icke-svensk" som generellt meningsfulla, vilket är särskilt intressant mot bakgrund av den tidigare nämnda konstruktionen av kategorin "äldre invandrare" som problemfylld och homogen.

Kapitel 11: Identitet, hög(re) ålder och invandrarskap: ett socialkonstruktionistiskt perspektiv

I detta avslutande kapitel besvaras syftesformuleringarna och vägar vidare för framtida forskning undersöks. För det första, vad har bidragits till identitetsforskningen genom att empiriskt studera identitetskategorierna hög(re) ålder och invandrarskap tillsammans? Bland annat kan man säga att identitetskategorierna hög(re) ålder och invandrarskap verkar få mer betydelse för identifikationer i vissa sociala situationer än i andra. Snarare än att nödvändigtvis utgöra en mer permanent del av de intervjuades självdefinitioner så verkar dessa identitetskategorier på ett mer dynamiskt sätt bli betydelsefulla ibland och i förhållande till vissa andra. Samtidigt kan de också bli ratade och omdefinierade i förhandlingsprocessen. Olika identifikationer kan dessutom framstå som motsägelsefulla: intervjupersonerna verkar kunna definiera sig själva som äldre vid ena tillfället men som icke-äldre vid ett annat, eller som annorlunda än svenskarna en gång men som likadana en annan gång. Trots generella identifikationer som (icke-)äldre eller (icke-)annorlunda så förefaller det som att motsatta definitioner kan få betydelse i specifika situationer.

Den externa dimensionen framstår som mycket betydelsefull genom att intervjupersonerna betraktar sig själva genom andras ögon i intervjuerna. Vissa menar att de inte känner sig gamla eller äldre men att de ändå bemöts på detta sätt, eller att de känner sig svenska men ändå alltid tycks bli betraktade som invandrare. Hur identitetskategorierna konstrueras i samhället synes i ganska stor utsträckning spela in i identitetsförhandlingarna. Dessa konstruktioner kan tänkas ha konsekvenser för individen på delvis olika sätt: det förefaller som att vissa i större utsträckning än andra blir externt definierade i termer som inte matchar deras egna definitioner. Sådana externa definitioner kan med tiden forma en del av ens självdefinition, vilket i sin tur kan leda till att identitetskategorierna i fråga omdefinieras. I stället för att vara stabila och inneboende hos individen så förefaller identitetskategorierna hög(re) ålder och invandrarskap från individens perspektiv vara dynamiska, föränderliga och kopplade till den sociala kontexten.

Den konstruerade kategorin "äldre invandrare" som förutsätter annorlundahet tycks inte ses som särskilt meningsfull av de intervjuade.

Antagandena om annorlundahet verkar snarare framstå som överskattade med tanke på att det framstår som att många av de intervjuade i mångt och mycket ser sig själva som ganska lika svenskarna. Medan man inte kan generalisera utifrån det fåtalet som har ingått i studien så kan man spekulera kring möjligheten att det finns flera bland de som har bott i Sverige under en väldigt lång tid som inte nödvändigtvis ser sig själva som så annorlunda än övriga befolkningen.

