Kosovar Albanian Identity within Migration in the Swedish society

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ABSTRACT

Within migration and globalization the concept of ethnic identity, religious identity and belonging have come to play a significant role in both immigrants’ lives and as well in social context. Sweden, as a multicultural society has been dealing with different ethnic groups of immigrants and the way these minority groups perceive themselves to be and how they are perceived by others in the society has also come to be of high importance. By migrating people also change their position. They often occupy inferior positions in the society when they settle down in the new country. Identity as a phenomenon is very abstract. It is a process that is shaped by social processes. My own thoughts to the questions of identity shape and belonging inspired me to specifically look into the Kosovar Albanian immigrants in Sweden and investigate their views and experiences of their shapes and changes of identity while living in Sweden, where they constantly are facing cultural differences. I wanted to research this phenomenon, partly because this subject lies personally close to me and see if other Kosovar Albanians share the same experiences.

From the experiences of the respondents that were selected during the interviews it is shown that immigrants are always in between two cultures, which gives the sense of confusion while they do not know where ‘home’ really is. The respondents show everything from how they feel themselves to how they are perceived by others. They have a background with different values and norms, they have an existing identity and they are influenced by Swedish values and norms, which leads to identity shape. The important theories that are described in the text strengthen the respondents’ views and experiences and give a broader understanding to the issue of identity. Ethnicity, culture, religion, diaspora and transnationalism are highly crucial to the subject. The historical background of the Kosovar Albanians is also important because of their pre-existing national and ethnic feelings about their country as an independent state and their rights to express their culture.

Keywords: identity, ethnicity, first & second generation immigrants, culture, diaspora, transnationalism, ‘Kosovar’ identity.¹

¹ The term ‘Kosovar’ emerged after the war to include the people of Kosova as Kosovars, despite their ethnicity. I would also like to add that during the whole research I will be using the word Kosova instead of Kosovo, because Kosova is the officially word used by Albanians. There is an uncertainty about the name of the country. People who will read this paper may question; is it Kosovo or Kosova? The Serbian people use the term Kosovo,
while the Albanians say Kosova. Kjell Magnusson (1993) argues that the term Kosovo is more known and used internationally; however, he states that both terms are correct.
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1. INTRODUCTION

In today’s multicultural Swedish society, the conceptions of what identity, belonging and religion are to many young people have evoked curiosity. Traditional sources such as the family, the nation, the ethnic group and the religion are playing significant roles in people’s lives, in particular young immigrant’s lives. By settling in an entirely different country the immigrants’ identities start to shape and they end up living an ambiguous life between two cultures. Identity normally is a process and it is formed by social processes. People have a given identity; they are born into an identity which is constructed. When facing different values and views in a different society, the identity then can deconstruct and take new forms. Notwithstanding globalisation and the universalisation of modernity, cultural differences continue to exist, within and between places, within and between nations and ethnic groups. Ethnic identity is perceived as a set of cultural traditions associated with a minority group, which originally is distinguished from religion. According to this view, what is cultural and what is religious should be distinguished. When you commit yourself to faith, you accept the set of absolute truths for all time in life. Ethnic identity on the other hand, is the tradition, which was brought here from the older generation of immigrants, a tradition that the younger immigrants are challenging today. According to Gerd Baumann, ethnic groups are formed by ethnic categories, which are defined with reference to a culture or nation they are assumed to share. When we for instance talk about Kosovar Albanian, Albanian ‘community’, or Muslim ‘community’, people are valued as members of a special collective. In ethnic minority cases they share a culture and as Baumann puts it in his own words, “...’community’ can function as the conceptual bridge that connects culture with ethnos.”

Many times it is religion that forms our views, beliefs and our personal identity. It does not ask you where you come from or what nation you belong to. Religion is who you are now and what you believe in now. Religion is a significant aspect of social life and within migration religious practices have become highly important parts of many individuals’ lives. This is due to the reason that many immigrants tend to find comfort and ‘belongingness’ in a community

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2 Jacobson, Jessica 1998: 144
3 Baumann, Gerd 1996: 12
4 Ibid. p. 16
of their own group in the society where they feel ‘excluded’. Many of the immigrants’ actions and behaviours are influenced by religious values.5

Today there are many multicultural countries, including Sweden with a great number of different cultures within the same country. It is common that while living in a country you automatically are inspired by the habits of its people, behaviours, food habits, values and their attitudes on how one should behave, act etc. However, the past should not be excluded, while that is already an existing identity.

Investigating the changes and shapes of identities of immigrants within migration would be very extensive and hard to make a limit. I chose therefore to narrow and put my main focus on a specific ethnic group in the Swedish society, namely the Kosovar Albanians, (both first and second-generation immigrants) who mostly migrated to Sweden in the beginning of 1990 century. Nowadays it has become much easier to choose or to attach to an identity through globalization. The notion of migration is being developed into a dilemma uniting the modern world, times with places, Europe with America. However, identities change and increase within globalization, migration and contacts between different regions, cultures and religions in the world. In general, people who migrate to Sweden change their position in the social structure by occupying the inferior social positions in the country of destination. The physical moving from one territory to another has also consequences in identity terms. The migrants then become a social and cultural minority when they arrive in Sweden located at the edge of the social system. This shows the power relations between the majority and the minority groups in the society. The main problem immigrants are faced with in the host country is the fact that they are always in between two cultures. However, this does not happen to all the immigrants and does not happen all the time but in the case of my selected group, Kosovar Albanians in Sweden, their identity is really undergoing a transformation.

Swedish Kosovar Albanians live in an ambivalent society. They think of their youth and experiences from Kosova which make them nostalgic. The younger immigrants learn about Kosova and about the way of life and the meaning of Islam from their parents. They also get to learn and understand more about their heritage and their own people from the summer vacations that they often spend in Kosova. Growing up with other friends from their country

5 McGuire, Meredith B. 2002 : 1
in Sweden, they learn much about their shared heritage as well. At the same time, they learn about the Swedish culture of which they are a part and which is a part of them. Still, they find out that they can never really be Swedish because of their background and religion. The elder generation of Kosovar Albanians in Sweden want their children to integrate into the Swedish society and move forward with education but at the same time they fear that their children might pick up Western values and ideas and forget about their roots.

1. AIM & RESEARCH QUESTIONS
My aim of this study is to closely investigate how the identity of an individual is shaped by migrating to a different country, in this case how the identity is shaped of Kosovar Albanians, who moved from Kosova during the 1990s to Sweden and the Kosovar Albanians living in the Swedish society today. I shall be looking at the ethnic, cultural and religious identities of Kosovar Albanians living in Sweden and shall seek to understand the ways in which these identities appear to have been shaped by their experiences of being a part of the Kosovar Albanian community and being raised with general traditions within that community and of at the same time living in a different society. When also taking into consideration the history background of the respondents, their ethnic and national identity has always been denied and oppressed by Yugoslavia, who never recognized the Kosovar Albanians. Their national identity has therefore played a significant role in their lives all the time. I would want to see what kinds of factors are important according to their own views and perceptions. The research questions that I would like to look in more detail are:

- How do the Kosovar Albanian immigrants define their own identities?
- How do the immigrants feel that they are perceived from other people in their surroundings?
- Where do the respondents feel that they belong to?
- What does being ‘Swedish’ and being ‘Kosovar Albanian’ mean to them?
- In what way does religion act as a source of identity and what do the immigrants feel they gain from the religion?
1.2 BACKGROUND
It is important to be aware of different definitions, like the ‘Kosovar’ identity and first- and generation immigrants as a reader to this text. What is moreover important in order to understand the Kosovar Albanian identity one needs to go back to the history of Kosova and Albanians, because ethnic identity has been a crucial factor for these people for many years.

1.2.1 DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS
In this part I will explain two concepts that are important definitions of this work. Instead of as most people commonly say Kosovo Albanians, I prefer to define them as Kosovar Albanians since the term ‘Kosovar’ emerged after the war and has become a significant definition of identity. The other definitions I will explain are the term immigrant, first generation and second generation immigrant.

1.2.2 THE CONCEPT OF ‘KOSOVAR’ IDENTITY
It is after the international invention in Kosova that the term ‘Kosovar’ has emerged. The term is used to refer to the whole population of Kosova disregarding ethnicity. The term derives from Albanian and means ‘person from Kosova’. In a research paper before the declaration of Kosova’s independence it is discussed about the term ‘Kosovar identity’ and it is argued that some Serbian leaders have indicated that they will not support the development of a Kosova territorial identity, since they fear that this will help the Kosovar Albanians to gain independence, despite that even Serbs consider themselves to be ‘Kosovars’. From being a province of the former Yugoslavia with a majority of people dreaming of Albania and later under UN jurisdiction, Kosova experienced a political culture based on ethnic and nationalistic attitudes in the transition from the Yugoslav nation-state to a new Kosova nation-state. The United States of America were the first among all international agencies that used the term ‘Kosovars’ to categorize the population of Kosova.

Migjen Kelmendi, an Albanian linguist and editor from Kosova said that the question of the creation of Kosovar identity is critical meaning that the Albanian Muslims who form a large

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6 http://www.aasmundandersen.net/docs/Kosovar_Identity_feb02_TexasPCA.htm
7 Ibid.
majority of Kosova “think of themselves in terms of their Albanian ethnicity, and they think that questioning that makes them a traitor”.8

1.2.3 ‘IMMIGRANTS’; FIRST GENERATION IMMIGRANTS AND SECOND GENERATION IMMIGRANTS

As we all know migration is when people move and resettle to another different country. People move from (emigration) and move to (immigration) a country. As more and more people are moving and settling to a new country today than at any other point in human history, migration in general, is considered to be one of the defining issues of globalization of the early twenty-first century.9 The term immigrant includes persons who move to a country, for instance, Sweden because of different reasons, for example, students, political refugees, work-immigrants and family reunifications. In order to be regarded as an immigrant one should immigrate and settle in Sweden during a longer period. Students, guests, tourists and those who live in Sweden temporary are not considered to be immigrants in everyday life. The children of those who have immigrated (the children of first-generation immigrants) or children who have themselves immigrated are referred as second-generation immigrants or young immigrants. Young people or children who are born in another country than Sweden, or who have one or both parents that are foreign-born are counted as young immigrants or second-generation immigrants. In some public debates it is also being spoken about that even a “third-generation of immigrants” (grandchildren of first-generation immigrants) is about to become of significance eventually. Lately, the term immigrant has been questioned from different ways and aspects. Public investigations have emphasized the weight of that to a great extent avoid the term ‘immigrant’, ‘young immigrants’ and ‘second-generation immigrants’. The only persons who should be referred as ‘immigrants’, are those persons who have recently moved to Sweden. The foreign-born people who have actually lived for a longer period in Sweden should be called persons with foreign background. According to this view, young people with one or both parents born abroad also ought to be referred as persons with foreign background.10

8 http://mrcheeseburger9000.wordpress.com/2007/12/17/are-you-my-mother-or-is-kosovo-struggling-to-forge-an-identity/
9 http://www.iom.int/jahia/Jahia/lang/en/pid/3
10 www.sverigemotrasism.nu
1. 3 HISTORY OF KOSOVA

There are approximately 2.2 million inhabitants in Kosova, whereas 95% of the population consists of ethnic Albanians and the rest are minorities of Serbs, Turks, Bosnians and Roma people.11 To fully address the relationship between Albanians and Serbs and their struggles in Kosova one must go back centuries. Both Albanians and Serbs consider to having “the historical right” to Kosova. Albanians believe to have stronger historical right to Kosova than the Serbs. They claim that they originate from the “Illyrians” who populated that area, during antiquity, that today consist of Kosova.12 According to the web page of Albanian history, data drawn from history has led to the conclusion that Albanians are the direct descendants of the ancient Illyrians and that the latter were natives of the lands they inhabited. Similarly, the Albanian language derives from the language of the Illyrians. In the beginning of 9th century, Albania came under the domination of a succession of foreign powers; Bulgarians, Italians and Serbs. In 1347, the country was occupied by Serbs, and this was the final occupation that caused massive migrations of Albanians abroad. A few decades later the country was confronted with a new threat. The Ottoman Turks invaded Albania and Kosova and expanded their power in the Balkans in 1389 and ruled until 1913.13 During the Ottoman Empire an Albanian national hero showed up, by the name “Skanderbeg”. He fought against the Ottoman Turks and he succeeded to drive the occupiers out, but when he died the Turks reoccupied the country again. The history of the hero “Skanderbeg” is very crucial to Albanians. His long struggle against the Ottomans and his will to keep Albania and the Albanians free became a highly significance for the Albanian identity and this strengthened their will to get freedom. Their solidarity were also strengthened and the history of “Skanderbeg” made them more conscious of their national identity, and it later came to be a great source of inspiration in Albanians struggle for national unity, freedom and independence.14 In 1912 Albania became independent. Half of Albania’s territory and 40% of its population were taken. An independent Albania was created, but Kosova ended outside and was occupied by Serbia.15

Yugoslavia was created after Second World War and Kosova became e province within that state. Albanians in Kosova were discriminated and treated as a second-class people, despite

11 http://sv.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kosovo
13 http://www.albanian.com/information/history/ottoman.html
14 Ibid.
15 Sturesjö, Örjan, Scheiman, Sebastian. 1997: 4-5
the fact that they were a majority group in Kosova. The Albanian language was not allowed officially and the very few schools teaching Albanian were closed. One of many other reasons that Kosova did not get a republic state in Yugoslavia was the fear that it would then want to connect to Albania. After the Second World War when Tito who was a Croat came into power in Yugoslavia things turned better for the Kosovar Albanians. Tito's greatest strength was holding back nationalist revolutions and maintaining unity throughout the country in the 1970s. Somehow ethnic identities during this time were weakened. Yugoslavia was more liberal than many Western European countries at this time and ethnicity was considered a non-issue. The economic situation was flourishing even among Albanians. When the Serbian Slobodan Milosevic came into power after Tito’s death ethnic divisions and conflicts grew enormously. Things turned enormously bad for the Albanians in Kosova. Albanians held demonstrations over and over again in Kosova during the 1980s. They wanted to be treated like the rest of the Yugoslav people and that the persecution and the terror would stop. Since 1991 four of the republics- Slovenia, Bosnia, Croatia, and Macedonia have declared independence and left the Yugoslavian state. Kosova still remained a province in Yugoslavia and hoped that the international community would be aware of the crisis in Kosova and play a significant role in resolving it. Milosevic continued to restrict Kosovar Albanians political and cultural expressions. Police violence and arrests towards Kosovar Albanians became a routine practice and many Albanians in Kosova were forced to leave the country and immigrate to European countries. The feeling of nationalism grew more among Albanians as a reaction to oppression by Milosevic and the Serb police forces.

1. 3. 1 THE WAR 1998-1999

When the international community failed to take a proactive position in resolving the disagreement with Serbia the liberation army of Kosova KLA (UÇK in Albanian), which was created attacked the Serbian army during a demonstration. Serbia responded to the KLA's increasing strength by increasing assaults on Kosovar Albanian villages and massacres of Kosovar Albanian populations, which were exposed by international human rights monitors. Since Serbia refused to sign the peace-plan that was held in the Rambouillet contract that ensured Kosova autonomy NATO airstrikes began in March 1999. While Serbia began

16 Ibid. p.37-38
18 http://folk.uio.no/geirthe/Identity_politics.html
19 Sturesjö, Örjan, Scheiman, Sebastian. 1997: 42
deporting the ethnic Albanians in masses from Kosova, it also began a major offensive against
the KLA. There were about 850,000 refugees fleeing from Kosova. UNHCR and other
humanitarian agencies quickly assisted the refugees in Albania and Macedonia. After 78 days
of bombing, the international community proposed a peace plan including that a civil and
security presence would be positioned. Serbia finally accepted. The Serb forces were driven
out from Kosova when the air campaign was finished in 10th June 1999 and new
peacekeeping NATO forces (KFOR) were sent to supervise the peace and disarm KLA.
NATO was criticized for the intervention and for its defence NATO claimed that their actions
were both legally and morally right when it came to avoid a human disaster.²⁰

1. 3. 2 THE INTERNATIONAL INTERVENTION IN KOSOVA AND THE
DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE
When the war was over the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo
(UNMIK) immediately established a presence on the ground. The mission (UNMIK) had four
pillars: civil administration, under the United Nations itself; humanitarian assistance, led by
UNHCR; democratization and institution-building, led by the OSCE; and economic
reconstruction, managed by the European Union.²¹ The security focused a lot on protecting
non-Albanian minorities, such as Serbs and Rome people. It was a tense situation between
ethnic Albanians and these minority groups. It was as clear in 1999 as it is today that the
Kosovars would never again allow themselves to be governed from Belgrade. There were two
options set for Kosova about the issue of independence. The first option meant that Kosova
should be entirely independent but still protecting the Serb minority population. The other
consideration was for Kosova to be partitioned, with at least some of the current Serb
populated areas returned to Serbia.²² A policy was set for Kosova to put the standards before
the status in order to reach to the goal of establishing a multi-ethnic, stable and democratic
society. The international community tried to integrate all the ethnicities by peacekeeping in
the civil society of Kosova. It was actually here where the question if Albanians could accept
Serbs as a minority group in order to gain full independence arose.²³ Finally, on 17 February
2008 Kosova was declared independent from Serbia; being a democratic, secular and multi-

²⁰ Nicholas J. Wheeler. 2001: 153
²³ http://www.unmikonline.org/news.htm#0505
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ethnic republic and it has been recognized by 52 UN member states until now. Many states, as Russia and Serbia have, however opposed to the declaration of Kosova.24

1. 4 DISPOSITION OF THE WORK
My research work begins with an introduction, which will give the reader a sight in my subject and why I have chosen to write about Kosovar Albanian identity in Swedish society within migration. The reason to why I have chosen to write about identity shapes is not a surprise to me, because it is a part of my daily life as well as it is for my respondents. In chapter one, I also describe the aim and research questions of the study and shortly after, I give definitions of different concepts and the background and history of the ethnic group, Kosovar Albanians that I am going to put my main focus on, will be depicted. Why ethnicity matters are so important for Kosovar Albanians will be explained in that part.

In chapter two, a deep methodology is treated, and I strain myself to describe the reason and focus to why I chose qualitative approaches as a method. Furthermore, I go in to explain why I have chosen interviewing as a method and the intention of the interview. I also elaborate how the process of the interviews have been carried on and worked out and give my focus on the Kosovar Albanians as a group.

In chapter three, I will come more to a theoretical part where different existing theories in life will be defined and where the reader will have an insight over the theories that occur and how we can relate ourselves to the theories. Firstly, identity will be described as a phenomenon and basic view that mainly is about how the individual experience himself/herself to be in the society. The way you perceive yourself to be is then affected by the way other people perceive you. I describe self-identity and social identity as important parts of identity. Then will different aspects of identity be described, such as cultural identity, which also is a very important part when it comes to cultural differences between two ethnic groups and living between two cultures, as my respondents are positioned in. The coming aspect ethnic identity can to a certain level make it easier for us to understand the immigrants’ struggle regarding their identity and belonging. Ethnicity is a great part in every human being’s life as it reflects the picture of the individual. With the concept of ethnicity the individual feels belonging and can identify herself/himself with a specific country and people. Furthermore, I go into explain

nationalism, which is also important to the Kosovar Albanian identity. As the majority of my respondents are Muslims, the religious identity has also come to be a significant part in their lives.

In *chapter four*, I have come to the analysis and results of the work. In the beginning a brief description of my respondents will be given in order for the reader to relate to the analysis on a personal level. The interviews with my respondents are thoroughly analyzed and examples from the theoretical framework are also given. The changes that have been informed through the respondents’ eyes are many. My respondents have discussed in detail everything in how they are, how they value things and how they behave to how they maybe would have wanted to be but are restricted because of their ethnic and religious belonging and the obstacles they face in the society. My respondents show in a clear way that it is possible to be a part of two cultures and they have more possibilities and benefits from that. However, they show that in the end they end up in confusion when always being in between. They refer themselves as Swedish Kosovar Albanian, but they do not really know where their home is. While being in Kosova, they feel happy, but they eventually want to come back to Sweden. However, when they come to Sweden, they meet obstacles in many ways because of their ethnic and religious belonging. They, then come to highly value their traditions and religion and find a comfort with that. They come to feel that they are a part of the Swedish society, but belong to the Kosovar Albanian community in Sweden. Sometimes, as one of my respondents said, they do not belong anywhere, maybe somewhere up in the air.

In *chapter five*, I give my own reflections to the study and the research questions and in *chapter six* I finally make a conclusion to the results and analysis of my research work.

2. METHODOLOGY

After having established a topic, and research questions it was time to look into what methods I could use for my research work. In this chapter I will strengthen my investigation by explaining what qualitative methods are and how I will be conducting my interview. My aim of exploring the ethnic, national and religious identities of Swedish Kosovar Albanian immigrants requires the use of qualitative methods, involving a series of interviews and discussions with the Kosovar Albanians in Sweden, as I believe gives a deeper and broader picture than quantitative methods. I will also be using existing literature study for the
theoretical part. My intention is mostly to look into both the elder and the younger generation of Albanian immigrants from Kosova seeing as both generations are significant to the identity formation in their own ways. I will investigate the ways in which the younger immigrants’ experiences by growing up in Sweden influence attitudes to the concept of ethnicity and religion as well. The elder generation of immigrants are also of high importance to look how they influence attitudes to the concept of ethnicity and religion, for the reason that ever since the arrival in Sweden they have been in the position of constantly adapting to the new country. The reason why I chose purposely the Kosovar Albanians as an ethnic group is mainly because not much research works have been made about Kosovar Albanians and their identities in Sweden specifically. Most research works that have been made are about Yugoslavian people and Balkan people in general, including Kosovar Albanians as a group of former Yugoslavia and the part of Balkan. Since, ethnicity is the main issue that has torn Yugoslavia apart; ethnic identity for Kosovar Albanians is also historically concerned and therefore it would be interesting to see how that identity is maintained when living as an immigrant in Sweden. What emphasized me the most in writing this topic is primarily because this subject to me is close associated. This investigation is of high importance and relevance also for my everyday life because as a Kosovar Albanian immigrant in Sweden myself I am situated in an ambiguous life between two cultures. In a way, while investigating the shape of identity of Kosovar Albanian immigrants in Swedish society, I will be exploring myself and my own identity as well. To write about such a broad topic as the shapes and changes of identity within migration tempts to a great freedom because this has been discussed all the time in Sweden and it is distinguished from case to case.

2.1 QUALITATIVE METHODS

There are two ways in which one can use methods; the use of qualitative or quantitative methods. I will describe what is meant by qualitative methods in order to show why qualitative methods are relevant and useful to my study. The major difference between qualitative and quantitative methods is that the qualitative data typically involves words and quantitative data involves numbers. When using qualitative methods, it is thought that by participating or being immersed in the research situation the researcher or the writer can learn the most by it. The researchers of qualitative approaches collect, analyze, describe and interpret data by observing what people do and say.25 The purpose of research is to discover

25 Berg, Bruce L. 2004: 2-3
answers to questions by examining various social settings and the individuals who inhabit these settings in social constructions. Qualitative researchers are then interested in meaning, how people make sense of their lives, experiences and surroundings through symbols, rituals, social structures and social roles.\textsuperscript{26} Basically, qualitative researchers are not only interested in what the respondents are saying but also \textit{how} they are answering the questions. The critiques of qualitative approaches are that, sometimes they focus too closely on individual results and fail to make connections to larger situations or possible causes of the results.” \textsuperscript{27}

There are two basic elements that distinguish reflected research: interpretation and reflection. Interpretation means that empirical references are results of interpretation. Interpretations are made by expectations, wishes, and earlier experiences. The idea that observations and interviews for example stand in a clear-cut relation to something outside the empirical material is thus principally rejected. The observation of the interpretations’ fundamental meaning makes that a simple thesis of reflection between the ‘reality’ or ‘empirical facts’ and the results of the research must be rejected. The interpretation then ends up in centre of the research work. To make theoretical assumptions, the meaning of the language and the meaning of understandings, which are very important decisions behind the interpretation, it is acquired to be carefully conscious. Reflection on the other hand, looks ‘inside’ into the person of research, looks into her society of research, society as a whole, intellectual and cultural traditions as well as the central meaning of language and story in the research context. Reflection can be defined as interpretation of interpretation and an ongoing self critique of own interpretations of empirical material.\textsuperscript{28} Reflection means to take a step back from the interpretation and interpret your own interpretations.

\textbf{2.2 INTERVIEW AS METHOD}

One of the most useful (and relevant to my topic) qualitative techniques is interviewing and the purpose of that is to simply gather information. In interviews it is assumed that there is a questioner and one or more interviewees. The people who you choose to interview can provide with their own words their situation in life through their own perspectives to you. To achieve the people’s experiences of everyday life through investigation the qualitative

\textsuperscript{26} Ibid. p.7
\textsuperscript{27} http://writings.colostate.edu/guides/research/observe/com2d3.cf
\textsuperscript{28} Alvesson, Mats, Sköldberg, Kaj. 1994: 12
interview is the most unique sensitive and powerful way to use as a method. 29 According to Kvale, the researcher who makes the interviews wants to find out specific information about the respondents’ everyday life and not only their opinions. The researcher must carefully observe what the respondents are saying and they must be critical to their own assumptions. Therefore, it is of importance that the researcher has interpreted the interviewees’ answers in a correct way. What makes an interview reliable and trustworthy according to Kvale is that you are associated to the topic and have a pre-knowledge about it and listen carefully to the respondents. In order for the readers to have the possibility to interpret and judge the credibility in the text by themselves I have been striving to provide a good balance between the respondents’ quotations and other commented texts and theories, while the study is based on interviews. The different theories that I have chosen as relevant to this subject will strengthen the empirical analysis. Another thing that could make my analysis trustworthy and reliable is that I am myself associated to the topic and subject and have a pre-knowledge about it. My way of doing the interviews has been to write down questions that are related to the concept of identity and my aim and research questions. (See appendix) Thereafter, I have in a careful way listened and written down the answers of my respondents. If some of my questions did not provide relevant responds I continued with follow-up questions to give a flow to our conversations. The starting point of my research was to bring about a more comfortable situation as possible so that my respondents could feel free to express themselves. Therefore, I chose to visit my respondents in person at their home.

Robert K. Merton in The Focused Interview. A Manual of Problems and Procedures argues that the persons who are interviewed are known to have been involved in a particular situation. “…the interview is focused on the subjective experiences of persons exposed to the pre-analyzed situation in an effort to ascertain their definitions of the situation”. 30 The use of interviews uncovers a diversity of relevant responses as Merton argues. 31 In qualitative approaches you try to explain the meaning of what the respondent is answering. Interviews are about meaning and the meaning I wanted to achieve was how identity as a phenomenon is socially constructed. I have been interviewing a group of people with a social scientific connection to identity within the topic that I am going to investigate. As mentioned above, my way of doing that has been to make an oral communication with my respondents and then try

29 Kvale 1997: 70
30 Merton 1990: 3
31 Ibid. p. 12
to analyze what they have said with the help of the theory. I have been using unstructured interviewing, which involves direct interaction between the researcher and the respondent. As unstructured interviews operate from a set of different assumptions, in advance the interviewees do not know what all the questions are and the interviewer is free to move the conversation in any direction of interest that may come up.\textsuperscript{32} “Unstructured questions are intentionally couched in such terms that they invite subjects to refer to virtually any aspect of the stimulus situation or to report any of a range of responses.”\textsuperscript{33} An unstructured question is not fixed; it needs to be filled by the interviewee. In qualitative research the researcher’s intention is to acquire insight into the complex meanings that are held by social actors. The reason why I chose interviewing in-depth is because the concept identity is a very abstract thing not only as a phenomenon but also to every individual. Therefore, I found it necessary to interview the respondents in a clear way about their identity, belonging and position in groups in the society and how these are socially constructed, in order to give an explanation to how the identities of the Kosovar Albanians in Sweden have been shaped and changed over time. Merton states that “What is perceived in the situation, the meanings ascribed to it, vary largely as the personal context varies”.\textsuperscript{34} The researcher must learn during the interview how the prior experiences and dispositions of interviewees are related to their situation in social life. “The interviewer can assume, with some confidence, that people engaging in a social situation…variously experience some measure of social and psychological distance or intimacy between themselves and others in the situation”.\textsuperscript{35}

2.3 THE SELECTION OF INTERVIEWEES

My thought of this investigation has been to find suitable respondents for my research. My way of doing that was to interview both first and second generation immigrants from Kosova in Sweden. The respondents are those who have come to Sweden with their family and those who have come here with their parents as children and now are grown up. The choice I made was to interview six people. At first, I thought six people may be few but I was surprised during my interviews how much information I gathered from my respondents. In the beginning I thought that it would be interesting to compare these two generations in order to see how different they are when it comes to the shapes of identity but in doing so a

\textsuperscript{32} Berg, Bruce L. 2004: 80
\textsuperscript{33} Merton 1990: 15
\textsuperscript{34} Ibid. p. 117
\textsuperscript{35} Ibid. p. 119
quantitative research would be needed and due to the time factor, the time limit I realized that I had to cut down and not use quantitative research. The age and sex of my respondents are not of much weight in order to achieve the aim and the results of my research work. However, I have chosen to have both young and old people to make a mix in order to gather as much information as possible because what a young respondent may answer maybe the older one has a different way of explaining his/her answer. The respondents who have taken part in my interviews and who will be presented more personally in the analysis have basically lived in Sweden for 16 years, since 1992, the year when the most Kosovar Albanians left Kosovo because of the terrible situation, which later lead to war. Despite the long period the immigrants have stayed in Sweden and despite the many young immigrants, who came as children have been brought up in Sweden, they still have a very strong connection to their homeland and their ethnic identity has a very strong appeal in their everyday life. They visit their homeland as much as they can and they are surrounded by traditions and customs very often. In weekdays they are more or less surrounded by Swedish people and Swedish environment and in a way they act like ‘Swedes’ as they are working or going to school. However, they spend so much time when they are free with traditions and customs. They hold festivities and visit relatives very often. This is why I actually want to analyze the shapes of identity among Kosovar Albanians living in Sweden, because they are constantly in between two different ways of living and acting, they are in between two different identities.

3. THEORY
Theory is of high importance when we come to relate ourselves and other people to certain things. In order to back-up and strengthen my analysis of the respondents the theoretical framework is needed.

3.1 IDENTITY
In order to address why identity is an important phenomenon and how it is shaped and changed through migration among Kosovar Albanians in the Swedish society it is needed to look for theoretical explanations, which can highlight the key concepts and provide a framework within which I can achieve a fuller understanding of what is involved in the construction of identity. While identity refers to a person’s location related to others in a situation or a society, as a concept, identity is very central and crucial to today’s society, and
also of high importance to my thesis. Within identity we come to understand different aspects such as ethnic identity, cultural identity and religious identity that will later be explained.

What is important to understand is that we must have in conscience that what is ‘real’ to a person may not be ‘real’ to another person. When thinking in these terms it is more clarified to understand the ‘difference’ between people. This is precisely what Berger and Luckmann in their book, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* are discussing about. They talk about the reality of everyday life and how we are conscious and realized that our everyday life is organised ‘here and now’ meaning that we are here right now, physically present. Furthermore, they state that the reality of everyday life presents itself to us as a world that we share with others. This is where the differentiation then takes place in everyday life from other realities of which we as persons are conscious of.

“I am alone in the world of my dreams, but I know that the world of everyday life is as real to others as it is to myself. Indeed, I cannot exist in everyday life without continually interacting and communicating with others. I know that my natural attitude to this world corresponds to the natural attitude of others, that they also comprehend the objectifications by which this world is ordered, that they also organize this world around the ‘here and now’ of their being in it...”

With this text we come to the understanding of the ‘Other’ in a positive way, by which both I and the others exist in the same world, interact with each other and understand this world in the same way but maybe in different meanings as is also shown here below.