Sist men inte minst, vad bidrar det socialkonstruktionistiska perspektivet till för vår förståelse av identitet och förhandlingen av identitetskategorier? Kort och gott kan man säga att det är genom detta perspektiv vi har kunnat ställa frågor om *när*, *vem* och *hur* och därmed få syn på en dynamisk föränderlighet som skulle förbli osynlig om fokus i stället hade stannat på frågan om *vad*.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Adamson, J. & Donovan, J.L. (2002). Research in Black and White. *Qualitative Health Research* 12(6): 816-825.
- Ahmadi, F., Mella, O., Palm, I. & Darvishpour, M. (2015). *Mångfaldsbarometern: Tio år av attitydmätningar i Sverige [Ethnic Diversity Barometer: Ten Years of Attitudinal Surveys in Sweden]*. Gävle: Gävle University Press.
- Ålund, A. & Schierup, C.-U. (1991). Prescribed multiculturalism in crisis. In *Paradoxes of Multiculturalism* (pp. 1-20). Hampshire: Avebury.
- Ålund, A. (1997). *Multikultningdom: kön, etnicitet, identitet [Multicultural youth: gender, ethnicity, identity]*. Lund: Studentlitteratur.
- Anthias, F. (1998). Rethinking social divisions: Some notes towards a theoretical framework. *The Sociological Review* 46(3): 505-535.
- Arnstberg, K.-O. (1989). *Svenskhet. Den kulturförnekande kulturen [Swedishness. The culture-denying culture]*. Stockholm: Carlssons.
- Arnstberg, K.-O. (2005). *Typiskt svenskt. 8 essäer om det nutida Sverige [Typically Swedish. 8 Essays on Contemporary Sweden]*. Stockholm: Carlssons.
- Arnstberg, K.-O. (2010). *Mera svenskt [More Swedish]*. Stockholm: Carlssons.
- Baron, R.A. & Byrne, D. (1997). Social cognition: thinking about others and the social world. In *Social Psychology* (8th ed., pp. 74-109). Boston, London, Toronto, Sydney, Tokyo & Singapore: Allyn and Bacon.
- Barth, F. (1969). Introduction. In F. Barth (ed.) *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture Difference* (pp. 1-38). Bergen & Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, London: George Allen & Unwin.
- Bartholomew, M.L. (2012). *Health Experiences of Older African Caribbean Women Living in the UK.* Dissertation, University of Huddersfield, UK.
- Bauman, Z. (2001). Identity in the globalising world. *Social Anthropology* 9(2): 121-129.
- Bengtsson, T., & Scott, K. (2011). Population ageing and the future of the Swedish welfare state. *Population and Development Review*, supplement 37: 158-170.
- Benwell, B. & Stokoe, E. (eds.) (2006). *Discourse and Identity*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Berger, P. & Luckmann, T. (1966). *The Social Construction of Reality. A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*. London: Penguin.
- Bernard, M., Chambers, P. & Granville, G. (2000). Women ageing: changing identities, challenging myths. In M. Bernard, J. Phillips, L. Machin & V. Harding Davies (eds.) *Women Ageing. Changing Identities, Challenging Myths* (pp. 1-22). London & New York: Routledge.
- Berner, H. & Choi, S.-J. (eds.) (2006). *Zuhause: Erzählungen von deutschen Koreanerinnen. [Home: Narratives by German Korean Women.]* Berlin & Hamburg: Assoziation A.
- Best, A.L. (2003). Doing race in the context of feminist interviewing: constructing whiteness through talk. *Qualitative Inquiry* 9(6): 895-914.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Biggs, S. (1997). Choosing not to be old? Masks, bodies and identity management in later life. *Ageing & Society* 17: 553-570.
- Biggs, S. (1999). The “blurring” of the lifecourse: narrative, memory and the question of authenticity. *Journal of Aging and Identity* 4(4): 209-221.
- Biggs, S. (2003). Negotiating aging identity: surface, depth, and masquerade. In S. Biggs, A. Lowenstein & J. Hendricks (eds.) *The Need for Theory: Critical Approaches to Social Gerontology* (pp. 145-159). Amityville, NY: Baywood.
- Biggs, S. (2004a). Age, gender, narratives, and masquerades. *Journal of Aging Studies* 18: 45-58.
- Biggs, S. (2004b). In pursuit of successful identities and authentic aging. In E. Tulle (ed.) *Old Age and Agency* (pp. 137-155). New York: Nova Science Publishers.
- Biggs, S., Phillipson, C., Leach, R. & Money, A. (2007). The mature imagination and consumption strategies. Age and generation in the development of a United Kingdom baby boomer identity. *International Journal of Ageing and Later Life* 2(2): 31-59.
- Bolzman, C., Fibbi, R. & Vial, M. (2006). What to do after retirement? Elderly migrants and the question of return. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 32(8): 1359-1375.
- Bradby, H. & Torres, S. (2016). Public policy, immigrant experiences, and health outcomes in Sweden. In D. Raphael (ed.) *Immigration, Public Policy, and Health. Newcomer Experiences in Developed Nations* (pp. 291-314). Canadian Scholars’ Press: Toronto.
- Bradby, H. (2002). Translating culture and language: a research note on multilingual settings. *Sociology of Health & Illness* 24(6): 842-855.
- Brandtstädter, J. & Greve, W. (1994). The aging self: stabilizing and protective processes. *Developmental Review* 14: 52-80.
- Brown, R. (1995). Social categorization and prejudice. In *Prejudice: Its Social Psychology* (pp. 39-80). Oxford, UK & Cambridge, USA: Blackwell.
- Brubaker, R. & Cooper, F. (2000). Beyond “identity”. *Theory and Society* 29: 1-47.
- Bryman, A. (2004). *Social Research Methods* (2nd ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Burgess, E.W. (1960). Aging in Western culture. In E.W. Burgess (ed.) *Aging in Western Societies* (pp. 3-28). Chicago: Chicago University Press.
- Burr, V. (2003). *Social Constructionism* (2nd ed.). London & New York: Routledge.
- Butcher, M. (2008). FOB Boys, VCs and Habibs: using language to navigate difference and belonging in culturally diverse Sydney. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 34(3): 371-387.
- Butler, J. (1990). *Gender Trouble. Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. London & New York: Routledge.
- Calasanti, T. (2003). Theorizing age relations. In S. Biggs, J. Hendricks & A. Lowenstein (eds.) *The Need for Theory: Critical Approaches to Social Gerontology* (pp. 199-218). Amityville, NY: Baywood.
- Cassilde, S. (2013). Where are you from? In R.E. Hall (ed.) *The Melanin Millennium. Skin Color as 21st Century International Discourse* (pp. 115-138). Dordrecht, Heidelberg, New York, London: Springer.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Chancer, L.S. & Watkins, B.X. (2006). *Gender, Race, and Class. An Overview*. Malden, MA & Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing.
- Chatman, C.M., Eccles, J.S. & Malanchuk, O. (2005). Identity negotiation in everyday settings. In G. Downey, J.S. Eccles & C.M. Chatman (eds.) *Navigating the Future. Social Identity, Coping, and Life Tasks* (pp. 116-139). New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Cheryan, S. & Monin, B. (2005). "Where are you *really* from?": Asian Americans and identity denial. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 89(5): 717-730.
- Clark, E. & Petersson, B. (2003). Boundary dynamics and the construction of identities. In B. Petersson & E. Clark (eds.) *Identity Dynamics and the Construction of Boundaries* (pp. 7-18). Lund: Nordic Academic Press.
- Clary-Lemon, J. (2010). 'We're not ethnic, we're Irish!': Oral histories and the discursive construction of immigrant identity. *Discourse & Society* 21(1): 5-25.
- Coleman, P.G., Ivani-Chalian, C. & Robinson, M. (1999). Self and identity in advanced old age: validation of theory through longitudinal case analysis. *Journal of Personality* 67(5): 819-849.
- Cool, L.E. (1981). Ethnic identity: a source of community esteem for the elderly. *Anthropology Quarterly* 54(4): 179-189.
- Cooley, C.H. (2009 [1902]). *Human Nature and the Social Order*. New Brunswick, USA & London, UK: Transaction Publishers.
- Cornell, S. & Hartmann, D. (2007). *Ethnicity and Race: Making Identities in a Changing World* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, London, New Delhi: Pine Forge Press.
- Coupland, J., Coupland, N., Giles, H. & Henwood, K. (1991). Formulating age: dimensions of age identity in elderly talk. *Discourse Processes* 14: 87-106.
- Creswell, J.W. (2007). *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design. Choosing Among Five Approaches* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, London, New Delhi: Sage Publications.
- Dahlstedt, M. & Neergaard, A. (2015). Conclusion. Swedish exceptionalism and beyond. In M. Dahlstedt & A. Neergaard (eds.) *International Migration and Ethnic Relations. Critical Perspectives* (pp. 249-270). London & New York: Routledge.
- Daun, Å. (1992). Introduction. In Å. Daun, B. Ehn & B. Klein (eds.) *To Make the World Safe for Diversity: Towards an Understanding of Multi-Cultural Societies* (pp. 7-13). Tumba: The Swedish Immigration Institute and Museum.
- Daun, Å. (1998a [1989]). *Svenske mentalitet [Swedish mentality]* (3rd ed.). Stockholm: Rabén Prisma.
- Daun, Å. (1998b). Differences and similarities: methodological comments on Tom O'Dell's essay. *Ethnologia Scandinavica* 28: 38-41.