“I also know, of course, that the others have a perspective on this common world that is not identical with mine. My ‘here’ is their ‘there’. My ‘now’ does not fully overlap with theirs. My projects differ from and may even conflict with theirs. All the same, I know that I live with them in a common world. Most importantly, I know that there is an ongoing correspondence between my meanings and their meanings in this world, that we share a common sense about its reality”.

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36 Berger & Luckman. 1991: 37
37 Ibid.
Here, we come to understand that others view the meaning of life and the world in a different way than I do. While I live here and they live there, we therefore do not share the same meanings about life and world and therefore we may come into conflict with the others. These theories could be understood in the aspect of ethnicity and ethnic identity. Within ethnicity we come to understand the concepts of ‘us’ and ‘them’, which is basically what Berger and Luckmann are here arguing about. However, we do actually exist in the same world, and our meanings do connect with each other, therefore we share a common sense about the world’s reality. As it is understood, what this meaning is trying to say is that after all we are humans and our meanings about life connect in some way with each other. These terms are relevant when we refer to the immigrants as ‘others’. As they have lived in an entirely different place with a different environment and different norms and values and when they settle down in the new country, which is totally different from what they have left, a conflict between different cultures may occur.

Living in today’s world of modernity, questions like, What to Do? How to Act? Who to Be? are crucial for everyone in the circumstances of society. Modernity has radically changed the nature of everyday social life and affected the most personal aspects of people. The social-theorist, Anthony Giddens in his book, *Modernity and Self-Identity* argues that the late modernity is a culture with risk, meaning that it has brought risks to the new generation in social life, which the previous generations have not had to face. In modern social life, the notion of lifestyles has become significant. Choosing your lifestyle is according to Giddens extremely important when constituting and forming the self-identity. The more individuals are forced to negotiate their choices of lifestyle among the options of diversity, the less tradition is important. He further argues that modernity produces difference, exclusion and marginalisation that lead to negative aspects in the society. Today, the individual and the individuality is significant, something that did not exist in the earlier traditional cultures. The term ‘self-identity’ is something that has to be created as a routine, it is not something that is given, as a result of the continuities if the individual’s action-system. According to Giddens, “The ‘identity’ of the self, in contrast to the self as a generic phenomenon, presumes reflexive awareness. It is what the individual is conscious ‘of’ in the term ‘self-consciousness’.

Basically, you must have a concept of what a person is in order to be a ‘person’. Even though

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38 Giddens, Anthony. 1991: 4-5
39 Ibid. p. 52
it is very common to all humankind what that concept of a person is, it still varies across culture what a ‘person’ is understood to be.

After having arrived in a new country with a totally different culture the immigrants feel different when they identify themselves with the natives in Sweden. The notion of difference is marked and it is related to the issue of identity. In John P. Hewitt’s work, *Self and Society-A Symbolic Interactionist Social Psychology*, it is much discussed about how situated identities are produced and the experience of that. Basically, situated identity is based on the person’s role;”...the perspective from which others act toward him or her”.

Hewitt tries to explain that when one person’s statements correspond with the placements or situations of that person by others, we have a situated identity. He further states that the more immigrants try to carry on the situated identity the more they are aware of the fact that they have a life outside this situation. He generally means that the immigrants in a new society are constantly reminded of their past and their experiences when they used to be ‘different’. Their identities are transformed every time they get involved in new passages in life. Moreover, the writer goes in to the forms of identity; social and personal identity. He says that social identity is not only something that we carry in our minds thinking about ourselves in relation to others. We also have a social identity when others place a person in it. People’s identities become stronger when they meet difference. It is there where personal identity comes up.

Richard Jenkins, in his book, *Social Identity*, also argues about how identifying ourselves with others is a matter of meaning and with meaning we have interaction between people: agreement and disagreement, communication and negotiation. What Jenkins is trying to show is that identity is not a thing rather a process understood as ‘being’ or ‘becoming’. “Identity is our understanding of who we are and of who other people are and, reciprocally, other people’s understanding of themselves and of others (which include us)”. He differs between individual and collective identity and talks about individuality as self-hood giving it a status as a primary or basic identification.

40 Hewitt, John P. 2003: 139
41 Ibid. p. 101
42 Ibid. p. 110-111
43 Ibid. p. 111
44 Jenkins, Richard. 2004: 5
3.2 CULTURAL IDENTITY

In today’s multicultural Sweden, we have many different people from many different countries with so many different languages. With culture we have come to understand different groups, behaviours and traditions. People around us usually speak, are dressed and perform different from us. Every lifestyle we choose is made by our own free choices.

In general, the word ‘culture’ refers to patterns of human activity and can be understood and defined as a way of life including arts and beliefs and moral system of a population that are passed down from generation to generation. “Culture has been defined in a number of ways, but most simply, as the learned and shared behaviour of a community of interacting human beings”\(^{45}\) As culture covers national, religious and ethnic belonging and is seen as a collective phenomenon it is therefore important to show these aspects from a cultural definition. Culture as a concept is however; also important and relevant given that culture is a link that connects the creation of identity.

During the time of colonization the term culture reflected inequalities within European societies and between European powers and their colonies around the world. The notion of culture was identified with ‘civilization’ and was given a contrast to ‘nature’. Some people were classified more cultured than others and some countries and nations were more civilized than others according to this view.\(^{46}\) Max Weber, the German sociological theorist argued that culture is connected with society. He wanted to understand cultural changes and the relation between culture and society. He was interested in the distinctive character of modern western culture. He used the word *rationalisation* as a concept to describe the western culture. He meant that what first and foremost distinguished the modern society and its culture was a rising rationalisation on the most places of life.\(^{47}\) However, Georg Simmel, another sociologist differed between the subjective and objective culture. He talked about how people bring into being lives and create material products through their feelings, desires and ideas. In this way nature is reshaped to culture. The German sociologist Norbert Elias argued that the two concepts *civilisation* and *culture* have been developed in relation to one another, but that they have successively come to have two different functions. “The concept “civilisation” tone

\(^{46}\) http://www.carla.umn.edu/culture/definitions.html
\(^{47}\) Miegel Fredrik & Johansson Thomas. 2002: 12
\(^{47}\) Ibid. p. 37
down to a certain degree the national differences between different people; it stresses what is common for all people- or should be that for those who regard themselves to be civilized… The German concept “Culture” emphasize on the other hand national differences and special group identities…”  

48 People were beginning to focus on how relations between different social groups contributed to an increased differentiation of the culture. What these theorists have been trying to do is to look into how people are shaped in different ways by the culture they live in.  

49 Elias talked about the individual human being as not completely independent, but always dependent on other people, human beings. He said that the people in the society are bound to each other by networks of dependences. There are no individuals without societies and no societies without individuals.  

50 Raymond Williams has lately described four significances of the word culture that has been developed during the epoch he studied and which replaces the old meaning of the word culture as a control over nature. Williams described the word culture as “general mental conditions and habits”, “a general condition of intellectual development in the society”, “a general denotation for what constitutes art”, a whole way of living, material, intellectual, spiritual”. It is especially with the last meaning which, Williams meant that the concept of culture is reflected when democracy, industry, class, and art are in question.  

51 Culture within a society has come to be emphasized in dealing with immigrant groups and their cultures. Subcultures are often parts of a greater society as a group of people who have different sets of behaviours and beliefs from the majority of people which they are part of in that society. Because of the race, ethnicity, age, class and gender the subculture may be distinctive. Subculture as distinctive is determined by the qualities that could be aesthetic, religious, occupational, political, sexual, or a combination of these factors.  

52 Culture can thus contain ideological connotations, where some cultures are seen as high levelled or more wanted than other cultures. Usually, culture can be connected with ethnocentrism, which means that one’s culture is superior to any other culture and one’s own beliefs, values and ethnicity are more important than other beliefs or values. Frequently, the view of ethnocentrism causes people to make wrong assumptions about other people because
it leads to the making of premature judgments. 53 “‘They’ may not be very good at what we are best at”. 54 With this we come to understand that culture is crucial in both the social and as well the politics field. Since cultural values are usually bond to politics, power and control ethnocentrism leads to the power relations about ‘we’ and ‘them’.

3. 3 ETHNIC IDENTITY

The word ‘ethnic’ derives from the old Greek, which originally means nation. Clearly, the word ethnicity was used to refer to the ‘others’, to those who had a different faith, typically those who were not ‘us’. “The term ethnicity acknowledges the place of history, language and culture in the construction of subjectivity and identity”. 55 In sociological terms, ethnicity has come not only to refer to others but also ourselves as we contrast ‘us’ with ‘others’. 56 Instead of ethnicity and nationalism to decrease in importance and vanish due to the globalization, industrialisation and modernisation, particularly since the Second World War, ethnicity and nationalism have on the contrary grown in political importance in the world.

In social anthropology, the term ‘ethnicity’, as the anthropologist Thomas Hylland Eriksen implies, refers to the aspect of relationships between groups which consider themselves, and are regarded by others, as being culturally distinctive. The anthropologist discusses about these cultural differences. While ethnic identity should be taken to refer to a notion of shared ancestry, he means that culture refers to shared representations, norms and practices. One can have deep ethnic differences without correspondingly important cultural differences. 57 How other people from outside perceive us may also in a major way influence to lead to how we are self-conscious as an ethnic population. We are given an ethnic identity in ethnic categorisation; however, what makes us an ethnic group is our claim to that identity. The way ethnic groups identify themselves is what is ethnic about that special ethnic group. Ethnicity is also a matter of contrast, meaning that when you distinguish yourselves from others, you claim an ethnic identity. On the basis of the claims we make about ourselves and them, that ‘they’ do not share what ‘we’ share, a boundary between ‘us’ and ‘them’ is drawn. The meaning of ethnic groups is seen when it is involved with ‘others’ but an ethnic population for example does not have to be a minority population. An ethnic group may either

53 www.sverigemotrasism.se
54 http://home.snu.edu/~hculbert/ethno.htm
55 Ibid. p. 37
56 Cornell Stephen, Hartmann Douglas 1998: 16
57 Ibid.
Ethnicity is seen as both objective and subjective. Cynthia Enloe in John Hutchinson’s and Anthony D. Smith’s work, *Ethnicity* argues that it has been agreed that ethnicity requires a sense of belonging and an awareness of boundaries between members and non-members. However, those boundaries may be vague and changing from time to time and situation to situation. The reason why it is so hard to define ethnicity is because language, religion, territory and custom are not enough by themselves to identify or maintain an ethnic group. Language, for example even though very important when it comes to terms of ethnicity is still not sufficient to distinguish an ethnic group. When religion comes into question, Yugoslavia is a good example to show how ethnic boundaries and group integrity were maintained and religion’s role that has played in the process. The author argues that Islam and Christianity have passionately followed converts and by that have taken in a variety of cultural groups. “The kind of religion...as part of an ethnic group’s communal package will determine how porous the ethnic boundaries are, how capable a group is of withstanding outside pressures to assimilate, and how prone the group will be to absorb outsiders through intermarriage or conversion”. Further the author tries to explain that “The most tense interethnic relationship occurs when two ethnic groups confess different religions...” Cynthia Enloe tries to give the example of Israel and Pakistan by stating that “Many nation-states have been formed on the assumption that religion and ethnicity were separable, but that when an overwhelming majority of citizens all confessed an identical religion- ethnicity would lose saliency and functional value”.

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59 Hutchinson John, Smith Anthony D.1996: 45
60 Ibid. p. 197-198
61 Ibid. p. 198
62 Ibid.
63 Ibid. p. 201
3. 3. 1 ETHNIC IDENTITY & NATIONALISM
When we talk about nationalism, the question if the study of national relations should be distinguished from the study of ethnicity or ethnic relations is emphasized. Nationalism is also commonly based on ethnic and blood ties, but nationalism and ethnicity are not the same, even though they are related. Ethnicity is in general more concerned when it comes to identify ourselves as ‘us’ and nationalism is more concerned with the nation-state. The experience of the break-up of Yugoslavia is an example of nationalism and the term ethnic cleansing. Ethnic and cultural differences have always existed between Serbs and Albanians in Kosova and differences of language and of religious tradition and custom have been over-emphasized. In the Balkans, religious identification has become part of national identity, every different group with different religions. The Kosovar-Albanians for example were the ethnic group who wanted rights or political autonomy for the group as a whole within the state, Serbia or Yugoslavia claiming status as nation based on assertions of people hood and common cultural heritage etc.64 “The distinguishing mark of nationalism is by definition its relationship to the state. A nationalist holds that political boundaries should be coterminous with cultural boundaries, whereas many ethnic groups do not demand command over a state. When the political leaders of an ethnic movement place demands to this effect, the ethnic movement therefore by definition becomes a nationalist movement”.65

3. 4 RELIGIOUS IDENTITY
As the majority of Kosovar Albanians are Muslims, religious identity besides ethnic identity is also important to take into consideration since religion plays a significant role in their lives. Religion is the main basis for ethnic identity helping to establish social networks and communicative patterns. Meredith McGuire in her book, Religion the Social Context states that the individual can choose which meaning to accept. The meaning system makes sense of one’s identity and social being.66 Migrants in this case with a meaning, identify themselves in the society. Religion is an important issue fort two main reasons. Religion is both individual and social. For many people, religion and the religious practices are important parts of many individuals’ lives. Many people are influenced by religious values and norms and the religious meanings help them interpret their experiences. Because of the religion’s influence on society

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64 Cornell Stephen, Hartmann Douglas 1998: 35-36
65 http://folk.uio.no/geirthe/Ethnicity.html#Chapter1
66 McGuire, Meredith B. 2002: 31
and society’s impact on religion, it is also an important object for sociological study.  

67 From a sociological perspective, no religion is superior to another. The religious perspective on human life often produces a very different picture of a reality than does a sociological perspective. What is evident to the religious believer may not be relevant to the sociologist. Religious behaviour and experience are thus human and therefore proper subjects for sociological research and understanding.  

68 In order to understand the meaning of ‘Muslim Space’, one needs to understand the fact that many of the Muslims have moved physically from one geographic area to another, which today we have Muslims living in the diaspora. The second-generation immigrants (the young people whose parents have emigrated from their country) and those people who have converted into Islam feel that they are ‘displaced’ both physically and culturally. 

69 Among many first-generation Muslim families Islam practice is central in creating meaning and community. The different authors in Metcalf’s book have emphasized the cultural strength and creativity of communities that draw upon Islamic symbols and practices to define ‘Muslim space’ against the background of a non-Muslim environment. Muslims have these artistically calligraphic Qur’anic verses that are displayed in prints, frames, trays or plates of for example copper and what actually all these calligraphic items have in common, regardless in style, is to convey a religious verbal message. The messages may be the names of God or the names of the Prophet. The Hajj, which is the fifth pillar in Islam where a Muslim should once in his lifetime visit Mecca, also demands its space and time, like prayer and Ramadan, where the Muslim needs its space and time to perform the prayer and fast. 

70 It is these typical things or practices which take Muslims in a space distinct from non-Muslims and as it is argued by Regula Burckhardt Qureshi in Metcalf’s book, “African-American Muslims have clearly found that their American nationality is but one small aspect of their identity as prescribed by Islam. They are part of the larger Muslim world and interact with immigrant Muslims…”  

71 What she is trying to say is that even though they are part of the American society, they are actually part of a larger community, where they interact with Muslims.

67 Ibid. p. 6  
68 Ibid. p. 7  
69 Metcalf, Barbara D. 1996: 2  
70 Metcalf, Barbara D. 1996: 65  
71 Metcalf, Barbara D. 1996: 73
3. 5 DIASPORA & TRANSNATIONALISM

The concepts of diaspora and transnationalism are important parts to this research study. You could say that these terms are outcomes of the different aspects of identity, such as ethnic, cultural and religious identities. If it were not for these identities, diaspora and transnationalism would not exist. Diaspora and transnationalism are what the immigrants have created in a way, by making these own ethnic or religious ‘communities’, where they interact with each other and maintain their origin values and traditions and have strong connections with their homeland.

As human beings we are constantly reminded of our past living individually and collectively. Our origins, heritage and history make huge importance in our lives. The past is always with us defining our present. The concept of diaspora is a bond to an actual or idealised homeland, which is distant from the new home. People in the new country have a historical relationship with the old place. Diaspora stands for a group of immigrant people who share a common space with other groups of people and also share a common experience. Diaspora is also seen as a community of individuals who live outside their homeland and identify themselves with the country and the people of their homeland. The members of a specific ethnic group maintain strong ties with their homeland. The word diaspora derives from the Greek word, dia, which means ‘through’ and the word speirein, ‘to scatter’. At the heart of the notion of diaspora is the image of a journey but it is not a usual journey that is meant by the word here. Diasporic journeys are about settling down and they remain historically. The question is not simply who travels, but also when, how and under what circumstances? As a result of persecution people may have had to desert their homes, as has been the fate of a number of Jewish people at various points in history. Another example is the experience of refugees such as Sri Lankans, Somalis and Bosnian and Kosovar Albanian Muslims, as they were forced to flee because of political strife. Whether or not members of the collectivity travel as individuals or households, diasporas emerge out of migrations of collectivities. People leave their countries together with their families. “Diasporic identities are at once local and global.

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72 Frykman Povrzanovic, Maja 2004: 82
73 Brah, Avtar. 1996: 182
They are networks of transnational identifications encompassing ‘imagined’ and ‘encountered’ communities”.74

As Maja Frykman has written in her article about *Beyond Integration: Challenges of belonging in Diaspora and exile: An introduction*, Diasporas include labour migrants, as well as their children, usually referred to as ‘second-generation immigrants’ or ‘people of immigrant background’ who chose to stay and settle down in the host country. People who fled because of war and persecution also maintain a sense of belonging of their homeland in an intellectual, spiritual and cultural way. When these people leave their homelands behind, especially at the beginning of their refugee experiences, they feel emotionally attached to their homeland.75 Maja understands the concept of diaspora to be, group identity based on a shared ethnicity and the experience of migration while related to political attitudes, migrant generation etc. She also understands the concept to be organised cultural or political expressions that are visible in public in the country where the migrants are living and in the country of origin.76

In diasporic contexts, ethnicity is marked by great variations as to *if* and *how* people are perceived as members of immigrant ‘ethnic groups’ from the majority, the natives in the country. Ethnicity is also marked by immigrants in understanding and proving belonging in the home country and the new country for both personal and political purposes. Instead of using the term *ethnic communities*, the concept of *diaspora* is considered more adequate and can be considered otherwise as a framework for the study of specific processes of group and community formation. Maja means that “The analytical benefit lies in a clear distinction between the symbolic, ethnic identity of “being” and a diasporic identity requiring involvement. While ethnicity may be a precondition for diasporic social formations, discourses, self-perceptions and actions, diasporic communities always have educational, generational, political as well as place-related aspects”.77

In our globalising world, social relations are extended more and more across borders of two or more nation-states. Maja Povrzanovic in her book, *Transnational Spaces: Disciplinary Perspectives* argues that the concepts of diaspora and transnational spaces overlap with each other. “While diaspora implies a group identity, transnational practices and experiences do

74 Ibid. p. 196
75 Frykman Povrzanovic, Maja. 2001: 23
76 Frykman Povrzanovic, Maja. 2004: 83
77 Frykman Povrzanovic, Maja. 2005:  7
not necessarily depend on belonging to a group, nor do they necessarily contribute to the creation of a group consciousness and solidarity within a transnational social space”.78 Transnational communities are not either political actively related to maintain the homeland. Transnational connections have been important for both anthropologists and especially in research concerning minority groups. With transnational migration it is meant that the migrants maintain connections between two different countries, in order to survive as individuals. Usually they come to feel that they belong to another community than that of national community.79 The word, *community* has been defined as expressions in a local social system, referring to a set of social relationships that take place within a given locality. It has also been seen as a sense of identity; based on that communal identification relies on personal contacts, shared language, migration experience, ethnicity and class. “Community, therefore, is where one learns and continues to practice how to be ‘social’. (...) it is where one acquires ‘culture’”.80

As we are living in a new world of globalization, we constantly need new social theories and concepts to understand the new world. Globalization represents both a new world, pointing out things that are new and what is new about them and a new way of regarding the world, making us see things that has been there all the time but that has been invisible because of earlier theories of understanding the world. According to Per Gustafson in the book, *Transnational Spaces: Disciplinary Perspectives*, the same goes for the concept of transnational spaces or transnationalism.81 He argues that transnational spaces are trying to identify something new. The sending (home country) and the receiving (new country) countries are connected with each other through production and reproduction of relationships by migrants. Individual and collective identities are also developed referring to more than one place or nation state. Migrants are activated and are involved in relationships socially, economically and politically and also create social fields that cross national borders in their everyday life. This is a process which represents transnationalism. The new technology has maintained transnational relationships and practices through communication and information. Before, in order for immigrants to become successful in economic and social terms they had to assimilate into the new country. Due to the transnational networks, those immigrants are

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78 Frykman Povranovic, Maja. 2004: 82-83  
79 Ibid. p. 151  
80 Ibid. p. 88  
81 Ibid. p. 65
given a sense of self-esteem and identity by maintaining cultural ties with the homeland. The ethnic communities are also supported and protected in a way not to feel excluded from the society. Furthermore, Per Gustafson argues that transnationalism represents migration as a new understanding enabling us to see things that were there all the time but we could not see because of other explanations and theories. “As several researchers have pointed out, previous scientific understandings often regarded rootedness and national belonging as something natural and desirable. Migration, on the other hand, was regarded as exceptional and abnormal- a temporary deviation from this normality”.  

4. EMPIRICAL FINDINGS
In this part it is thought to make an analysis with the interviews that have been made and the views of the respondents about their own picture of how they experience and perceive themselves in the multicultural Sweden and how the Swedish society may have had an impact in their views of identity within migration. In order to back up the results a connection to the theoretical framework needs to be made. On the basis of the qualitative research and through the interviews together with the theories, I want to analyse and give a reality picture of the actual existence of the Kosovar Albanians identity in order to achieve the aim of this research work.

The respondents draw upon the pre-existing understandings and experiences of what it means to be a Kosovar Albanian when they try to construct and maintain the ethnic boundaries, differing themselves with the others. They are, however not trying to create a new social collectivity within the Kosovar Albanians community in Sweden. They are instead keeping the same understandings and conceptions that they had in their homeland. The young immigrants are trying to do the same in a way; they are drawing up the experiences and understandings of what it means to be a Kosovar Albanian by their parents and by their visitations to Kosova.

It has been very common to consider religion as one aspect of ethnicity. However, I would like to distinguish between them as different identities because what it means to be a Muslim is differentiated with what it means to be a Kosovar Albanian, even though many of my respondents considered their religious identities as part of their ethnic identities.

82 Ibid. p. 67
4.1 PRESENTATION OF THE RESPONDENTS

My target group is consisted of Kosovar Albanian immigrants who came after 1992 to Sweden. They are a mix of both old and young people and all of them are born in Kosova, including the second generation immigrants. However, the young people came here as small children and were raised in Sweden.

*Bajram*, is a middle-aged man at 44 years old. He is right now working as a bus driver in the city of Malmö, where he also lives with his wife and his four children. He came to Sweden when he was 28 years old, in 1992 and at that time he had only two children. He has a bachelor degree in Mathematics from his home country.

*Lindita*, is a 34 year-old woman, married and has two children. She works full-time as a teacher in Malmö, where she also lives. She met her husband who came to Kosova from Sweden during a summer vacation and later they got married and she came here in November 1996. She graduated as a teacher for secondary school in her home land and she continued working as a teacher in Sweden as well.

*Fitim*, is a 27 year-old married man who has one child. He works full-time in a factory that produces plastic material outside of Malmö in a small town called, Staffanstorp. He has only lived in Sweden for 3 years; he came here in 2005 as he married his wife. In Kosova his latest work was as a language assistant within UNMIK (The UN).

*Nita*, is a 23 year-old young woman who is studying International Economics in the university of Lund and will be graduating next year. She married a year ago and now is living with her husband in Staffanstorp. Eventually they plan to have children as well. Nita also works part-time as a care assistant for the old people. Nita came to Sweden in 1992, as a 7 year-old girl.

*Vlera*, is a 17 year-old girl who lives with her family in Landskrona. She is in high-school and her plans are to become a nurse in the future. She also works as a cleaner, house keeper in the weekends. Vlera came to Sweden when she was only 2 years-old with her family.
Valjeta, is a 22 year-old girl who for the moment is living in Uppsala, close to Stockholm where she is studying Pharmacy. She will graduate in two years and her goal is to work as a pharmacist. Her family lives in Lund, where she also was raised and went to high-school. Part-time she works as care assistant for the old people. Valjeta came to Sweden when she was 6 years old, in 1992 and now she is engaged and her fiancé will soon come to Sweden from Kosova.

4. 2 WHERE IS ‘HOME’?

Most of my respondents told me that they have in mind to go back and live in Kosova for good some day but they are discouraged however from doing that because of the financial problems, bad system in Kosova and the fact that they would want a better education for their children here in Sweden. As one of my respondents argued:

“I enjoy my life in Sweden, but still I would like to return to Kosova if I had the opportunity to do so and have the same conditions as I have here. It seems to me that I am here physically but mentally I am there- in Kosova”.\(^{83}\) (Interview with Lindita)

For all of my respondents of the first generation, Kosova still remains a ‘home’ where they with much pleasure plan to return. However, they emphasize that returning only remains a desire because they cannot leave their children who have settled in Sweden.

“...there are a lot of things I would miss about Sweden. Basically, daily things, routines. Now that I do not have any children I think I could do that, return and live in Kosova. But, what I do not know, is how much longer I could stand to live there. It would be interesting to actually try and do it and see how much I can stand out. I believe that when I will have children I will have other thoughts of returning to Kosova. The thought of returning would be irrelevant because when my children grow up here in Sweden, it will then be much harder to return to Kosova”.\(^{84}\) (Interview with Nita)

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\(^{83}\) Interview with Lindita 9th November 2008

\(^{84}\) Interview with Nita, 7th December 2008
The immigrants think about their future and are aware of the fact that when there are children involved it is more difficult to return because they have settled down in Sweden and want what is best for them when it comes to education and employment.

The younger generation of immigrants to a great surprise also wish to return someday to Kosova when things will turn better and the economics will start to function properly. However, unlike the older generation they say that they could live there a month or maybe two but they would still want to come back to Sweden because they have created their lives and experiences in that society, which will always remain great parts of their youth in the future.

“If you have the right education and if you are motivated you will find yourself even in Kosova. I have been there every summer and winter and I have gotten used to the lifestyle. It is so easy to live there. I do not have to think about errands, documents and appointments, things that give you stress. I could see myself living in Kosova but, I must say that in Sweden I have created my own experiences and memories and my life is here. I always get sceptic and confused whenever this question appears”.85 (Interview with Valjeta)

As far as their own views on Kosova are concerned, a number of the respondents told me that they would find it difficult to adapt to life in Kosova if they stayed longer than a summer vacation, because they would miss to do a lot of things they do in Sweden that they could never do in Kosova. However, all of my respondents spoke about their experiences of Kosova in a way that it still holds considerable appeal for them. They all visit Kosova every summer and some even during the winter. They try to adapt with both cultures. That is why they constantly are in between two cultures. The memories of their visits to Kosova, and the stories they hear from other people about the lives that they spent there seem to provoke in the minds of the respondents. Kosova remains the place which attracts them the most and which is very close to them as they want to refer as ‘home’. On the other hand, they feel that Kosova is their home but at the same time it is not their home. It is the place which also frightens these people. When questioning my respondents if they would want to return to Kosova for good they usually all want to return ‘someday’, but that ‘someday’ never seems to come.

85 Interview with Valjeta, 13th December 2008
“Of course I would like to return to Kosova for good and I actually have this question on my mind all the time. I often make this question to myself in a serious way and I confront with ‘myself’ about this over and over again”.

(Interview with Bajram)

“I plan to return to Kosova only if the living conditions, like employment, lack of electricity and many other important things will be improved. It is very hard to live in Kosova where one person is very talented and has all the skills but cannot go to higher education because of the money”.

(Interview with Fitim)

There seem to exist many factors of fantasy and nostalgia in the immigrants’ visions of Kosova. One of my respondents said that she would like to return to Kosova for good but still would want to always have some sort of connection to Sweden. She argued that she would return, but that would happen as she put it in her own words;

“...later in my life, when I am done with school. If I would find my love there I would definitely return and also If I would find a good job. However, I think that I would want to come back to Sweden again”.

(Interview with Vlera)

The younger generation too could see themselves in Kosova in the future and build a life there because of the inspiration that Kosova is an independent state now that is improving democratically and economically. While the younger Kosovar Albanians have spent so much time in Kosova during the summer vacations they are attached and attracted to the life the Albanians in Kosova are living. It is like a circle that goes on. As they are young and free their imagination is also open and spread. They could imagine living anywhere as long as they feel happy. When they marry and get children the thought of returning is not much of relevance. They think of what is best for their children instead. It is the feeling that you are being perceived as ‘different’ that makes one belong more to one’s own community and homeland. Vijay Agnew shows this in her book, Diaspora, Memory and Identity. A Search for Home, by stating that “Cultural differences, or the sense of being an outsider or a foreigner, can make the individual feel alienated and heighten feelings of sadness, nostalgia, and create a

86 Interview with Bajram, 27th November 2008
87 Interview with Fitim, 2nd December 2008
88 Interview with Vlera, 5th December 2008
longing for home”. Even though the majority has the desire to someday return to their ‘homeland’, there is still another feeling which has come up to be more important and that is the feeling that they belong to another community than the national community, namely transnational communities. Transnational spaces may lead that immigrants feel that they do not have to assimilate into the Swedish society. They are given a feeling of comfort through transnational communications. They choose to live in Sweden, not in Kosova, but within their ‘community’.

In the early experiences when refugees arrive in the new country they all have the feeling to return home. However, not all the diasporas include the idea of returning. All diasporas are differentiated spaces even if they are constructed of the common ‘we’. As the contemporary diasporas are seen as ‘exemplary communities of the transnational moment’ that nowadays overlap with the concept of migrant, immigrant, exile and refugee, to Avtar Brah the concept of diaspora is “an interpretive frame referencing the economic, political and cultural dimensions of these contemporary forms of migrancy”. When my respondents are then asked where they themselves think they belong most of them have answered that they belong to somewhere in between both Kosovar Albanian community and Swedish community. I got many different, but at the same time equal answers to my surprise. They all say firstly, that they belong to their country of origin and they give very rich and detailed examples in what they want to say. By living in Sweden, they have built a new way of thinking and behaving in a spontaneous way. They are to a high level aware of what it means to first have an existing identity and then develop another identity. However, most of my respondents say that they belong in Sweden but some of them stress that they belong to the Kosovar Albanian community in Sweden.

“I belong to the Kosovar Albanian community. I live very segregated here. I do not feel integrated. I feel myself trapped here. Therefore, I feel I am myself when I am around with Kosovars”. (Interview with Bajram)

89 Agnew, Vijay. 2004: 42 
90 Frykman Povrzanovic, Maja. 2004: 65-66 
91 Brah, Avtar. 1996: 186 
92 Interview with Bajram, 27th November 2008
For my respondent home is within a Kosovar Albanian community in Sweden. As the term diaspora has come to be the most debated term today particularly within discussions of migration, identity, displacement, communication and global movements, the immigrants in Sweden have found a way to be ‘close’ to their homes. “Once separated from their homelands by geographical distance and political barriers, diasporic peoples find themselves in closer relations with their old countries in ways now made possible by modern transportation, communication, and labour-migration technologies”.

“I feel more home in Sweden I must say. In Kosova I feel home for a while but then I still want to come back home- in Sweden. My life is here, with my family and friends.”

(Interview with Nita)

For my respondent here, home is in Sweden, because she has created her experiences in youth here and for my other respondent below, home is both there and here.

“I feel home both in Sweden and in Kosova. I am consisted of two cultures. In Sweden I feel more Albanian and in Kosova I feel more Swedish in some aspects. The reason to why I feel this way is because the difference between me and Swedish people and in Kosova why I feel more Swedish is because the different minds I have than those there about things in life”.