- Daun, Å. (2011). Pippi Longstocking in our dreams? In K. Almqvist & A. Linklater (eds.) *Images of Sweden* (pp. 237-253). Stockholm: Axel and Margaret Ax:on Johnson Foundation.
- Dean, J. (2008). 'The lady doth protest too much': theorising disidentification in contemporary gender politics. *IDA Working Papers* 24/07/08, World Network in Ideology and Discourse Analysis Working Paper Series.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Deaux, K. & Ethier, K.A. (1998). Negotiating social identity. In J.K. Swim & C. Stangor (eds.) *Prejudice. The Target's Perspective* (pp. 301-323). San Diego, London, Boston, New York, Sydney, Tokyo, Toronto: Academic Press.
- Delanty, G. & Strydom, P. (2003). *Philosophies of Social Science. The Classic and Contemporary Readings*. Maidenhead & Philadelphia: Open University Press, McGraw-Hill Education.
- Delucchi, M. (1998). Self and identity among aging immigrants in *The Joy Luck Club*. *Journal of Aging and Identity* 3(2): 59-66.
- Dwyer, P. & Papadimitriou, D. (2006). The social security rights of older international migrants in the European Union. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 32(8): 1301-1319.
- Ehn, B. (1993). Nationell inlevelse [National empathy]. In B. Ehn, J. Frykman & O. Löfgren *Försvenskningen av Sverige: Det nationellas förvandlingar [The Swedification of Sweden: Transformations of the National]* (pp. 203-266). Stockholm: Natur och kultur.
- Elias, N. (2005). Living in Germany, longing for Israel. The elderly Jewish immigrants from the former Soviet Union in Germany. *East European Jewish Affairs* 35(2): 167-187.
- Eriksen, T.H. & Sørheim, T.A. (2003). Opplevelse av kulturell avstand [The perception of cultural distance]. In *Kulturforskjeller i praksis: Perspektiver på det flerkulturelle Norge [Cultural differences in practice: Perspectives from multicultural Norway]* (pp. 61-64). Oslo: Gyldendal Akademisk.
- Eriksen, T.H. (1993). *Etnisitet och nationalism [Ethnicity and nationalism]*. Nora: Nya Doga.
- Erikson, E.H. (1980). *Identity and the Life Cycle*. New York & London: W.W. Norton & Company.
- Essed, P. (1991). *Understanding Everyday Racism: An Interdisciplinary Theory*. Newbury Park: Sage Publications.
- Estes, C.L., Biggs, S. & Phillipson, C. (2003). Age and identity. In *Social theory, social policy and ageing: A critical introduction* (pp. 25-43). Maidenhead: Open University Press.
- Eurostat (2016). Asylum decisions in the EU: EU Member States granted protection to more than 330 000 asylum seekers in 2015. *Press release Eurostat 75/2016*, 20 April 2016.
- Fealy, G., McNamara, M., Treacy, M.P. & Lyons, I. (2012). Constructing ageing and age identities: a case study of newspaper discourses. *Ageing & Society* 32(1): 85-102.
- Featherstone, M. & Hepworth, M. (1989). Ageing and old age: reflections on the postmodern life course. In B. Bytheway, T. Keil, P. Allatt & A. Bryman (eds.) *Becoming and Being Old: Sociological Approaches to Later Life* (pp. 143-175). London, Newbury Park, New Delhi: Sage.
- Featherstone, M. & Hepworth, M. (1991). The mask of ageing and the postmodern lifecourse. In M. Featherstone, M. Hepworth & B.S. Turner (eds.) *The Body. Social Process and Cultural Theory* (pp. 371-389). London: Sage.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Featherstone, M. & Hepworth, M. (2005). Images of aging: cultural representations of later life. In M.L. Johnson (ed., with V.L. Bengtson, P.G. Coleman & T.B.L. Kirkwood) *The Cambridge Handbook of Age and Ageing* (pp. 354-362). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Feinberg, R.I. (1996). Use of reminiscence groups to facilitate the telling of life stories by elderly Russian Jewish immigrants. *Smith College Studies in Social Work* 67(1): 39-51.
- Fenstermaker, S. & West, C. (eds.) (2002a). *Doing Gender, Doing Difference. Inequality, Power, and Institutional Change*. New York & London: Routledge.
- Fenstermaker, S. & West, C. (2002b). "Doing difference" revisited: problems, prospects and the dialogue in feminist theory. In S. Fenstermaker & C. West (eds.) *Doing Gender, Doing Difference. Inequality, Power, and Institutional Change* (pp. 205-216). New York & London: Routledge.
- Flick, U. (2006). *An Introduction to Qualitative Research* (3rd ed.). London: Sage Publications.
- Fontana, A. & Frey, J.H. (2000). The interview. From structured questions to negotiated text. In N.K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (eds.) *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (2nd ed., pp. 645-672). Thousand Oaks, London, New Delhi: Sage Publications.
- Fry, C.L. (2007). The social construction of age and the experience of aging in the late twentieth century. In H.-W. Wahl, C. Tesch-Römer & A. Hoff (eds.) *New Dynamics in Old Age. Individual, Environmental and Societal Perspectives* (pp. 11-23). Amityville, NY: Baywood Publishing Company.
- Frykman, J. (1993). Nationella ord och handlingar [National words and deeds]. In B. Ehn, J. Frykman & O. Löfgren *Försvenskningen av Sverige: Det nationellas förvandlingar [The Swedification of Sweden: Transformations of the National]* (pp. 120-201). Stockholm: Natur och kultur.
- Gardner, K. (2002). *Age, Narrative and Migration: The Life Course and Life Histories of Bengali Elders in London*. Oxford, UK & New York, USA: Berg.
- Gee, E.M. (1999). Ethnic identity among foreign-born Chinese Canadian elders. *Canadian Journal on Aging* 18(4): 415-429.
- George, M. & Fitzgerald, R. (2012). Forty years in Aotearoa New Zealand: white identity, home and later life in an adopted country. *Ageing & Society* 32(2): 239-260.
- Giddens, A. (1991). *Modernity and Self-Identity. Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Gilleard, C. & Higgs, P. (2000). *Cultures of Ageing: Self, Citizen and the Body*. Harlow, UK: Prentice Hall.
- Gilleard, C. & Higgs, P. (2009). The third age: field, habitus or identity? In I.R. Jones, P. Higgs & D.J. Ekerdt (eds.) *Consumption & Generational Change. The Rise of Consumer Lifestyles* (pp. 23-36). New Brunswick & London: Transaction Publishers.
- Gilleard, C. (1996). Consumption and identity in later life: toward a cultural gerontology. *Ageing & Society* 16: 489-498.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Gleason, P. (1983). Identifying identity: a semantic history. *The Journal of American History* 69(4): 910-931.
- Goffman, E. (1959). *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. New York: Anchor Books, Random House, Inc.
- Gordon, P. (1992). The racialisation of statistics. In R. Skellington & P. Morris (eds.) *'Race' in Britain Today* (pp. 16-34). London: Sage.
- Green, B.S. (1993). *Gerontology and the Construction of Old Age*. New Brunswick, New Jersey: Transaction Publishers.
- Gunaratnam, Y. (2003). *Researching 'Race' and Ethnicity: Methods, Knowledge and Power*. London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: Sage Publications.
- Hacking, I. (1999). *The Social Construction of What?* Cambridge, Massachusetts & London, England: Harvard University Press.
- Hall, S. (1989). Ethnicity: identity and difference. *Radical America* 23(4): 9-20.
- Hall, S. (1996). Introduction. Who needs identity? In S. Hall & P. du Gay (eds.) *Questions of Cultural Identity* (pp. 1-17). London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: Sage.
- Hareven, T. (1995). Changing images of aging and the social construction of the life course. In M. Featherstone & A. Wernick (eds.) *Images of Aging. Cultural Representations of Later Life* (pp. 119-134). Routledge. London.
- Harré, Rom (1991). The discursive production of selves. *Theory & Psychology* 1(1): 51-63.
- Hazan, H. (1994). *Old Age. Constructions and Deconstructions*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hepworth, M. (2004). Embodied agency, decline and the masks of aging. In E. Tulle (ed.) *Old Age and Agency* (pp. 125-135). New York: Nova Science Publishers.
- Herlitz, G. (2012). *Svenskar: Hur vi är och varför [Swedes: What we are like and why]*. Malmö: Liber.
- Higgs, P. & Gilleard, C. (2006). Departing the margins: social class and later life in a second modernity. *Journal of Sociology* 42(3): 219-241.
- Higgs, P. & Gilleard, C. (2015). *Rethinking Old Age: Theorising the Fourth Age*. London & New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Hollander, J.A., Renfrow, D.G. & Howard, J.A. (2011). *Gendered Situations, Gendered Selves. A Gender Lens on Social Psychology* (2nd ed.). Lanham, Boulder, New York, Toronto, Plymouth: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.
- Holstein, J.A. & Gubrium, J.F. (2000). *Constructing the Life Course* (2nd ed.). New York: General Hall, Inc.
- Holstein, J.A. & Gubrium, J.F. (2004). The active interview. In D. Silverman (ed.) *Qualitative Research. Theory, Method and Practice* (2nd ed., pp. 140-161). London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: Sage Publications.
- Howard, J.A. & Hollander, J.A. (1997). *Gendered Situations, Gendered Selves. A Gender Lens on Social Psychology*. Walnut Creek: Altamira Press.
- Howard, J.A. (2000). Social psychology of identities. *Annual Review of Sociology* 26: 367-393.
- Hübinette, T. & Lundström, C. (2014). Three phases of hegemonic whiteness: understanding racial temporalities in Sweden. *Social Identities* 20(6): 423-437.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Hurd Clarke, L. (2001). Older women's bodies and the self: the construction of identity in later life. *CRSA/RCSA* 38(4): 441-464.
- Hurd, L.C. (1999). "WE'RE NOT OLD!": Older women's negotiation of aging and oldness. *Journal of Aging Studies* 13(4): 419-439.
- Jenkins, R. (1997). *Rethinking Ethnicity: Arguments and Explorations*. London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: Sage Publications.
- Jenkins, R. (2000). Categorization: identity, social process and epistemology. *Current Sociology* 48(3): 7-25.
- Jenkins, R. (2003). Rethinking ethnicity: identity, categorisation and power. In J. Stone & D. Rutledge (eds.) *Race and Ethnicity: Comparative and Theoretical Approaches* (pp. 54-71). Oxford: Blackwell.
- Jenkins, R. (2008). *Social Identity* (3rd ed.). London & New York: Routledge.
- Johansson, A.W. (2001). Inledning: Svensk nationalism och identitet efter andra världskriget [Introduction: Swedish nationalism and identity after World War II]. In A.W. Johansson (ed.) *Vad är Sverige? Röster om svensk nationell identitet [What is Sweden? Voices on Swedish national identity]* (pp. 7-17). Stockholm: Prisma.
- Johnson, M.L. (2005). The social construction of old age as a problem. In M.L. Johnson (ed., with V.L. Bengtson, P.G. Coleman & T.B.L. Kirkwood) *The Cambridge Handbook of Age and Ageing* (pp. 563-571). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Jones, R.L. (2006). 'Older people' talking as if they are not older people: positioning theory as an explanation. *Journal of Aging Studies* 20: 79-91.
- Kambar, R. (2013). *A Family Archive: Construction of Identity in the Assyrian American Diaspora*. Dissertation, New York University, New York, USA.
- Katz, S. (1996). *Disciplining Old Age. The Formation of Gerontological Knowledge*. Charlottesville & London: University Press of Virginia.
- Kaufman, S.R. (1986). *The Ageless Self. Sources of Meaning in Late Life*. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press.
- Kaufman, S.R. (2000). The ageless self. In J.F. Gubrium & J.A. Holstein (eds.) *Aging and Everyday Life* (pp. 103-111). Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.
- Kawakami, A. (2012). *Aging and Identity among Japanese Immigrant Women*. Dissertation, Arizona State University, Arizona, USA.
- Kim, E. (2001). *Leisure Activity of Older Korean Americans in the United States and its Relationship to Cultural Integration and Ethnic Preservation*. Dissertation, University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia, USA.
- Kim, E., Kleiber, D.A. & Kropf, N. (2001). Leisure activity, ethnic preservation, and cultural integration of older Korean Americans. *Journal of Gerontological Social Work* 36(1/2): 107-129.
- Koobak, R. & Thapar-Björkert, S. (2012). Becoming non-Swedish: locating the paradoxes of in/visible identities. *Feminist Review* 102: 125-134.
- Koro-Ljungberg, M. (2008). A social constructionist framing of the research interview. In J.A. Holstein & J.F. Gubrium (eds.) *Handbook of Constructionist Research* (pp. 429-444). New York & London: The Guildford Press.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Krekula, C. (2006). *Kvinna i ålderskodad värld: Om äldre kvinnors förkroppsligade identitetsförhandlingar* [Women in an age-coded world: On older women's embodied identity negotiations]. Dissertation, Uppsala University, Uppsala, Sweden.
- Kuhn, M.H. & McPartland, T.S. (1954). An empirical investigation of self-attitudes. *American Sociological Review* 19(1): 68-76.
- Kuipers, G. (2008). The sociology of humour. In V. Raskin (ed.) *The Primer of Humor Research* (pp. 361-398). Berlin & New York: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Kumsa, M.K. (2006). 'No! I'm not a refugee!': The poetics of be-longing among young Oromos in Toronto. *Journal of Refugee Studies* 19(2): 232-255.
- Kvale, S. & Brinkmann, S. (2009). *InterViews. Learning the Craft of Qualitative Research Interviewing* (2nd ed.). Los Angeles, London, New Delhi, Singapore: Sage.
- Lai, D.W.L. (2012). Ethnic identity of older Chinese in Canada. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Gerontology* 27(2): 103-117.
- Lamont, M. & Molnár, V.G. (2002). The study of boundaries in the social sciences. *Annual Review of Sociology* 28: 167-195.
- Lamont, M. (2000). *The Dignity of Working Men. Morality and the Boundaries of Race, Class, and Immigration*. Cambridge, Massachusetts & London, England: Harvard University Press.
- Larkin, S., Dierckx de Casterlé, B. & Schotsmans, P. (2007). Multilingual translation issues in qualitative research: Reflections on a metaphorical process. *Qualitative Health Research* 17(4): 468-476.
- Laslett, P. (1987). The emergence of the Third Age. *Ageing & Society* 7(2): 133-160.
- Lawler, S. (2014). *Identity. Sociological Perspectives* (2nd ed.). Cambridge, UK & Malden, MA, USA: Polity Press.
- Le Tran, M.-A. (2004). *And the Flesh became Word: A Narrative Study of Identity and Faith Construction in Life Story Interviews with Twelve Vietnamese Women*. Dissertation, Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, Evanston, Illinois, USA.
- Leavey, G., Sembhi, S. & Livingston, G. (2004). Older Irish migrants living in London: identity, loss and return. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 30(4): 763-779.
- Lee, K., Herrera, L.R., Lee, S. & Nakamura, Y. (2012). Seeking "a place where one belongs": elderly Korean immigrant women using day care services in Japan. *Journal of Transcultural Nursing* 23(4): 351-358.
- Lee, S.S.J. (1996). *Social Memory and Ethnicity. The Aging of Korean Residents in Japan*. Dissertation, University of California, San Francisco and Berkeley, California, USA.
- Li, W.W. & Chong, M.D. (2012). Transnationalism, social wellbeing and older Chinese migrants. *Graduate Journal of Asia-Pacific Studies* 8(1): 29-44.
- Li, W.W., Hodgetts, D. & Ho, E. (2010). Gardens, transitions and identity construction among older Chinese immigrants to New Zealand. *Journal of Health Psychology* 15(5): 786-796.
- Li, W.W., Hodgetts, D. & Sonn, C. (2014). Multiple senses of community among older Chinese migrants to New Zealand. *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology* 24(1): 26-36.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Lundgren, A.S. & Ljuslinder, K. (2011). "The baby-boom is over and the ageing shock awaits": populist media imagery in news-press representations of population ageing. *International Journal of Ageing and Later Life* 6(2): 39-71.
- Lundgren, A.S. (2010). "In the good old days": insidious nostalgia and the constitution of old age identity. *Journal of Aging Studies* 24(4): 248-256.
- Lundström, C. (2007). *Svenska Latinas. Ras, klass och kön i svenskhetens geografi* [Swedish Latinas. Race, Class and Gender in the Geography of Swedishness]. Göteborg & Stockholm: Makadam.
- Machat, L. (2010). Bilden av 'äldre invandrare' i äldrepolitiken [Images of 'elderly immigrants' in social policy for older people]. In S. Torres & F. Magnússon (eds.) *Invandrarskap, äldrevård och omsorg* [Migrancy and eldercare] (pp. 55-68). Malmö: Gleerups.
- Machat-From, L. (2011). Decisions at a crossroads: choosing between interviews and focus groups in research on identity in relation to ethnicity/'race' and old age. Poster presented at the 11th *Thinking Qualitatively Workshop Series*, International Institute for Qualitative Methodology, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, June 20-24.
- MacRae, H. (1990). Older women and later life. *Canadian Journal on Aging* 9(3): 248-267.
- Maines, D.R. (2001). *The Faultline of Consciousness: A View of Interactionism in Sociology*. Hawthorne, NY: Aldine de Gruyter.
- Manderson, L., Bennett, E. & Andajani-Sutjahjo, S. (2006). The social dynamics of the interview: age, class, and gender. *Qualitative Health Research* 16(10): 1317-1334.
- Marshall, B.L. (2015). Anti-ageing and identities. In J. Twigg & W. Martin (eds.) *Routledge Handbook of Cultural Gerontology* (pp. 210-217). London & New York: Routledge.
- Mattsson, K. (2001). Ekonomisk rasism. Föreställningar om de Andra inom ekonomisk invandrarforskning [Economic racism. Conceptions of the Others in economic immigrant research]. In M. McEachrane & L. Faye (eds.) *Sverige och de andra: postkoloniala perspektiv* [Sweden and the Others: Postcolonial Perspectives] (pp. 243-264). Stockholm: Natur och Kultur.
- Mattsson, K. (2005). Diskrimineringens andra ansikte – Svenskhet och "det vita västerländska" [The other face of discrimination – Swedishness and "the White Western"]. In P. de Los Reyes & M. Kamali (eds.) *Bortom Vi och Dom: Teoretiska reflektioner om makt, integration och strukturell diskriminering* [Beyond us and them: Theoretical reflections on power, integration and structural discrimination] (pp. 139-157). Stockholm: Statens Offentliga Utredningar, SOU 2005:41.