(Interview with Valjeta)

The respondents above explain that home for them is both here and there, which leads them to feel more Swedish in Kosova and more Albanian in Sweden. The writer in the book, Cartographies of Diaspora Contesting Identities by Avtar Brah makes a distinction between ‘feeling home’ and declaring a place as home. In terms of diaspora, the identity formation is always in plural and in process. When does a location become home, and what is the difference between ‘feeling at home’ and claiming that a place is one’s own? These questions are emphasized in the book and an example is given in order to show diasporic identities. A black Jamaican young woman living in Britain may feel more home in Britain than in Jamaica. However, she may insist to define herself as Jamaican or Caribbean when racism occurs and represent black people as being outside ‘Britishness’, as a way of confirming her

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93 Ibid. p. 192
94 Interview with Nita, 7th December 2008
95 Interview with Valjeta, 13th December 2008
identity, which she perceives is being degraded in Britain. The subjectivity of the young woman is marked within differing different political practices and she occupies different subject positions. She may choose to represent both of the positions (British or Jamaican) at different circumstances and moments.96

Maja Povranovic Frykman goes in to explain that the word place matters in two ways. She means that the place the immigrants actually live in, for example Sweden and the place the immigrants ‘create’ similar to their home land when they meet and interact for activities. “...the diasporic physical meeting places, with all the memorabilia of common trips, festivities and football matches, talk about the shared experiences of doing things together. They are done not only “in Sweden”, but in a particular town, at a specific address, together with friends socialising in “one’s own” club and not in some other”.97 Place, familiarity, sensual experience, human interaction and local knowledge are what belonging is rooted in.

My respondents have argued that they experience ’home’ in both countries and they show it in different ways, which to me is very normal when being situated in their way. They feel more or less as part of the both cultures. An outsider to this subject may perhaps question how it is possible to maintain two different identities and actually handle to unite with the two different cultures in everyday life. However, I am influenced by these opinions and I can relate myself to my respondents’ thoughts more or less.

4. 3 AMBIVALENCE OVER IDENTITY

My intention with this part is to look at ethnic identities of my respondents and try to understand the ways in which these identities appear to have been shaped by their experiences of living and being raised with traditional ways within the Kosovar Albanian community in Sweden and at the same time, in the Swedish society, which seems to both embrace them as part of the society and exclude them from the society because they are ‘different’ and ‘others’. The question of belonging seems to be a notion that the immigrants are constantly being faced with. The feeling of belonging to something or belonging to a special place or group is a very important issue of identity. The notion of belongingness leads to that, immigrants may either feel that they do not belong to the new society or feel that they have to try to fit in somehow.

96 Brah, Avtar. 1996: 193
97 Frykman Povranovic, Maja. 2005: 8
Almost all of my respondents felt some degree of uncertainty and self-doubt when the question of identity came up. Many of my respondents said that they feel very happy during the summer vacations in Kosova, however, even there they have come to feel ‘outsiders’.

“When I am in Kosova I feel different. When I am here I feel also different. I do not really know where I stand. I do not feel home anywhere. Maybe more in Kosova than in Sweden, but still somewhere up in the air”.98 (Interview with Lindita)

John P. Hewitt’s theory is thus related to my analysis here, while the Kosovar Albanian people in the Swedish society are situated as ‘immigrants’, ‘different’ and ‘Others’ giving these people new ways of identifying themselves. Within that situation the immigrants are provided with a way to locate themselves relative to one another.99

“I am very happy and thrilled whenever I am in Kosova and I feel that I am one of them. However, there are times when I disagree with my friends and relatives there. That is why I tend to feel more ‘Swedish’ sometimes when I am there. For example, they have other views whenever we come into questions about life and so on. They are always dependent of something or someone and they have these ideas about things in life that are very fixed. We have a broader thinking here. What I most like about them is how they manage to have time for both school or work and family and traditions. Swedish people focus too much only on their career”.100 (Interview with Valjeta)

Alexandra Ålund argues in her book about the difficulties over identity, especially when you do not know as a person where you belong. In a part of a chapter she wrote Homeless, but still home. A girl from Eritrea by the name Elen discusses about her arrival in Sweden and that she does not know where to place herself. She does not know where she belongs. When I am worried she says, I think of THERE, to live in my homeland. However, she goes on arguing that after visiting Eritrea you are treated as ‘other’ or as a ‘new person’ with ‘new culture’ by relatives, cousins and friends. They say that I have become like a Swede, she states and that makes me confused. She tries to explain how they have kept the customs and traditions so highly in Sweden and yet they are seen as ‘changed’ and ‘different’ in their homeland.

98 Interview with Lindita, 9th December 2008
99 Hewitt, John P. 2003: 139
100 Interview with Valjeta, 13th December 2008
Furthermore she goes in to explain why she feels more comfort living in the suburb close to her own community. When we come to Sweden we automatically start acting and doing things like Swedes. Despite this Swedish ‘belonging’ we are still not safe in the Swedish society. Therefore we tend to find more comfort in our own community and feel that we belong more to that kind of community. Here again, the transnational communities come to play a great part. Also, the Kosovar Albanians feel that they belong to the Swedish society but they find more comfort within the Kosovar Albanian community in Sweden, where these people interact with each other.

When my respondents were asked how they feel during their visitations in Kosova they responded:

“I feel myself ‘home’ when I am in Kosova, but in many aspects I feel different from my own people there. Maybe it is because the influence of the Swedish society that I have been living in. I do not know really. I feel more like Swedish there. I know that while I am there, I am only for some weeks. I know that eventually I will come back to Sweden. Sweden is more like my home, but still not completely”. (Interview with Vlera)

She then states that she feels herself much integrated into the Swedish society unlike other immigrants from other countries. However, she says that she does not feel totally integrated in the Swedish society because of the traditions and her religion. She spends most of her time with Kosovar Albanian friends, Bosnians and Turks. The only Swedish friends she spends her time with are those who she states,

“...adapt themselves with us, immigrants. They fast sometimes during Ramadan, for example and they come to our Albanian traditional parties because they want to have fun”. (Interview with Vlera)

This shows that the transnational community has become more important than any other community at all. She does not feel ‘home’ neither in Sweden nor in Kosova, but somewhere in between. Jessica Jacobson, in her work, Islam in Transition. Religion and Identity among

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101 Ålund, Alexandra 1997: 87
102 Interview with Vlera, 5th December 2008
103 Interview with Vlera, 5th December 2008
British Pakistani Youth, argues about the different boundary processes that shape the immigrants’ identities and religion in the social environment that these immigrants are facing in Britain. The author argues about these immigrants’ wishes to maintain the minority community distinctive. Committing to the minority seems to be a commitment to the traditional lifestyle and values of its members for the member of the older generation. This means then that the social interaction with the outsiders of that community is limited. Jacobson further talks about the positioning of the immigrants in relation to ‘boundaries of Britishness’. There are different reflections of the definition of ‘Britishness’. The immigrants are adjusted in relating themselves to the different identities, which are rooted in the place of the homeland which their parents left and the new country where they parents stayed.  

They are influenced also by the Swedish lifestyle. They try to show that they have taken what is best from both cultures. This make them ‘rich’ in a way, but still very ‘confused’ when sometimes being in a position where you have to choose between two things you do not know which way to go. The immigrants are also always concerned with how they are being perceived in the Swedish society. My respondents also stress that they tend to feel more ‘Swedish’ while being in Kosova, because of some differences they meet with people there whenever they get involved

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104 Jacobson, Jessica. 1998: 59
105 Ibid. p. 65
106 Ibid.
in conversations. They add that they are always dependent to someone or something and they have fixed ideas about certain things, while we have a broader thinking and knowledge. As Norbert Elias, the sociologist theorist argued about the individual human being as not completely independent, but always dependent on other people, we come to understand in a way why my respondents feel this sort of ‘difference’ towards their own people even when they are in their home country. Elias further argues that there are no individuals without societies and no societies without individuals.\textsuperscript{107} Even in Kosova the respondents take into consideration how they are perceived by their own people, because it is not only how you perceive yourself that you know who you are, it is also how other people perceive you.

To strengthen my interviewees’ answers Gidden’s theory is relevant, because it explains how these people live in world with difficulties and differentiations. In today’s globalized world, the search of one’s own self-identity is becoming a modern issue of society. Late modernity “…produces a situation in which humankind in some respects becomes a ‘we’, facing problems and opportunities where there are no ‘others’.\textsuperscript{108} By living in late-modernity, we live in a world different from the previous eras of history where various distinctive tensions and difficulties on the levels of the self are involved giving us dilemmas.\textsuperscript{109} What Anthony Giddens means is that in order to be a person you must have the concept of what a person is and despite that we all as people know what a person is, as we have different cultures in the world we therefore understand it differently. Giddens theory is especially important to my analysis above since these people think they know who they are, but it is first after they have been meeting cultural differences and ‘us’ and ‘them’ that they come to understand who they are.

The German sociologist, Max Weber, in Stephen Cornell’s and Douglas Hartmann’s work, \textit{Ethnicity and Race. Making Identities in a Changing World} refers to ethnic groups as persons who are distinguished by common culture, language, religion, behaviour or belief. Ethnic ties are blood ties and it does not matter if a blood relationship exists, but what people perceive one to be. As one of my respondents said,

\textsuperscript{107} Miegel Fredrik & Johansson Thomas. 2002: 119
\textsuperscript{108} Giddens, Anthony 1991: 27
\textsuperscript{109} Ibid. p. 188
“I feel myself free in my home country, in the aspect of that we share the same values and norms. I do not have to feel myself withdrawn and think to myself that I will face misunderstandings”.\textsuperscript{110} (Interview with Fitim)

“Ethnicity is a subjective matter; the crucial issue is how we see ourselves”.\textsuperscript{111} What is most important here is how my respondents see themselves. My respondents’ feelings about where they feel home are important in terms of ethnic identity, because first it is more important how you see yourself and then how others see you.

“I feel that I am ‘home’ there. I feel I belong to those people. I feel free in many aspects”.\textsuperscript{112} (Interview with Bajram)

Later, when my respondents were given the question on how much they are integrated into the Swedish society and who the ones that include their daily surrounding are, I was surprised to hear that most of my respondents feel integrated in Sweden because most of them have good jobs and good education. However, they stress that they think they have been lucky unlike other Kosovar Albanian immigrants or immigrants in general to be able to go to higher education. They also highlight that in their spare time they are mostly surrounded by an Albanian environment.

“Well, I must really say that ever since I have come to Sweden for three years now I have had the luck to get into the labour market and the Swedish system very fast, unlike many other immigrants. I have integrated myself very fast into the labour market but unfortunately that is not the same in the public sphere. Most of my time I spend with my relatives and family and those friends that I have here are not Swedish”.\textsuperscript{113} (Interview with Fitim)

“I do not believe that I have changed that much since I have come to Sweden. On the other hand, I have taken a lot from my baggage and baked some more. I have picked what is positive from the both cultures”.\textsuperscript{114} (Interview with Lindita)

\textsuperscript{110} Interview with Fitim, 2\textsuperscript{nd} December 2008
\textsuperscript{111} Cornell Stephen, Hartmann Douglas. 1998:17
\textsuperscript{112} Interview with Bajram, 27\textsuperscript{th} November 2008
\textsuperscript{113} Interview with Fitim, 2\textsuperscript{nd} December 2008
\textsuperscript{114} Interview with Lindita, 9\textsuperscript{th} December 2008
“To be honest, whenever I am around with Swedes I try to adapt myself after their way of living. It depends what I want from something. School is the place where I spend most of my time. I must socialize with all students. I cannot work individually; therefore I think that you must try to adapt yourself in a way in order to have success”.115 (Interview with Nita)

Culture is an important factor in shaping the identity; identifying and establishing what is ‘ours’ and what we recognize as ‘acceptable’ in comparison with what is counted as ‘unknown’ and ‘unacceptable’ in other peoples culture. We are often separated from other ethnic groups by boundaries in everyday life that are physical and geographical and social, economic and cultural. As we recognize the term ‘Otherness’, we tend to differentiate skin colour, clothing, location, cultural practices etc. 116

The respondents have stressed that they are integrated in the Swedish society, unlike other immigrants. They have good education and work and they try to show that they have taken what is best from both cultures in order to have success in their lives. They make it clear that they automatically start adapting after the Swedish lifestyle.

When I then asked my respondents what ‘Swedishness’ means to them and what they like most about living in Sweden it was clear to me that being Swedish to them is what they are not.

“To me, it means to look myself into what I am not. To be Swedish, to me is connected with Swedish citizenship. What I do not like is that immigrants are not given many opportunities and instead of improving it is only becoming harder for immigrants to live in Sweden. The law is good, but in practice not”.117 (Interview with Fitim)

The immigrants are represented in a negative way by media. The term ‘immigrant’ has been indicated with the meaning of difference and has lead to the thinking of ‘we’ and ‘them’ and the notion of the ‘Other’. We have an aspect when immigrants are evaluated as the ‘host’, the ‘different’, the ‘Other’ or the ‘exotic’. Another example is that when in everyday life and formal contexts the word ‘we’ is used to refer to Swedes, it thereby cuts out immigrants as

115 Interview with Nita, 7th December 2008
116 www.sverigemotrasism.nu
117 Interview with Fitim, 2nd December 2008
‘them’. Stereotypes arise because of the lack of competence the other different ethnic groups has. Immigrants can come to think that they cannot fully belong to the Swedish society or be seen as a ‘Swede’ because the concept ‘immigrant’ is being misunderstood, which leads to stigmatization on difference and non-Swedishness.118

“To be perceived as Swedish, I think you must have Swedish parents and be raised in Sweden within a Swedish environment and be educated with Swedish culture. However, what I most like about living here is the good system, family and economics safety, education in school, the respect in general for human rights and the opportunity to express yourself as a human being. What is bad about living here is the difficulty to live as an immigrant, and it is more difficult when you are a Muslim immigrant as well. You are not given the equal rights as the natives in Sweden in practical”.119 (Interview with Bajram)

What is of high importance in order to understand cultural identity is that cultural identity has existed in the past and will always continue existing in the future. Stuart Hall, in Charmé’s article says that “Cultural identities come from somewhere, have histories. But like everything which is historical, they undergo constant transformation”.120 Sartre means that every human being is always moving beyond the statement about what we are, transcending who they were a moment earlier. He says that we are not what we are, while we are always in a process of becoming: “who we are is really what we are not (yet)”.121 He means that people always want to become something they are not, a Kosovar Albanian in Sweden tries to cope with being Swedish as my respondents have given clear examples above. In this way, their identities are shaping, unconsciously even though they cannot fully be seen as Swedish people.

“There are things that I like about Swedish people, for example the way they think about their future, their independence. However, I think that being too independent in life may be negative; you may end up being selfish and isolated. Swedish people tend to close themselves inside, freeze themselves in”. I have taken advantage of this independence and I have become

118 www.sverigemotrasism.nu
119 Interview with Bajram, 27th November 2008
120 Charmé 2000: 144
121 Charmé 2000: 149
more independent when it comes to education, school and to be able to stand for my opinion”. 122 (Interview with Nita)

Identification is a process; it is something that we do, claims Jenkins.123 First, we come to know ourselves by realising the others. In this case, the Swedish Kosovar Albanian know who they are when they realise that their own people in Kosova are different than them and in Sweden they also know themselves as they realise that Swedish people are not like them. Second, as our individual identities and minds adapt and change, the process of identification continues throughout our lives. The others then perceive us in the way we (the individuals) present ourselves to them. That presentation is either accepted or not and becomes a part of the individual’s identity in the eyes of the others. Third, “Who I have relationships with, and the nature of those relationships – who I identify with – contributes to who I am, and says something to others about me”124

“Typical Swedish is to ‘take it easy’, be independent and live by yourself. Swedish people are very careful and punctual and are very engaged in their career”.125 (Interview with Valjeta)

What Nita and Valjeta are trying to say is that Swedish people are too independent and these girls have taken what is best from this independence and they have taken the best part and way from how it is to be dependent and live in collective. In this way they have come to make a perfect combination. They have maintained their identities and at the same time their identities have been transformed. My respondents sense that they have taken the positive manners from Swedish people by having given the chance to be part of two nationalities. However, even if they have this opportunity to be part of two cultures, in the end they feel that they are not gaining anything but confusion. Vlera gives clear examples about this by stating that,

“Swedish people are very calm and careful. I like Sweden because there are so many opportunities here. I can both work and go to school here. But, sometimes when you have so

122 Interview with Nita, 7th December 2008
123 Jenkins, Richard. 2004: 47-48
124 Ibid. p. 49
125 Interview with Valjeta, 13th December 2008
many opportunities in your life you end up making the wrong choice. You do not know what you really want in your life—this or that!”126 (Interview with Vlera)

Today, the definition of ethnicity means that the self-identification of groups changes during historical, economic, social and political processes. For example, the relationship between ethnic groups should be understood as social processes. Ethnicity has thereby connection with social classifications and group relations. What is important to be mentioned and relevant to the changes and making of identities among Kosovar-Albanians in Swedish society within migration is that when people experience unequal economical and political relations within a national state the identity of an ethnic group is strengthened.127

I expected that the respondents would be more positive to live with two different cultures, even though they actually mention that they try to pick what is best from both cultures. By living in two different places these people automatically adapt so fast. They seem to switch their identities whenever they change between Sweden and Kosova but they do not seem positive and confident with that. They say that they are happy to call themselves Swedish Kosovar Albanian and they get much attention from people in Kosova because they are coming from a welfare state like Sweden. However, they do not feel fully Swedish. As also mentioned before in the end they still get a lot confused of always being in a position to choose between great decisions in life.

4. 4 VALUES AND LIFESTYLE

When I questioned my respondents what kind of values they have received and maintained from their homeland and what values they have obtained after they came to Sweden my respondents gave a lot of explanations of many different sets of behaviour, thoughts, lifestyle and values that differ Kosovar Albanians from Swedish people.

“Before I came to Sweden I used to have the same values they have now in Kosova. I valued everything on the basis of my place and my people. Something that was not part of my place and people I valued as ‘unknown’ and ‘abnormal’. When I came to Sweden I realised that my mind about some certain things was changed. Now I do not jump into immediate conclusions

126 Interview with Vlera, 5th December 2008
127 www.sverigemotrasism.nu
about certain things without first analysing and giving some critique. My mind is broader after having analyzed the differences between people when it comes to culture, religion and so on”.128 (Interview with Bajram)

“The norms and values that I have maintained from my homeland are the special respect to older people and educated people and to always welcome a guest who wants to come for visit, even if it may be an inappropriate time. By living in Sweden I have come to be influenced by the way people are independent as individuals. For example, if a woman in Kosova comes unfixed with no make-up on at work everybody will look down at her and start making judgments. In Sweden, you come and go as you please; nobody cares what you wear and how you choose to look”.129 (Interview with Fitim)

Here again, we come to the values that these respondents have picked and combined with their own existing values. In this way, by automatically taking some of the Swedish values their identity is shaping and transforming, unconsciously, as also mentioned before. Fitim is emphasizing here that independence is the best value that he has taken from the Swedish culture. But then, one of my respondents has a problem with this part that Swedish are too independent.

Nita argues that “We are more open and warm than Swedish people I think. I notice this more and more each day in school. The Swedish students for example are more withdrawn, they avoid helping you when you actually need help. They think more of themselves. I have a lot of problems with this issue I must say. It really bothers me”.130 (Interview with Nita)

Nita shows that in this way she feels excluded. The feeling of ‘exclusion’ is also another example that shows the strength of an ethnic group within a state. In a multicultural society, immigrants are those who are classified in terms of ethnicity. The definitions of ethnicity and ethnic identity do not only work as a way of defining the ‘Others’- the immigrants whose actions and behaviours, unlike the Swedes, are supposed to be decided by their ‘ethnicity’, but

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128 Interview with Bajram, 27th November 2008
129 Interview with Fitim, 2nd December 2008
130 Interview with Nita, 7th December 2008
also as a way of showing who is in charge of defining the social reality and who is the first of interpretations in the society.\textsuperscript{131} Valjeta also give examples of ‘exclusion’ by saying,

“When Swedish friends ask me to go out on a pub, I must say no because I do not drink alcohol. The Swedish friends then take distance from me and our friendship slides away eventually.”\textsuperscript{132} (Interview with Valjeta)

“Cultural categories with social and group referents are the focus of ethnic inquiry. Where there is a group, there is some sort of boundary, and where there are boundaries there are mechanisms to maintain them. These boundary mechanisms are cultural markers of difference”.\textsuperscript{133}

My respondents further go in to argue that they have made their own values by combining the both cultures and picking what is best from each culture.

“I have baked a new culture that is nor pure Swedish nor pure Albanian. I have baked two cultures in one”.\textsuperscript{134} (Interview with Lindita)

“I was only six years old when I came here and as a child I did not have any values on things. I have built my own values with my family and Albanian friends and through my vacations in Kosova and also with my Swedish friends and Swedish school. I have so to speak picked up what I have considered is the ‘best’ from both cultures”.\textsuperscript{135} (Interview with Valjeta)

“The values I have that I have obtained from my parents are the respect for people, especially guests. When guests come at our house, we have to be polite and kind and make special tea and coffee. Swedish people on the contrary say: Please, serve yourself!”\textsuperscript{136} (Interview with Vlera)

\textsuperscript{131} www.sverigemotrasism.nu
http://www.cmr.nu/smr/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=46&Itemid=29
\textsuperscript{132} Interview with Valjeta, 13\textsuperscript{th} December 2008
\textsuperscript{133} Hutchinson John, Smith Anthony D. 1996: 24-25
\textsuperscript{134} Interview with Lindita, 9\textsuperscript{th} December 2008
\textsuperscript{135} Interview with Valjeta, 13\textsuperscript{th} December 2008
\textsuperscript{136} Interview with Vlera, 5\textsuperscript{th} December 2008
These respondents show the different sides of values in a clear way. They show how they have been used to behave and act and how they have learned to act and behave in Sweden as well. By explaining the different values, the respondents also show the cultural distinction, which is of significance in ethnicity matters. “In everyday language, the word ethnicity still has a ring of "minority issues" and "race relations", but in social anthropology, it refers to aspects of relationships between groups which consider themselves, and are regarded by others, as being culturally distinctive”.137

In dealing with immigrant groups, culture has been emphasized within society. Minority groups as a group of people with a subculture have different values, beliefs and norms where they are a part of the majority group in that society. The cultures between the groups differ in ethnicity, race, religion, class, and gender. Ethnocentrism, which means that a culture is superior to another, may lead to power relations between ‘we’ and ‘them’. Culture then is of course seen as the reason to the different actions of problems by immigrants. For example, people usually draw the assumption that immigrants choose to live collectively because of their culture, meaning that people act the way they act because of their culture. However, culture is also seen as a phenomenon that is constantly shaping and changing because immigrants start to cope with the new way of live in the host country.138

Furthermore, I asked my respondents in what way their culture clashes with the Swedish culture in everyday life in order to get a deeper insight to the main problems they face.

“There is much that clashes between the both cultures. I am raised in a patriarchal environment. Young people are more flexible, they can easier switch from one culture to another, while old people are more sceptical. However, the disadvantage with the young people’s flexibility to quickly adapt themselves into the society may be a risk to go more into assimilation than integration. The benefits from the scepticism among the first generation immigrants are that we have kept in safe and taken care of our own identity”.139 (Interview with Bajram)

“In Sweden, it is very normal for people outside marriage to live together, to divorce many times, and to have stepmothers, stepfathers, stepsisters and so on. You do not see this much in

137 http://folk.uio.no/geirthe/Ethnicity.html#Chapter1
138 http://home.snu.edu/~hculbert/ethno.htm
139 Interview with Bajram, 27th November 2008
my homeland. By living here, these values may cross with the Swedish culture and many young Kosovar Albanians in Sweden may be influenced by this way.” (Interview with Fitim)

These men give examples of the different way of living of the two different cultures. They show with what kind of values they have been raised with and what kind of values they have been observing in Sweden and they stress that the younger immigrants are those who mostly get influenced by the Swedish lifestyle. They show that the younger Kosovar Albanians get better along in the Swedish society because they are more flexible and can adapt easily. However, they are afraid that the younger Kosovar Albanians might get too influenced by the Swedish lifestyle and lose their own origin values.

“When I was younger and my Swedish friends came over to my place and slept over they took their own pillow and blanket with them. I thought that was very strange and unnecessary. I brought them coffee or tea and food to eat in tray. When I went over to sleep at their place, I was told to bring my own pillow and blanket and they said to me go up and take for yourself to eat what you want. Whenever I happened to be at a friend’s house and they were eating dinner, my friend had to ask her parents if I could eat too, and many times they said no. If this would have happened in my house it would have been considered very rude” (Interview with Nita)

My respondents seem to always come into talking in terms of ‘us’ and ‘them’ and ‘difference’. Nita gives clear examples above on what Swedish behaviours she sees as ‘weird’ and different from her own norms and behaviours. The anthropologist, Thomas Hylland Eriksen arguing in his work says, “The first fact of ethnicity is the application of systematic distinctions between insiders and outsiders; between Us and Them. If no such principle exists there can be no ethnicity, since ethnicity presupposes an institutionalised relationship between delineated categories whose members consider each other to be culturally distinctive”.

140 Interview with Fitim, 2nd December 2008
141 Interview with Nita, 7th December 2008
142 Eriksen Hylland, Thomas. 2002: 13
4. 5 ETHNIC BOUNDARIES

Ethnicity is the basis for the Kosovar Albanian immigrants’ process to generate a band between two cultures and create a new identity in the new country where they face different experiences in values, norms and principals. In order to understand what it actually means for my respondents to be ethnic Kosovar Albanians or Swedish Kosovar Albanians my thought was to ask them how they feel when they are abroad, outside Sweden and outside Kosova. My intention was to find out if and why they feel more Swedish or Albanian.

“I prefer to call myself Albanian and Muslim. My looks make it clear that I do not look like a Swede, even though it says Swedish citizenship on the passport”.143 (Interview with Bajram)

“I look like a typical Albanian (he laughs). It is pretty obvious that I am not Scandinavian. Therefore, I feel much better with myself to say that I am a Kosovar Albanian. However, when the question comes to me about where I live, I say in Sweden”.144 (Interview with Fitim)

These men make it clear that one’s look can tell much about who that person is and where he comes from.

Nationalism is an important theoretical aspect in order to understand why my respondents feel this way. The perfect explanation in order to understand nationalism is to look at the experience of the break-up Yugoslavia. What actually broke Yugoslavia up were the ethnic and cultural differences that have always existed between the different ethnic groups in the different countries within Yugoslavia. The Kosovar Albanians were a part of those ethnic groups who demanded rights and freedom to be able to express their own language and culture but were always oppressed by the dominant Serbs. They have for many years been claiming status as nation and they finally were independent in the beginning of 2008.145 Nationalism therefore arose as a result of the ethnic cleansing of Kosovar Albanians. The reason why my respondents have so strong feelings about their Kosovar identity and why they prefer to call themselves Kosovar Albanians is due to the early experiences about their

143 Interview with Bajram, 27th November 2008
144 Interview with Fitim, 2nd December 2008
desire to have a nation state of their own and therefore nationalism has become a strong
appeal for them. It is a fact that they did not want to lose their identity then and lose it to the
oppressors and it is a fact that today while living far away from their home land they want to
keep their identity safe.

One of my respondents argued that “When I am abroad I usually tell people I am ‘Swedish’
because I look like a typical Swede and to be honest I also say I am Swedish because it is so
bothersome to always go into details and explain where Kosova is and when I came to
Sweden and so on. There are not so many people who actually know where Kosova really is,
some old people still say Yugoslavia or the Balkan countries. Therefore I would rather prefer
to call myself Swedish than Yugoslavian”.

(Interview with Valjeta)

Valjeta gives another side of explanation that how you look is also how you are perceived.

Both ethnicity and nationalism deal with blood ties but they are different in that nationalism is
more related to the state. The elder people where raised in Kosova to experience the horrible
situation and the young Kosovar Albanians in Sweden have had strong feelings about their
home land from stories of their parents and the news they heard every day in 1998 when the
war erupted. They became solidarities sympathizing with their fellows in Kosova.

One of my respondents stressed that if she was to call herself Swedish she would lose her own
existing identity as a Kosovar Albanian.

“I say that I come from Sweden but that I belong to the Kosovar Albanian population. I do
not call myself ‘Swedish’, because I would lose my identity if I would be saying that I am
Swedish”. (Interview with Nita)

Richard Jenkins’s theory about ethnicity and the terms ‘us’ and ‘them’ are relevant to the
above quotation of my interviewee as he argues about ethnicity as a primary identification. As
a collective identity, ethnicity is an important and early dimension of self-identification.

“Ethnicity, when it matters to people, really matters. The circumstances under which it

146 Interview with Valjeta, 13th December 2008
147 Interview with Nita, 7th December 2008
matters are relevant, however. Ethnicity depends on similarity and difference rubbing up against each other collectively: ‘us’ and ‘them’”.\(^{148}\) According to Jenkins there are two modes of collective identification. “In the first, the members of a collectivity can identify themselves as such: they know who (and what) they are. In the second, members may be ignorant of their membership or even of the collectivity’s existence”.\(^{149}\)

In general, my respondents conclude that they would not refer themselves as Swedish because they would be losing their own identity.

Afterwards, my respondents argue about how they are perceived by other people in the society. Identity is mostly about how an individual perceives himself/herself and who you are. The way you think and perceive yourself to be is then affected by how other people see you and perceive you. This led me to question my respondents as whom they think people perceive them to be and if their choices they make in life are influenced because of their ethnic belonging. Hewitt’s theory of social identity is relevant in this case as he argues about two important forms of identity; social and personal identity. It is not enough to only place ourselves in relation to others. As has been mentioned more or less in the texts above, social identity is also when we are placed in a way by other people.

Lindita argues below that people basically see her as an immigrant.

> “People perceive me as social, brave, tempered, helpful but still as an immigrant. I try to do things more in Kosovar Albanian style as possible in order to keep my identity still within me and my children”.\(^{150}\) (Interview with Lindita)

Principally, it is not only how we compare ourselves to others thinking we are different to them but also how the others place and look ourselves in the society. When differentiation about you from others is made, social identity exists.\(^{151}\) On the contrary, personal identity is something the person creates and owns, like a property. Hewitt gives an explanation with religion and beliefs by saying that “A religious seeker who has settled for a time on a belief

\(^{148}\) Jenkins, Richard. 2004: 65

\(^{149}\) Ibid. 81

\(^{150}\) Interview with Lindita, 9\(^{th}\) December 2008

\(^{151}\) Hewitt, John P. 2003: 110-111
system may, when challenged by others with differing views, say, “These are my beliefs and my truth and no one can take them away from me”¹⁵²

Nita and Valjeta show below that they have always been misunderstood by their Swedish friends and it has been hard to explain to them why they could not do some things as the Swedish people could do. The Swedish friends could not understand why we chose to behave in a different way. Therefore, boundaries were created and again the terms ‘us’ and ‘them’ were stressed. Stephen Spencer, in the book, *Race and Ethnicity. Culture, Identity and Representation*, also talks about identity as work in progress and as a space between ‘us’ and them. “Identity is a work in progress, a negotiated space between ourselves and others; constantly being re-appraised and very much linked to the circulation of cultural meanings in society”.¹⁵³

“I am perceived as both Swedish and Kosovar Albanian in Sweden as well as in Kosova by other people. I have always got along with my Swedish friends but to a certain degree of our friendship we could not understand each other. I always thought in my mind; she will never understand what I really want to say. It seems like I have always played a role in life. I have never been myself because of the boundaries and misunderstandings”.¹⁵⁴ (Interview with Nita)

“I am perceived as Swedish because I have blue eyes and blond hair and my accent is excellent when I speak Swedish. Many times Swedish people get very surprised when I tell them I am originally from Kosova. Because of my looks and because I have lived here for more than 16 years now I am perceived as a part of the Swedish society, unlike many other immigrants. I try to live the way as is my ethnic belonging. In secondary school all my girlfriends in my class had boyfriends. I could have also chosen to have a boyfriend, but I chose not to have one because I have been raised in an Albanian way of thinking. Many chose to avoid me because of my choices but now I know I made the right decision. And even now when I do not participate in some activities they immediately take me for ‘odd’ and withdrawn and they connect it with my culture”.¹⁵⁵ (Interview with Valjeta)

¹⁵² Ibid. 111
¹⁵³ Spencer, Stephen. 2006: 26
¹⁵⁴ Interview with Nita, 7th December 2008
¹⁵⁵ Interview with Valjeta, 13th December 2008
These girls show how they have experienced ‘exclusion’ because of the different ways they chose to behave. They were avoided by Swedish friends when for example they did not go out with boys. Everything they did was connected to their ethnic belonging and culture. Once again, Valjeta reminds us that how you look really matters how other people perceive you, but then she stresses that it is how you choose to act and behave that people can tell you are ‘different’. Other people then draw assumptions and represent you in a special way.