- Maynard, M., Afshar, H., Franks, M. & Wray, S. (2008). Identities and life course events. In *Women in Later Life. Exploring 'Race' and Ethnicity* (pp. 50-72). Maidenhead, UK: Open University Press.
- McEachrane, M. & Faye, L. (2001). Inledning [Introduction]. In M. McEachrane & L. Faye (eds.) *Sverige och de andra: postkoloniala perspektiv* [Sweden and the Others: Postcolonial Perspectives.] (pp. 7-16). Stockholm: Natur och Kultur.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Mead, G.H. (1934). *Mind, Self & Society from the Standpoint of a Social Behaviourist*. Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press.
- Medina, J. (2003). Identity trouble: disidentification and the problem of difference. *Philosophy & Social Criticism* 29(6): 655-680.
- Mella, O. & Palm, I. (2010). *Mångfaldsbarometern 2010 [Ethnic Diversity Barometer 2010]*. Department of Sociology, Uppsala University.
- Mella, O. (2015). Svenska attityder till mångfald [Swedish attitudes towards diversity]. In F. Ahmadi, O. Mella, I. Palm & M. Darvishpour (2015). *Mångfaldsbarometern: Tio år av attitydmätningar i Sverige [Ethnic Diversity Barometer: Ten Years of Attitudinal Surveys in Sweden]* (pp. 35-59). Gävle: Gävle University Press.
- Mella, O., Palm, I. & Bromark, K. (2011). *Mångfaldsbarometern 2011 [Ethnic Diversity Barometer 2011]*. Department of Sociology, Uppsala University.
- Morgan, D. (1996). Focus groups. *Annual Review of Sociology* 22: 129-152.
- Murphy, J.W. & Longino, C.F. Jr. (1997). Toward a postmodern understanding of aging and identity. *Journal of Aging and Identity* 2(2): 81-91.
- Mutran, E. & Reitzes, D.C. (1981). Retirement, identity and well-being: realignment of role relationships. *Journal of Gerontology* 36(6): 733-740.
- Neugarten, B.L. (1974). Age groups in American society and the rise of the young-old. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 415(1): 187-198.
- Ng, C.F. & Northcott, H.C. (2010). The ethnic and national identity of South Asian immigrant seniors living in Edmonton, Canada. *Canadian Ethnic Studies/Études ethniques au Canada* 41(3): 131-156.
- Nikander, P. (2000). "Old" versus "little girl": a discursive approach to age categorization and morality. *Journal of Aging Studies* 14(4): 335-358.
- Nikander, P. (2009). Doing change and continuity: age identity and the micro-macro divide. *Ageing & Society* 29: 863-881.
- Nilsson, M. (2008). *Våra äldre. Om konstruktioner av äldre i offentligheten [Our elderly. On the social construction of older people in public discourse]*. Linköping Studies in Arts and Science No. 450.
- O'Dell, T. (1998). Junctures of Swedishness: reconsidering representations of the national. *Ethnologia Scandinavica* 28: 20-37.
- Oliver, C. (2011). Pastures new or old? Migration, narrative and change. *Anthropologica* 53(1): 67-77.
- Omi, M. & Winant, H. (1986). *Racial Formation in the United States*. New York: Routledge.
- Peralta, A. (2005). Det sagda och det tänkta: Begreppsanvändning och begreppsskifte i diskursen om invandrare och invandrapolitik [What is said and what is thought: use of terms and changing terminology in the discourse on immigrants and immigrant policy]. In P. de Los Reyes & M. Kamali (eds.) *Bortom Vi och Dom: Teoretiska reflektioner om makt, integration och strukturell diskriminering [Beyond us and them: Theoretical reflections on power, integration and structural discrimination]* (pp. 185-202). Stockholm: Statens Offentliga Utredningar, SOU 2005:41.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Peterson-Veatch, E. (1999). *Sharing Lifestories: An Act of Intimacy*. Dissertation, Indiana University, Indiana, USA.
- Phillipson, C. & Biggs, S. (1998). Modernity and identity: themes and perspectives in the study of older adults. *Journal of Aging and Identity* 3(1): 11-23.
- Phillipson, C. (1998). *Reconstructing Old Age. New Agendas in Social Theory and Practice*. London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: Sage Publications.
- Pini, B. (2005). Interviewing men. Gender and the collection and interpretation of qualitative data. *Journal of Sociology* 41(2): 201-216.
- Pollack, S. (2003). Focus-group methodology in research with incarcerated women: race, power, and collective experience. *Affilia* 18(4): 461-472.
- Potter, J. & Wetherell, M. (1987). *Discourse and Social Psychology. Beyond Attitudes and Behaviour*. London, Newbury Park, Beverly Hills, New Delhi: Sage Publications.
- Powell, J.L. & Gilbert, T. (2009). Introduction: postmodernism and aging identity. In J.L. Powell & T. Gilbert (eds.) *Aging Identity: A Dialogue with Postmodernism* (pp. 1-3). New York: Nova Science Publishers.
- Pred, A. (2000). *Even in Sweden: Racisms, racialized spaces and the popular geographical imagination*. Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press.
- Pyke, K. & Dang, T. (2003). "FOB" and "whitewashed": identity and internalized racism among second generation Asian Americans. *Qualitative Sociology* 26(2): 147-172.
- Remennick, L. (2003). Retired and making a fresh start: older Russian immigrants discuss their adjustment in Israel. *International Migration* 41(5): 153-175.
- Renfrow, D.G. (2004). A cartography of passing in everyday life. *Symbolic Interaction* 27(4): 485-506.
- Roberman, S. (2007a). Fighting to belong: Soviet WWII veterans in Israel. *ETHOS* 35(4): 447-477.
- Roberman, S. (2007b). Commemorative activities of the Great War and the empowerment of elderly immigrant Soviet Jewish veterans in Israel. *Anthropological Quarterly* 80(4): 1035-1064.
- Roberts, S. (2010). Writing *Zuhause*: identity construction of the Korean-German. *Asian Women* 26(4): 28-59.
- Rojas, M. (2001). *Sveriges oölskade barn: att vara svensk men ändå inte [Sweden's unloved children: being Swedish but not quite so]*. Stockholm: Brombergs bokförlag.
- Ronström, O. (2002). The making of older immigrants in Sweden: identification, categorization, and discrimination. In L. Andersson (ed.) *Cultural Gerontology* (pp. 129-138). London & Westport, Connecticut: Auburn House.
- Ronström, O. (ed.) (1996). *Vem ska ta hand om de gamla invandrarna? [Who will take care of the old immigrants?]* FoU-rapport nr. 1996:3, Stockholms socialtjänsts forsknings- och utvecklingsbyrå.
- Roth, E.G., Keimig, L., Rubinstein, R.L., Morgan, L., Eckert, J.K., Goldman, S. & Peebles, A. (2012). Baby Boomers in an active adult retirement community: comity interrupted. *The Gerontologist* 52(2): 189-198.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Runfors, A. (2003). *Mångfald, motsägelser och marginaliseringar: en studie av hur invandrarskap formas i skolan* [Diversity, contradictions and marginalisation: a study of how migrancy is shaped in school]. Stockholm: Prisma.
- Sainsbury, D. (2006). Immigrants' social rights in comparative perspective: welfare regimes, forms of immigration and immigration policy regimes. *Journal of European Social Policy* 16(3): 229-244.
- Salih, R. (2000). Shifting boundaries of self and other. Moroccan migrant women in Italy. *European Journal of Women's Studies* 7: 321-335.
- SCB (Statistiska centralbyrån [Statistics Sweden]) (2012). *Integration – utrikes födda i pensionsåldern* [Integration – foreign born persons of retirement age]. Integration: Report No. 5.
- SCB (Statistiska centralbyrån [Statistics Sweden]) (2017). Statistics database. Available at www.scb.se (Accessed: February 22, 2017).
- Schierup, C.-U. & Ålund, A. (2011). The end of Swedish exceptionalism? Citizenship, neoliberalism and the politics of exclusion. *Race & Class* 53(1): 45-64.
- Scott, S. (2015). *Negotiating Identity. Symbolic Interactionist Approaches to Social Identity*. Cambridge, UK & Malden, MA, USA: Polity Press.
- Seale, C. (1999). *The Quality of Qualitative Research*. London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: Sage Publications.
- Seidman, I. (1998). Affirming informed consent. In *Interviewing as Qualitative Research. A Guide for Researchers in Education and the Social Sciences* (2nd ed., pp. 49-62). New York & London: Teachers College Press.
- SFS (Svensk författningssamling [Swedish Code of Statutes]) 2003:460. *Lag om etikprövning av forskning som avser människor*. [Act on ethical review on research involving humans]. Regeringskansliet.
- Shternshis, A. (2013). Gender and identity in oral histories of elderly Russian Jewish migrants in the United States and Canada. In A. Quayson & G. Daswani (eds.) *A Companion to Diaspora and Transnationalism* (pp. 279-292). Oxford, UK & Cambridge, USA: Blackwell.
- Silverman, D. (2006). The potential of qualitative research: eight reminders. In *Interpreting Qualitative Data. Methods for Analyzing Talk, Text and Interaction* (3rd ed., pp. 377-397). London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: Sage Publications.
- Simmons, L. (1945). *The Role of the Aged in Primitive Society*. New Haven, Massachusetts: Yale University Press.
- Sokolovsky, M. (2003). *A Dialogical Approach to Cultural Identity: A Study Based on Life-Narrative Interviews and Life-Reminiscence Group Sessions with Elderly Jewish Immigrants from the Former Soviet Union*. Dissertation, University of Connecticut, Connecticut, USA.
- SOU (Statens Offentliga Utredningar [Official Reports of the Swedish Government]) 2003:91. *Äldrepolitik för framtiden: 100 steg till trygghet och utveckling med en åldrande befolkning*. [Future social policy for older people: 100 steps towards security and development with an ageing population]. Socialdepartementet.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Spini, D. & Jopp, D.S. (2014). Old age and its challenges to identity. In R. Jaspal & G.M. Breakwell (eds.) *Identity Process Theory. Identity, Social Action and Social Change* (pp. 295-315). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Stephens, K. (ed.) (2009). *Afrikansksvenska röster [African-Swedish voices]*. Malmö: Notis.
- Stone, G.P. (1962). Appearance and the self. In A.M. Rose (ed.) *Human Behavior and Social Processes* (pp. 86-118). Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Strauss, A. & Corbin, J. (1998). *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Suzman, R.M., Manton, K.G. & Willis, D.P. (1992). Introducing the oldest old. In R.M. Suzman, D.P. Willis & K.G. Manton (eds.) *The Oldest Old* (pp. 3-16). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Svanberg, I. & Tydén, M. (2005). *Tusen år av invandring: en svensk kulturhistoria [A thousand years of immigration: a cultural history of Sweden]* (3rd ed.). Stockholm: Dialogos.
- Swann, W.B. & Bosson, J.K. (2008). Identity negotiation. A theory of self and social interaction. In O.P. John, R.W. Robins & L.A. Pervin (eds.) *Handbook of Personality. Theory and Research* (3rd ed., pp. 448-471). New York & London: The Guilford Press.
- Swann, W.B. (1987). Identity negotiation: where two roads meet. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 53(6): 1038-1051.
- Tammeveski, P. (2003). The making of national identity among older Estonians in the United States. *Journal of Aging Studies* 17(4): 399-414.
- Tesfahuney, M. (1998). *Imag(in)ing the Other(s): Migration, Racism and the Discursive Constructions of Migrants*. Uppsala: Geografiska Regionsstudier 34.
- Thomas, L.E., Sokolovsky, M. & Feinberg, R.I. (1996). Ideology, narrative, and identity: the case of elderly Jewish immigrants from the former USSR. *Journal of Aging and Identity* 1(1): 51-72.
- Thomas, W.I. & Thomas, D.S. (1928). The methodology of behavior study. In *The Child in America. Behavior Problems and Programs* (pp. 553-576). New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.
- Torres, S. (2006). Elderly immigrants in Sweden: 'Otherness' under construction. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 32(8): 1341-1358.
- Torres, S. (2010). Etnicitet och invandrarskap [Ethnicity and migrancy]. In S. Torres & F. Magnússon (eds.) *Invandrarskap, äldrevård och omsorg [Migrancy and eldercare]* (pp. 19-40). Malmö: Gleerups.
- Torres, S. (2015a). Expanding the gerontological imagination on ethnicity: conceptual and theoretical perspectives. *Ageing & Society* 35(5): 935-960.
- Torres, S. (2015b). Ethnicity, culture and migration. In J. Twigg & W. Martin (eds.) *Routledge Handbook of Cultural Gerontology* (pp. 277-284). London & New York: Routledge.
- Torres, S. (2016). At the intersection between an elderly care regime and a migration regime: The Swedish case as an example. In U. Karl & S. Torres (eds.) *Ageing in Contexts of Migration* (pp. 15-26). London & New York: Routledge.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Townsend, J., Godfrey, M. & Denby, T. (2006). Heroines, villains and victims: older people's perceptions of others. *Ageing & Society* 26: 883-900.
- Troll, L.E. & McKean Skaff, M. (1997). Perceived continuity of self in very old age. *Psychology and Aging* 12(1): 162-169.
- Turner, B.S. (1994). The postmodernisation of the life course: towards a new social gerontology. *Australian Journal on Ageing* 13(3): 109-111.
- Vadher, K. & Barrett, M. (2009). Boundaries of Britishness in British Indian and Pakistani young adults. *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology* 19: 442-458.
- van Nes, F., Abma, T., Jonsson, H. & Deeg, D. (2010). Language differences in qualitative research: is meaning lost in translation? *European Journal of Ageing* 7: 313-316.
- Varverakis, M. (2011). *Reflected Images: How Lived Experiences Shape the Identities of First-Generation Greek Immigrants*. Dissertation, University of St. Thomas, St. Paul, Minnesota, USA.
- Vignoles, V.L., Schwartz, S.J. & Luyckx, K. (2011). Introduction: Toward an integrative view of identity. In S.J. Schwartz, K. Luyckx & V.L. Vignoles (eds.) *Handbook of Identity Theory and Research* (pp. 1-27). New York: Springer.
- Vryan, K.D., Adler, P.A. & Adler, P. (2003). Identity. In L.T. Reynolds & N.J. Herman-Kinney (eds.) *Handbook of Symbolic Interactionism* (pp. 367-390). Lanham, Boulder, New York, Toronto, Oxford: AltaMira Press.
- Ward, R. & Holland, C. (2011). 'If I look old, I will be treated old': hair and later-life image dilemmas. *Ageing & Society* 31: 288-307.
- Warnes, A.M. & Williams, A. (2006). Older migrants in Europe: a new focus for migration studies. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 32(8): 1257-1281.
- Warnes, A.M., Friedrich, K., Kellaher, L. & Torres, S. (2004). The diversity and welfare of older migrants in Europe. *Ageing and Society* 24: 307-326.
- Weaver, S. (2010). The "Other" laughs back: humour and resistance in anti-racist comedy. *Sociology* 44(1): 31-48.
- Weiss, D. & Lang, F.R. (2012). "They" are old but "I" feel younger: age-group dissociation as a self-protective strategy in old age. *Psychology and Aging* 27(1): 153-163.
- West, C. & Fenstermaker, S. (2002). Doing difference. In S. Fenstermaker & C. West (eds.) *Doing Gender, Doing Difference. Inequality, Power, and Institutional Change* (pp. 55-79). New York & London: Routledge.
- West, C. & Zimmerman, D.H. (2002). Doing gender. In S. Fenstermaker & C. West (eds.) *Doing Gender, Doing Difference. Inequality, Power, and Institutional Change* (pp. 3-23). New York & London: Routledge.
- Wetherell, M. (2010). The field of identity studies. In M. Wetherell & C.T. Mohanty (eds.) *The Sage Handbook of Identities* (pp. 3-26). Los Angeles, London, New Delhi, Singapore, Washington DC: Sage.
- Whitbourne, S.K. (1999). Identity and adaptation to the aging process. In C.D. Ryff & V.W. Marshall (eds.) *The Self and Society in Aging Processes* (pp. 122-149). New York: Springer Publishing Company.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Whitbourne, S.K. (2002). Models of identity and the aging process. In *The Aging Individual. Physical and Psychological Perspectives* (2nd ed., pp. 1-21). New York: Springer Publishing Company.
- White, P. (2006). Migrant populations approaching old age: prospects in Europe. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 32(8): 1283-1300.
- Wilkinson, S. (1998). Focus groups in feminist research: power, interaction, and the co-construction of meaning. *Women's Studies International Forum* 21(1): 111-125.
- Wilson, G. (2009). 'Not old' and 'old': postmodern identities in a new lifestage. In J.L. Powell & T. Gilbert (eds.) *Aging Identity: A Dialogue with Postmodernism* (pp. 69-79). New York: Nova Science Publishers.
- Wimmer, A. (2008). Elementary strategies of ethnic boundary making. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 31(6): 1025-1055.
- Wimmer, A. (2013). *Ethnic Boundary Making. Institutions, Power, Networks*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Wong, J.P.-H. & Poon, M.K.-L. (2010). Bringing translation out of the shadows: translation as an issue of methodological significance in cross-cultural qualitative research. *Journal of Transcultural Nursing* 21(2): 151-158.
- Woodward, K. (1991). Youthfulness as a masquerade... Denial, resistance, and desire. In *Aging and Its Discontents* (pp. 146-165). Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.
- Ylänne-McEwen, V. (1999). 'Young at heart': discourses of age identity in travel agency interaction. *Ageing & Society* 19: 417-440.
- Ylänne-McEwen, V. (2000). Golden times for Golden Agers: selling holidays as lifestyle for the over 50s. *Journal of Communication* Summer 2000: 83-99.
- Yuval-Davis, N. (2006). Intersectionality and feminist politics. *European Journal of Women's Studies* 13(3): 193-209.
- Zevallos, Z. (2008). 'You have to be Anglo and not look like me': identity and belonging among young women of Turkish and Latin American backgrounds in Melbourne, Australia. *Australian Geographer* 39(1): 21-43.
- Zontini, E. (2015). Growing old in a transnational social field: belonging, mobility and identity among Italian migrants. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 38(2): 326-341.