The term ‘immigrant’ is usually connected with problems and for the most time it is media who represents the depiction of what it is to be an immigrant and what the immigrants are, in a negative way. Media possess the power to control the representation of individuals or groups. An example is that a lot of issues and problems in the society are interpreted in ethnic terms. Usually, some of the issues that are connected to immigrants are unemployment, immigrants living in segregated areas, social problems and youth crime. Media depicts immigrants either as victims of injustices or people who need financial help from the Swedish society. They are seen as dangerous, criminal and as a threat to the Swedish social society because of their culture. One of my respondents gave a good example that could explain the representation of immigrants that is depicted in the Swedish society.

“I am a Kosovar Albanian wherever I go. I would never say that I am Swedish or that I belong to the Swedish identity because if for example I someday would become famous in whatever field, I would never be represented as ‘the Kosovar Albanian’ in Sweden. I would instead be known as Swedish, internationally. However, if I were to commit a crime, I believe I would be represented as ‘the Kosovar Albanian’ who committed the crime”. (Interview with Fitim)

We usually have the need to mirror ourselves in contrast to what we are not. In Representation by Stuart Hall, due to Saussure, difference matters because it is important to meaning; without it, meaning could not exist. Further, Saussure argues that we know what black means, not because there is some real meaning of ‘blackness’ but because we contrast it

156 Franzén, Elsie C. 2001: 18
157 www.sverigemotrasism.se
158 Interview with Fitim, 2nd December 2008
with white.\textsuperscript{159} We define concepts from what it is not and what it is related to. Freud gives another relevant explanation. He states that we need “the other” in order to constitute “the self”.\textsuperscript{160} We define ourselves on the basis of what other people are.

“In Sweden, Swedish people see me as a Kosovar Albanian, but by the Albanians in Sweden and also Albanians in Kosovo I am seen as a mixture between Swedish and Albanian, a Kosovar Albanian who is raised within Swedish culture”.\textsuperscript{161} (Interview with Vlera)

This tells us how differently people are perceived by different people in different situated places. For my respondents it is understood that who you are, is always depended by how you are perceived by other people.

Moreover, my respondents have stressed in many ways the influence of their parents. Their parents have tried to keep in safe their identities, the children have been reminded over and over again who they are and how important it is to keep the traditions. However, they also stress that their parents have emphasized them not to separate from the majority, to take what is good from the both cultures. One of my respondents says that the mother tongue is very important by arguing,

“My parents have always spoken Albanian with us and we were always told to speak Albanian at home. They worked really hard to teach us about Albanian history, literature, grammar and so on. We had Albanian lessons once a week at school, and as I have been a regular student it has helped me a lot and I am very thankful to my parents today. I never had any problems with my Swedish. Everybody was surprised how fluent I was in Swedish. I have learned that if you do not fully know your own language, you will never be able to fully express yourself in any other language”.\textsuperscript{162} (Interview with Valjeta)

The main problem immigrants face in the host country is the fact that they are always in between two cultures. Muhammad Anwar in his article, \textit{Between Cultures: Continuity and Change in the Lives of Young Asians} tries to show this by stating that many Asian children
face this problem in Britain, while family and the members of the community emphasize values that are different from those the children are learning at school. They may, therefore experience problems in especially adapting to life, in both school, home and in the community. On the other hand, parents fear that their children might pick up Western values and ideas when spending so much time with British people in school and outside the school. It is further mentioned in Anwar’s article that in schools there seems to be a view that “...any language used at home other than English hinders the process of learning English at school”. It does not have to be this way. In fact, if you first know the mother tongue fluently it should help you possess the Swedish language much better. Giving a support to this, Anwar states in his article that many young Asian people and parents feel proud of their mother tongue, seeing it as a part of their ethnic and cultural identity. Jessica Jacobson states that “Minority language use can be an especially explicit and concrete element of a cultural boundary, in that it reinforces both the sense of belonging of group members and the exclusion of outsiders”.

Another relevant theory to how these people are perceived is Thomas Hylland Eriksen’s theory who also argues that second-generation immigrants in European cities experience identity problems because they live between two cultures. When Eriksen talks about immigrants he basically means non-Europeans. He states that only those immigrants who are locally perceived as significantly and culturally distinctive are regarded as immigrants.

To conclude this part, my respondents feel that overall they are perceived as immigrants by other people and that the word ‘immigrant’ has a negative meaning in the society. Some of my respondents also argue that how you look can tell how people perceive you. For those who look like Swedish people, other people may perceive them as Swedish but they emphasize that they want to be perceived as Kosovar Albanians because they do not want to lose their own identity. However, they state that it is the choices one makes and lifestyle one chooses to have that makes other people perceive the respondents as Kosovar Albanian immigrants and not Swedish. In general, they say that in Sweden they are mostly perceived as Kosovar

163 Anwar, Muhammad. 1998: 117-118
164 Ibid. p. 119
165 Ibid. p. 130
166 Ibid.
167 Jacobson, Jessica. 1998: 96
168 Eriksen, Hylland, Thomas. 2002
Albanians, while in Kosova they are often perceived as a mix of both Albanian and Swedish culture.

4. 6 RELIGIOUS BOUNDARIES

As religion for the majority of my respondents has strong appeal in their daily experiences, I chose to investigate what it means to them to be a Muslim and how they practice Islam. Some of my respondents however, say that religion is not the crucial part in their daily life. They refer to call themselves Muslims when they are asked what they believe in, but they do not act in an Islamic way. There are many factors to why most of the Kosovar Albanians in general do not practice their faith fully. One main factor is that Islam during the communism in Yugoslavia was oppressed and the majority of Albanians who were Muslims were denied to practice Islam in public. After investigating the ethnic identity among my respondents I also chose to look into the religious identity as well because in my opinion I think religion is a very important perspective that plays a great part and contributes to different forms of the shapes of identity among immigrants. In my respondents’ hearts, Islam is the best way and guide in life. In order to understand if religion is important to my respondents I have put my main thought in these questions: How often do you practice Islam? Has religion influenced your values and your shape of identity and how do you experience your faith in the Swedish society. In what ways does your religion clash with the Swedish society?

“Unfortunately I am not a fully practical Muslim but I do fast Ramadan and I always have a conflict with myself whenever I think of God. I feel guilty that I am not doing all the things my religion requires. Whenever I see other people praying I say inshallah (If God will) I will start praying some day. I know the truth but I do not follow it and deep down that kills me because in my conscious I know how important that is and I know Islam is the right way. I see the right way but I do not follow it”.169 (Interview with Fitim)

Religious experience, although private, refers to all of the people’s involvement. People try to communicate their experiences by expressing their beliefs in rituals. The awareness of belonging to a group of believers may also be religious experience. “Rituals often remind the individual of this belonging, creating an intense sense of togetherness”.170 A meaning system

169 Interview with Fitim, 2nd December 2008
170 McGuire, Meredith B. 2002: 21
makes sense of one’s identity and social being. Meredith McGuire in her work talks about how religion is both individual and social and argues that an individual’s meaning system is learned, mostly during the process of socialization. By performing a suitable ritual or event, an individual can apply meaning to a situation. However, the way group do things and the fact that they exist meaning is given. To give meaning to their existence, both the individual and the social group draw on religion.”Religion interprets and evaluates the “way things are to be done” in the social group”.

“Islam has made me the person I am today. I constantly think in terms of Islam, because everything you do has to do with Islam. I always think about good & evil and sometimes I get low self-esteem. I always think with my heart and mind but never really put my thoughts into action. I know for example that I must not judge anybody in whatsoever because God will punish those who do so and spontaneously I do that. I also know for example that I am not allowed to show my legs and I still go on and wear skirts.” (Interview with Nita)

“I do not practice Islam as I should do. I do not pray. I do not fast regularly during Ramadan. However, I am so interested in my faith, it is so right with everything; it makes sense about all things in life. I know all of that and I know that it is not accepted to say that I do not find the right time and space to practice my faith, because when people really want something they do it, they cross boundaries to do what they really desire. I feel guilty, I know. But, I always say maybe someday I will do more for God than just thank Him”. (Interview with Vlera)

My respondents emphasize that religion is very important to them, even though they do not practice their faith as they should do. They all say here that they feel guilty for not practicing Islam fully, but they hope to someday be able to fix this. What they have in common is that they see the right way but they do not follow it.

The religious identity among Kosovar Albanians is very important as the ethnic identity, because many people are influenced by religious values and norms and the religious meanings help them interpret their experiences. For the majority of my respondents religion seems to have a great impact in their lives, some of them are more religious than the others, and some

171 Ibid. p. 32
172 Interview with Nita, 7th December 2008
173 Interview with Vlera, 5th December 2008
are less religious than the others but they still emphasize that they all believe in God. For example, one of my respondents who is quite religious says:

“I practice my faith regularly. I pray five times each day, visit the mosque everyday (because the mosque is very near where I live, in Rosengård). I fast during Ramadan and I try to make the right choices in life according to Islam”.

(Interview with Bajram)

Further, one of my respondents, who claim not to be religious states,

“I am not very religious but I do believe in God. I practice Islam in many different ways. For example, by thinking of God and thank Him for all the food and health, helping other people in need”.

(Interview with Lindita)

In general they all come to the conclusion that they are today who they are because of their religion. They are aware of the time limits and space limits that occur in the Swedish society and therefore they are not able to fully practice their own religion.

Barbara D Metcalf, states that some individuals can come to look at their religious maintenance as a merit, and as a satisfaction. What they mean is that it is much harder to maintain the religion and practice it in non-Muslim societies than it is in their homeland.

My respondents give clear examples to what Metcalf is trying to say. Valjeta explains how,

“Religion is something you hold strongly on to in all aspects of life. You have religion as an argumentation to what happens in life and what surrounds us. I do not practice Islam fully, for example I do not wear veil, but I do pray each day (sometimes five times a day). There are so many obstacles in everyday life that you cannot find the time and space in this society to perform your faith. I, however fast during Ramadan, celebrate the festivals, and visit the mosque during Ramadan”.

(Interview with Valjeta)

The primary ritual of a Muslim is salat, the ritual prayer, when Muslims pray five times each day. Even though we see the gestures during the prayer, the primary action of salat is verbal

174 Interview with Bajram, 27th November 2008
175 Interview with Lindita, 9th December 2008
176 Metcalf, Barbara D. 1996: 8
177 Interview with Valjeta, 13th December 2008
where you say and recite the prayer. Muslims’ submission of their will to God requires space. Salat, the ritual prayer requires space both physically and mentally, because during 5-10 minutes five times each day they must have this space in private in order to practice their religious duty. The Muslim requires a clean physical place to perform the prayer undisturbed. During Ramadan, fasting makes demands of mental and spiritual space. It is these typical things or practices which take Muslims in a space distinct from non-Muslims. My respondents show that the more religious one is, the more this distinction is widened.

I further carried on questioning my respondents if religion has influenced their values and their shapes of identity and how they experience their faith in the Swedish society. In what ways does Islam clash with the Swedish society?

“Religion has had the impact on me because I value people on the basis of the upbringing and education they have from their religion and not their ethnicity. I prioritise the religious education and upbringing and then the other values”. (Interview with Bajram)

“The more I have grown, the more I have come to understand how important religion has been to me. When I was younger, I did not understand much. My parents told me you should not do this and that because God does not want to. I had my boundaries, and today I am thankful that I was raised in that way”. (Interview with Nita)

Religion has influenced these respondents’ minds and behaviours as they have been raised with religious views. They were told to act and behave in the ways Islam allows people to behave as they were younger and today they are thankful that they had limitations to not do certain things and they have come to understand that the religious education is the most adequate one.

How do you experience your faith in the Swedish society? In what way does it clash with the Swedish society?

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Metcalf, Barbara D. 1996: 49

Interview with Bajram, 27th November 2008

Interview with Nita, 7th December 2008
“Unfortunately, because I am not a fully practical Muslim I can easily adapt into the society. However, it is very terrible when the feast, Eid occurs and I have to work that day. Sometimes, during Ramadan Swedish people do not respect that I am fasting. They think it is weird why I am not eating, and they drink and eat in front of me. Of course, I understand why they do that, because they do not know the meaning with Ramadan”.181 (Interview with Fitim)

“The more religious you are, the more clashes come out in the Swedish society”.182 (Interview with Nita)

The respondents show that if you are religious you can face more clashes in the Swedish society. Given that, most of my respondents are not fully practical Muslims they can easier get along in the Swedish society. Their religious identity is not as important as their ethnic identity; however they are not proud of that they do not perform the prayer and other important rituals fully. The majority in a society automatically can come to categorize other people, minority groups because something is different about them. It could be from different cultural patterns, different lifestyles to religious rituals that are not like the majority’s. As people, we are very strange in that we think of something that we ourselves are not used to as weird and strange. However, it does not have to be strange and weird, only that it is not a part of our everyday life and we are not used to that.183

In order to understand how immigrants are represented in the Swedish society it is needed to understand that the word ‘immigrant’ has also been a common concept considering Muslims as immigrants. For example in media immigrant women are usually illustrated as Muslim women bearing veils. The immigrant groups and the Swedish groups are in general not homogenous groups. The identity of people is shaped with a starting point in for example national or ethnic belonging, gender, sexuality, age etc. Ylva Brune has shown that immigrant men and women are represented very differently as she since 1970 has been investigating the representations of immigrants. In general, media depicts the typical immigrant woman as isolated and controlled, lacking the freedom of a ‘modern’ woman (Swedish woman) and being the victim of a culture clash. On the contrary, usually the immigrant boy or man is represented as being socially marginalised and associated with crimes that he has already

181 Interview with Fitim, 2nd December 2008
182 Interview with Nita, 7th December 2008
183 Metcalf, Barbara D. 1996: 217
committed or is expected to commit. A picture of immigrants as ‘different’ is then created because of the described stereotypical depiction that men are superior to women. Other representations of young immigrant women in media are that they are “trapped” in between cultures where one usually tends to be described as traditional, strict and part of a patriarchal society and the other as modern and free with equal rights to men. It is quite clear which of the two women described above the reader will sympathize with when being represented and portrayed in this way with binary oppositions. The modern life seems to confront the boy and the girl with different demands. The reason why this is important to my subject is that as some of my respondents who are religious they face difficulties in the society. For example, sometimes they do not participate in activities, they do not take part when colleagues from work are gathered outside work and drink alcohol, or girls avoid going to discos and therefore there is a space left which gives other people the power to represent them as ‘weird’ or ‘strange’, ‘isolated’ and ‘controlled’ and being victims for culture clash. By that the word immigrant connotes a negative meaning. One of my respondents argues by expressing himself;

“It is hard to adapt the practice as a Muslim in the Swedish society. For example, it is hard to find a job where you fast, pray, wear veil, have beard, not shake hand with the opposite gender etc. You have to choose either that or the other. Because of as a Muslim you must practice these rules and for example not be present with colleagues when they drink alcohol it only gets harder to adapt into the Swedish society. I try to adapt myself, however with what is allowed to do. Things that are basics I can correct, but if I were told for example not to perform the prayer on work, I would never take that work.” (Interview with Bajram)

My respondent above show that the basic rituals of Islam are of high importance and for those who do not fully understand the meaning of these rituals it is then easier to make negative assumptions about Islam.

However, one of my respondents shows a good side about Sweden as a place who values to a high level the human rights.