APPENDIX I: INTERVIEW GUIDE

Preparations before starting – things to address:

- My background (PhD candidate, research area, earlier interests + where I am from, where I have lived, about my parents)
- Personal interest in the topic
- (repeat) what the project is about
- Scientific relevance
- Sample selection criteria (double-check that they fit!)
- Great that you decided to participate!
- Go through consent form, hand out info letter (if they haven't already gotten it), explain every detail on the form
- (repeat) what the interview questions are about
- Check if they have any further questions
- Obtain signature, give a copy to interviewee
- Preparation for the interview itself: how it is conducted (focus on individual perspectives and experiences, no “right” or “wrong” answers, just like a regular conversation, okay to pause/think/think aloud and ask questions, asking for explanations etc.)
- Ask whether it is okay to start recording

The interview starts:

GETTING STARTED

1) I thought we'd start with some questions about your background.

Where were you born?

When did you come to Sweden?

Have you lived in any other countries than _____ (country of origin) and Sweden?

How come you moved here?

COMING TO SWEDEN

Now I am going to ask some questions about what it was like coming to Sweden, right when you first got here.

2) What was it like first coming to Sweden, when you think about your ethnic/cultural background in meeting/encountering Swedes and Swedish society?

3) Thinking back to that period in time, can you think of any particular situations or contexts where you felt that it became evident or clear that you were from another country (than Sweden), that is, when you think about your ethnic/cultural identity? In meeting/encountering Sweden and Swedes.

4) When thinking about how you yourself felt, then, were there any particular situations or contexts that you remember feeling strongly that you weren't originally from Sweden?

APPENDICES

5) Do you feel that anything changed with time when it comes to how you yourself feel about your ethnic/cultural identity?

IDENTITY

Now I am going to ask some other questions that have more to do with how you regard yourself, how you would describe your identity.

6) Imagine you met someone who is an acquaintance of one of your friends, or a friend of a friend. Supposing you had never met this person before and you were to tell them who you are, what would you say; how would you describe yourself?

7) You did/not mention _____ (your ethnic/cultural background) – do you feel that this is/not central to who you are?

8) You did/not mention _____ (your age) – do you feel that this is/not central to who you are?

9) Supposing you were in the same situation around 15/20/30 years ago (when you first came to Sweden) – that is, how you would describe yourself to a friend of a friend whom you haven't met before, and were to tell them who you are, and describe yourself – do you think you would have answered differently at that point in time? What do you think you would have answered back then?

MIGRANCY TODAY...

Now we've already talked a bit about what it was like coming to Sweden with another ethnic/cultural background back then, and what it was like encountering Swedes and Swedish society.

10) Coming back to the present, then – now you've lived quite a large part of your life in Sweden. What is it like today?

11) Has it changed at all, then compared to now, what it is like encountering/meeting Swedes and Swedish society, when you think of your ethnic/cultural background?

12) When thinking of your daily life today, whatever you do, can you think of any particular situations or contexts where you feel that it becomes evident or clear that you are from another country (than Sweden), that is, when thinking of your ethnic/cultural identity?

13) When thinking more about how you yourself feel today, are there any particular situations or contexts you can think of where you strongly feel that you aren't originally from Sweden?

14) Do you think that your experiences had been different if you had moved here from another country [than your country of origin]? In what way(s)?

"ELDERLY IMMIGRANTS"

Now we've talked a bit about questions concerning ethnicity/culture, and we'll soon talk more about questions concerning age. First I thought I'd ask how you feel about this term (or category) "elderly immigrant". In social policy contexts, "elderly immigrants" are often discussed as a challenge and a bit of a problem for future elder care, presuming that "elderly immigrants" have "special needs" that are different from the needs of other older people.

APPENDICES

- 15) Have you heard about this discussion before?
- 16) Other than that, what do you think about this category – what do you think of when you hear the term “elderly immigrant”?

OLD AGE

Now it's time to talk a bit more about age. Now we've talked a bit about what it was like when you first came here and what it is like today when it comes to your ethnic/cultural identity. One thing that differs between then and now is of course your age.

- 17) How do you feel [or think] about your own age, that is, the age you are today?
- 18) How do you feel [or think] about ageing and growing older here in Sweden now?
- 19) Can you think of any particular situations or contexts where you yourself feel old?
- 20) When you say that you (do not) feel old, what does that mean/entail?
- 21) When thinking once more about your daily life today, are there any particular situations or contexts where you have felt that others treat you as old or as an older person?

FINISHING UP AND “BACKGROUND FACTS”

Now we're actually almost done! I've just got a couple of simple “background fact” type of questions left, but first I wonder:

- 22) Is there anything I didn't ask that you feel I should have asked about?
- 23) Have you thought of anything else/anything more about the topics we have talked about? Is there otherwise anything else you would like to add?

Then there are only a couple of “background fact” questions left...

- 24) When were you born?
- 25) Are you married?
- 26) Do you have any children?
- 27) What do you/did you work with? Is that the same or a different occupation as compared to before you migrated? Has this corresponded to your qualifications?
- 28) What about your contacts with _____ (country of origin) – do you visit sometimes? How often?
- 29) Have you ever considered returning to _____ (country of origin)? How do you feel about that today?

I guess that's all the questions I had... Thank you so much for doing this interview!

APPENDIX II: LETTER OF INFORMATION

INTERVIEWEES WANTED!

What is this about?

I am looking for volunteers to interview for a research project – my dissertation – which focuses on identity in relation to on the one hand growing older and on the other hand having migrated earlier in life. There is very little research that looks into identity in relation to both old age and migrancy. Those who have conducted research on identity in relation to old age have mostly not been interested in migrants, and those who have conducted research on identity among foreign-born persons have most of all focused on the younger generations. The overarching aim of the study is to shed light onto identity processes related to both old age and migrancy because we have so little knowledge about identity in relation to these two aspects. Therefore I hope that my study will be able to fill some knowledge gaps and contribute to the development of theories.

Who am I?

My name is Laura Machat-From and I am a PhD candidate at the National Institute for the Study of Ageing and Later Life (NISAL) at Linköping University. During my previous studies I specialised in the field of Migration and Ethnic Studies. I am now combining both fields of interest in my dissertation, with identity in focus. Originally I am from Germany.

Whom am I looking for?

I am interested in interviewing people who

- were born abroad,
- moved to Sweden at least 15 years ago,
- speak Swedish (or English)
- are aged 55-60 or preferably older.

How does it all work?

Participation in the study is of course entirely voluntary. If you match the description and are interested in being interviewed, we'll get in touch first and I'll answer any kinds of questions you might have. If you then decide that you want to be interviewed, we'll agree on a time and place to meet. You can choose where and when you'd like to meet up with me.

The interview itself will take between one and two hours and will address questions concerning your experiences of having moved here from abroad, living in Sweden with a foreign background and growing older here.

The interview will be tape recorded. Your answers and your results will be handled in such a way that no unauthorised persons will have access to them. You will also be anonymous in the study, which means that one won't be able to tell that you're the one I talked to.

What happens next?

After the interview I'll first transcribe the recording, that is to say I'll write down our conversation so that it becomes a text. If you want to, you'll have the opportunity of receiving a copy of this text. Once I've completed all interviews I'll analyse the material and then write about the results in my dissertation. You're also welcome to receive a copy of it once it's finished!

Please feel free to contact me if you are interested in participating in the study, or know anyone else who might be interested! Participation is entirely voluntary and you have the right to withdraw from the study at any time you wish.

Laura Machat-From, NISAL, ISV, Linköping University

E-mail: laura.machat-from@liu.se Telephone: xxx-xx xx xx Mobile: xxx-xxx xx xx

[Linköpings universitet](http://www.liu.se)

NISAL, Nationella institutet för forskning om äldre och åldrande
ISV, Institutionen för samhälls- och välfärdsstudier
SE - 601 74 Norrköping
www.isv.liu.se/nisal

APPENDIX III: FORM OF CONSENT

FORM OF CONSENT

Title of the project: Identity, migrancy and old age: Identity negotiations and intersecting social positions

Project leader: Laura Machat-From, PhD Candidate, NISAL, Linköping University

Participant's first and last name:

I, the participant, hereby confirm that I have been informed about the study's background and aim and have also had the opportunity to ask questions, which have been answered.

I understand that my information will be treated confidentially and that I will be anonymous in the study. I understand that my answers and my results will be handled in such a way that no unauthorised persons will have access to them.

I give my consent for the interview to be audio recorded.

I understand that I have the right to withdraw my participation in the study at any time I wish, without having to offer any particular explanation.

I hereby consent to participate in the study.

Place, date _____

Signature _____

Contact information for project leader:

Laura Machat-From

NISAL/ISV

Linköping University

SE-601 74 Norrköping

E-mail: laura.machat-from@liu.se

Telephone: xxx-xx xx xx

Mobile: xxx-xxx xx xx

Fax: xxx-xx xx xx

[Linköpings universitet](http://www.liu.se)

NISAL, Nationella institutet för forskning om äldre och åldrande

ISV, Institutionen för samhälls- och välfärdsstudier

SE - 601 74 Norrköping

www.isv.liu.se/nisal