184 Tufte, Thomas. 2003: 53
185 www.sverigemottrasim.nu
186 Brune, Ylva. 2000: 28
187 Tufte, Thomas. 2003: 56
188 Interview with Bajram, 27th November 2008
There are of course many occasions when religion clashes with the society; however I would like to add that Sweden is one of the best countries when it comes to freedom of religion. If it weren’t for my parents, basically and if it weren’t for my broad education and knowledge that I perceived in Sweden, I would have never really become so attached to my religion”.189

(Interview with Valjeta)

Valjeta shows in a way that the more knowledge and education you get in general, the more and better you can come to understand Islam.

Religious identity is distinguished from ethnic identity. Jessica Jacobson in her book when investigating the ethnic and religious identity among young British Pakistani immigrants came to the conclusion that ethnic identity and religious identity are distinct. The author means that ethnic boundaries distinguish from religious boundaries. The distinction rests on the notion that while Pakistani or Asian ethnicity is related to a particular place and people, Islam has universal law and relevance. Ethnic identity is perceived as a set of cultural traditions associated with a minority group, which originally has nothing to do with Islam. According to this view, what is cultural and what is religious should be distinguished. When you commit yourself to faith, you accept the set of absolute truths for all time in life that are in the Quran. Ethnic identity on the other hand, is the tradition, which was brought here from the older generation of British Pakistanis, a tradition that the younger British Pakistanis are challenging.190 Almost the same goes for the Kosovar Albanians. Ethnic identity is the tradition, but they value that more than they challenge. Another way to distinguish ethnic identity and religious identity is that ethnicity is based on a perception of national origins or descent. “Thus, while one’s ethnic identity (or self-definition as, for example, ‘Asian’ or ‘Pakistani’) denotes one’s attachment to a country or region of origin, one’s religious identity as a Muslim signifies belonging to a global community and, indeed, commitment to a set of doctrines which asserts the intrinsic equality of men across all boundaries of race and nation”.191 The young people seem to find comfort in Islam, by being Muslims who belong to a wider and global community. The Kosovar Albanian immigrants also find comfort in Islam, but unlike them they do not consider only Islam as the most important identity. They highlight

189 Interview with Valjeta, 13th December 2008
190 Jacobson, Jessica 1998: 144
191 Ibid.
the ethnic identity to also be more crucial. However, those of my respondents who are most religious consider themselves to belong to the Muslim umma, to a wider community.

What my respondents all agree with is that the more religious you are the more difficult it is to perform your faith and be a good Muslim. Even though the most of my respondents are not practical Muslims, Islam still has a strong appeal in their lives and they are proud to refer themselves as Muslims. They stress that there are times when you have to correct yourself in order to continue along within society, meaning that you have to act like the majority if you do not want to be distinctive. However, my respondents add that Sweden is a country where the human rights are respected and there is freedom of religion. One of my respondents who is the most religious emphasizes that he wants to be loyal to his religion and if he was to correct himself many times in the society he would become hypocrite.

5. MY OWN REFLECTIONS

In addition, my intention with this part is to show the reason to why I decided to write about the Kosovar Albanian identity in Swedish society. I am myself with an original background from Kosova and I can relate to my respondents who came to Sweden in early age and who have strained to cope with both the origin culture and the Swedish culture in their everyday life. Today, I must say that I feel partly Swedish, but not fully. I feel myself as a part of the Swedish society, but also part of the Kosovar Albanian community in Sweden. This is the main reason why I have chosen to investigate the issues among Kosovar Albanian identity in Sweden, and not only for my own benefit, but also as an offer and option for further studies, hopefully.

The most surprising and dazing experience of this work has been the empirical part. In the beginning, I did not realize how much information I would receive from my respondents and how much I actually would relate myself to their responses. I have been able to go into my respondents’ thoughts and how they experience themselves in an easy way and by that I have come to feel a sense of closeness to most of my respondents and the central aim thoroughly. The meeting with my respondents has been very positive and openly. They made me feel comfortable and made it easier for me as they gave rich and detailed answers. I tried to give my respondents follow-up questions in order for our conversation to flow and not be interrupted so that my respondents would get de-concentrated. At the end of each interview I
felt I had received the enough and right respond for my analysis. One reason to why the interviewees have been so open and comfortable during the interviews may be that I share the same background as them, that I am also situated in the same position as them. I did not put any time limits during the interviews. I let the interview flow and gave my respondents time to think through their answers. By doing in this way, I hoped to gather as much information as possible from my respondents. I did not expect in the beginning that I would receive so many examples from them that could be connected to the theoretical framework. I was not conscious as I am now, that a person’s direct expressions and experiences tell more than you actually think.

I have been facing difficulties during my work of this paper. There were times when I did not know what parts to add that were most relevant to my topic. There were also those times when I wanted to put down everything I gathered on the paper because every word my respondents said made sense and was relevant. However, in order to make the analysis more reliable I tried to really give the exact quotations of my respondents’ answers. The time factor has been a problem, and I believe that there is much more to add to this study that is of high importance and interest. Still, in the end I must say that my work has exceeded the expectations.

6. CONCLUSION
The aim of my research study was to investigate the Kosovar Albanian identity in Swedish society after having left their place of origin to settle down in the new destination country. My aim has been to look into the identity changes that occur within the individual human being when he/she migrate into a new country taking with them their own values and behaviours and adapting with the new values and culture they meet there. I also wanted too see what are the factors to these changes of identity according to the respondents’ own views and experiences. My main research question has been to analyze how the Kosovar Albanian immigrants define their own identities. Furthermore, besides how the respondents define their identities, I was curious to know how they believe that they are perceived by other people because many times how people perceive themselves to be is connected to how they are first perceived by others. I go further into research the concept of belonging, where my respondents feel that they belong to and what being ‘Swedish’ and ‘Kosovar Albanian’ mean to them. Eventually, I go into look at the religious identity, besides the ethnic identity, in
order to understand in what way religion acts as a source of identity and what the immigrants think they gain from religion. The main and basic reason for me to enter deeply into these research issues is for the reader to get an overall picture of what it actually means to live with two different identities and how immigrants manage to do so and what the factors to the changes of identity are.

In order to achieve the right results and goal of the aim of my work, I chose to use qualitative approaches as a method. I carried out an unstructured interview with 6 respondents in-depth to gain a more personal insight of the immigrants’ experiences and views about the abstract concept identity. The interviews were held in my respondents’ places, where they felt more comfortable. The respondents are a mix of both male and female. Age and gender are not of specific importance, however I still chose to have both young and adult people in my interviews in order to get as much and different results as possible. In the methodology part I gave a brief presentation of the respondents that provides a more personal knowledge about them. The motivation to why I have chosen Kosovar Albanians specifically as an ethnic group to my study is because of my personal connection to this identity and my interest to see how these issues of identity control our everyday life and to show a real picture to it as a whole.

In the theory part I have used relevant main concepts and theories to my subject in order to illuminate and strengthen my respondents’ views and experiences about their identity. The basis to why I have chosen specifically those theories is to give a broader understanding on how the Kosovar Albanian immigrant groups are perceived in the Swedish society, how they prefer to identify themselves, what Swedish and Kosovar Albanian mean to them and finally if and how religious identity is important to them. Ethnicity, as a concept is the most important theory to my subject, because with ethnicity we come to understand people’s sharing of a same country, culture and values and we then come to understand the terms ‘us’ and ‘them’. Culture is also of high importance because we come to understand the two different cultures the immigrants face in the host country. I have also explained what diaspora and transnationalism means, while the Kosovar Albanian immigrants form their own ‘community’ in Sweden in order to maintain their values and habits. Diaspora is important to my research because it means that people share a belonging and nostalgic memory to a certain place. Finally, I have also described what religious identity is, because most of my respondents add that religion has a strong appeal in their lives. As my respondents argue, the
more religious one is, the more time and space one needs in the society to perform the faith, where they often meet difficulties. Due to the cause my respondents are not fully practical Muslims they can easily get along in the society, however, they still stress that they face differences in culture, ethnicity, values and beliefs and they are not proud of being non-practical Muslims in a full way. They come to feel a sense of guiltiness.

I decided to also give a background history of my respondents’ home country, Kosovo because I believe it is needed to understand what forced Kosovar Albanians to flee and leave their place and why today they visit Kosovo so often and how they are influenced by their visitation and how they often come to feel different from their own people there, because of the influence Sweden has had on them. The history of Kosovo is also important to know, while Albanians as an ethnic and minority group of Kosovo have always been oppressed by Serbia and they have been denied cultural, ethnic and religious rights. The Kosovar Albanians’ struggle for freedom, independence and human rights has led to that Albanians have come to share deep national and ethnic feelings about their country, Kosovo. The reason, therefore, to why Kosovar Albanians cannot fully feel themselves as Swedish, beside the cultural differences they share with Swedish people and the fact that they are always seen as ‘immigrants’, is also because ethnic and national values have for a long time been essential to these people, even before their first enter to Sweden. It took quite a long time until their dream came true and Kosovo was independent. The war in Kosovo was a part of the conflict, which during the 90’s torn Balkan into pieces and forced millions of people to migrate. The history of the Kosovo war is very complicated but extremely important in order to understand why Kosovar Albanians could not accept Kosovo to be a part of Serbia.

In my analysis I have eventually come to the conclusion of my aim and research, where I have sum up what my respondents have been answering and have tried to connect their answers with the theory part. In order to get a more real picture and understanding to my research questions, I try to strengthen the analysis with the already existing theory. In my analysis I made a division of five different parts. The first part in the empirical analysis is, ‘Where is Home’, which is then followed by the chapter, Ambivalence over identity. After that I have gone into research Values and Lifestyles of my respondents and then looked into Ethnic boundaries. Finally, I have ended my analysis with the Religious identity part.
I have come to the conclusion with this study research that the Kosovar Albanians seem to be living and adapting each day with two different cultures. They seem to be playing different roles whenever they switch to act like a Kosovar Albanian or like a Swedish. What all my respondents have in common is that they are all aware of the fact that they come from a different culture with a different identity, which they unconsciously never knew would be shaped or changed but during the process of everyday life their identity slowly and effectively was shaped as they each day were surrounded by the Swedish people and culture. In order to get along and have success they all need to adopt into the society. It is only when they visit their home country that my respondents come to see the differences and the shapes their identities have taken while living in Sweden. Therefore, the question of how they feel when they visit their home country was relevant because only then they can tell the differences. My respondents give clear examples by saying that they have a broader thinking than the people in Kosova. Their friends and relatives say that they look like Swedish people, have different lifestyles and have taken other views and norms. However, my respondents stress that they feel happy whenever they are there. They do not have to think of adapting to something or someone, they feel free and they have attention from other people there. Though, when the question of returning to Kosova appears, most of my respondents are sceptical. They say that in a way they would want to return but they must think of their future and the better living conditions that are in Sweden. My respondents also talk a lot about how they see themselves and how they are perceived by others and what ‘Swedishness’ means to them. They emphasize that they see themselves as ethnic Kosovar Albanians and that they are perceived as Kosovar Albanian immigrants in Sweden. For that reason, they cannot fully perceive themselves as Swedish, because they are not perceived as Swedish and their views, actions, culture, norms have great impact on these people, which leads to difference and ‘us’ and ‘them’. The respondents stress that they are a part of both the Kosovar Albanian belonging and Swedish belonging. They are a mix of both. They feel proud to fluently speak both languages, represent both nationalities, have two ways of looking into certain things etc. However, in the end they end up feeling confused by always dealing with ambiguous decisions in life. They are aware of this and as a result the only belonging which is more appropriate to them is the Kosovar Albanian ‘community’ in Sweden. Within that community the Swedish Kosovar Albanian immigrants share the same experiences, histories, lives and so on. Therefore, they find a sense of comfort together with each other keeping their own traditions and values, but at the same time coping with Swedish lifestyle. The majority of my
respondents are integrated well into the Swedish society. They are mostly surrounded by family members, relatives and immigrant friends, but each day they are also surrounded by Swedish friends and colleagues, who are important persons in their lives. The way my respondents have been answering the questions if they are integrated into the Swedish society, and who they spend their most of the time with clearly has shown that they have an ability to adapt themselves with both cultures. They are aware of how it is to be part of each culture; they understand how people act according to their values and traditions in both countries. Whenever my respondents will be questioned where they belong to, I do not think that their answer will be that they belong to only Kosovar Albanian population and neither do I believe that they will say; I am Swedish. Their answers always are somewhere in between these both cultures. They are either this or that; but still, they are both, and then they are neither this nor that, instead they feel they belong to somewhere up in the air, as one of my respondents argued.

My respondents go into talk a lot about what it means to them to be ‘Swedish’ and ‘Kosovar Albanian’. Even there they make comparison with the two nationalities and draw what is typical Swedish and what is typical Albanian. My intention with this question has been to investigate if my respondents ever feel ‘Swedish’ or what Swedish values they have and have not taken. There are many times in Kosova where these people feel themselves Swedish. As mentioned before, it is because of the different meanings some people have their. They prefer to choose independence, and therefore they choose the Swedish lifestyle. My respondents however, add that they do not exaggerate with the independence they have maintained, because they do not want to isolate themselves and only focus on themselves. As my respondents told me during the interviews, they pick up what is best from both cultures and make a perfect combination. In the end, the question of religious identity is also central to my subject. The interviewees have shown that besides feeling Kosovar Albanians and Swedish, they also belong to a greater community, the Muslim community. While interacting daily with many Muslim immigrant friends and facing the different religions in Sweden, their own religious belief has started growing even more. Their religious values are just as important as their tradition values. They do things in a cultural way, but also in a religious way. While being educated in Sweden, they have come to learn more about Islam than they ever did in their home country. Their knowledge is broader and they consider Islam to be the answer to many things and decisions in their daily lives. Everything you do is Islam. Most of my
respondents are not practical Muslims, meaning that they do not pray five times each day; the women do not wear veils for example. However, they stress that they are not proud of this outcome, they feel guilty. Someday, they hope to improve and become better Muslims, as God wants. The reason to why my respondents are not to a great extent practical Muslims has to do with the time of communism in Yugoslavia. Kosovar Albanians were not allowed to perform their religious rituals then. The feeling of nationalism has grown as a result of that oppression and therefore ethnic and religious identities have had a very strong appeal in their lives. As also mentioned above, my respondents include that the more religious you are, the more difficulties you meet in the Swedish society, for example you do not always find a suitable work where you can have the space and time to pray. What is important to point out in general here and conclude my work is that overall the Kosovar Albanian identity is being shaped and changed, for some more and for some less. What I have come to realize is that in order for Kosovar Albanians to belong to the Swedish society they must assimilate. No matter how integrated they feel themselves in the society, it is still not enough. The changes of identity seem to appear in certain situations and it is distinguished from individual to individual.
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Popular Culture Association and American Culture Associations in New Mexico


8. APPENDIX

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Tell me about yourself, age, status, the time of arrival to Sweden, education etc.

2. Which nationality do you belong to?

3. Where do you think you belong?

4. Do you feel yourself integrated into the Swedish society? Who include your surrounding?

5. How do you feel in your home country? When you are there, which ethnicity do you feel you belong more to? Are there times when you come to feel Swedish?

6. What values have you taken from your own culture and what values have you obtained in Sweden?

7. Where do you feel Home? And why?


9. Do you experience any culture clashes in Sweden and in Kosova? Give examples!

10. Has your parents influenced the way how you see yourself, and in what ways?

11. How do people perceive you?

12. What does it mean to you to be 'Swedish'? What is typical Swedish? In what ways do you relate to Swedihness and in what ways do you not?

13. What do you like about living in Sweden?
14. Would you consider yourself to return to Kosova for good? Do you ever think about returning?

15. Is religion important to you? In what ways is it important?

16. How often do you practice and perform Islam?

17. Has religion affected your values and the shape of your identity?

18. How does religion function with the Swedish society? In what aspects does your faith clash with the Swedish society?

19. Do you correct yourself or your identity depending on the situation, for example who you spend your time with, in what country you are?

20. Do you consider that your ethnic belonging is what the majority perceive you?

21. Are the choices that you make in life affected by your ethnic belonging? Do you prefer to make certain choices in terms of your ethnic belonging?