Understanding the attitudes of ethnic minority students towards higher education in Sweden

A social identity perspective.

Authors: Nji Hopkins Tah

Supervisor: Kifle Hamde
Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my parents from the bottom of my heart for making my studies possible. Without their constant support, nothing would have been possible. I would also like to extend my gratitude to my supervisor for his help, advice and encouragement. Also, I want to acknowledge my respondents and thank them for giving me their time. And I also want to say thank you to all my friends and teachers for their support.

Nji Hopkins Tah
Abstract

European higher education is being faced with more and more challenges arising from diversity. Diversity arises as Universities seek to achieve higher levels of internationalisation by accepting students from as many countries as possible. Everyone seems to be of the opinion that diversity is essentially a good thing. However, studies have shown that diversity does not always lead to productivity. In Sweden for example, research has found that groups with gender diversity have more productive outcomes, while groups with ethnic diversity display less positive outcomes. In general, research on higher education has often showed that ethnic minority students achieve lower levels of performance than other students.

This thesis studies the factors that affect the attitudes of ethnic minorities, first from a social identity point of view, and then by looking at other factors such as expectations of employment and the effects of studying in a new educational system. The social identity processes that are important in a student context are examined so as to determine those that have a stronger effect on minority students.

For this study, interviews were carried out with three students, and questionnaires were also administered. From the analysis, it is observed that ethnic minority students suffer negative effects from being in a cultural minority and often feel dominated by the surrounding culture. Also, they develop less positive attitudes towards their studies because of lower employment expectations, difficulties of adapting to a new setting and less preparation in their earlier education.

It is suggested that in order to create a more favourable environment for ethnic minority students, steps must be taken to create a better psychological atmosphere for minority students. Also, steps should be taken to improve social contact between students and to enhance the process of group work.

The main limitations of the study are time, scope and cost. To be able to carry out a more in-depth study of school performance, it is important to perform more interviews and surveys, covering a longer time frame.

Keywords: Diversity, ethnic minorities, social identity theory, higher education.
Contents

Acknowledgements ........................................................................................................ i

Abstract ........................................................................................................................ ii

Contents ....................................................................................................................... iii

1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND. ................................................................. 1

1.1 Background to the study area ............................................................................. 1

1.2 Choice of Subject ............................................................................................... 2

1.2.1 Why Social Identity ..................................................................................... 2

1.2.2 Why attitudes? ............................................................................................... 3

1.3 Research Question: ......................................................................................... 3

1.4 Objectives .......................................................................................................... 3

1.5 Layout of the study ............................................................................................. 4

1.6 Definition of key concepts as used in the study ................................................. 4

2: Methodology. ......................................................................................................... 6

2.1 Research Philosophy .......................................................................................... 6

2.1.1 Epistemological Considerations: ................................................................. 6

2.1.2 Ontological Considerations: ......................................................................... 7

2.1.3 Background of author and impact on approach ........................................... 8

2.2 Research Approach .......................................................................................... 9

2.3 Research strategy .............................................................................................. 10

2.4 Primary Sources of data .................................................................................. 10

2.4.1 Questionnaires ............................................................................................. 11

2.4.2 Interviews ..................................................................................................... 11

2.4.2.1 Choice of Interview type ......................................................................... 11

2.4.2.2 The interview guide ............................................................................... 12

2.4.2.3 Carrying out the interview .................................................................... 13

2.5 Choice of the sample for Primary Data ............................................................. 13

2.6 Sources of Secondary Data ............................................................................ 13

3: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK. ......................................................................... 14

3.1 Social Identity Theory ....................................................................................... 14

3.1.1 Minority-Majority Relations........................................................................ 15

3.1.2 Self Categorisation and Work Group Socialisation. .................................... 17

3.1.3 Commitment and Work Behaviour ............................................................. 18

3.1.5 Cooperation ................................................................................................. 19

3.1.6 Status .......................................................................................................... 20

3.1.7 Limitations of social identity theory ......................................................... 20

3.2 Attitudes and behaviour ..................................................................................... 20
Tables and Figures

Figure 1: Summary of theoretical framework ......................................................... 24
Figure 1: Bar chart - Attitude towards studies .......................................................... 38
Figure 2: Bar Chart of Expectations ................................................................. 39
Figure 3: Bar chart for External factors ................................................................. 40
Figure 4: Bar chart showing attitude towards group work ...................................... 41
Figure 5: Role in Group work ............................................................................ 42
Figure 6: Theoretical model of factors that affect student performance .................. 55

Table 1: Research Strategies ............................................................................. 10
Table 2: Kanter’s Classification of groups by ratios .............................................. 16
Table 3: The Respondents ............................................................................... 26
Table 4: Descriptive Statistics, Attitudes towards studies .................................... 38
Table 5: Descriptive Statistics, Expectations ....................................................... 39
Table 6: Descriptive Statistics, External Factors .................................................. 40
Table 7: Descriptive Statistics, Ethnicity Effects ................................................. 41
Table 8: Descriptive Statistics, attitudes towards group work ............................. 42
Table 9: Summary of Analysis ........................................................................ 50
1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND.

The aim of this chapter is to set the stage for the research. It explains why it is interesting to study the attitudes that minorities have towards their studies at USBE. It offers some definitions of key concepts and states the problem, purpose and objectives of the study as well as presents the research considerations used in this study. The chapter ends by outlining the structure of the thesis.

1.1 Background to the study area

Several studies have been carried out on the subject of gender and ethnicity issues in groups. This study is therefore one of many others carried out along similar lines. Even with the existence of several of such studies, there is still the need to carry out further research because social contexts are constantly changing and bringing new challenges for understanding diversity. As a loose example, we can look at the changes that have taken place in the United States in the last century. Gender issues have moved from a question of whether a woman should vote or not, and today, women are as highly successful and empowered as men. However, there are still numerous gender issues which are getting more and more complex with time. Also, as discriminative political systems such as Apartheid and Jim Crow laws have been abolished, and even as minorities seem to have achieved better integration into societies, opportunities and outcomes are still different between the different groups. It is therefore interesting to find different angles from which one can examine the situation and develop fresh new insights into problems and opportunities caused by cultural diversity.

Having minority students in Swedish higher education is essentially a good thing. It could potentially lead to educational excellence and is an indicator of social justice (Chang 2003, p. 126) and it shows that the younger parts of immigrant communities can be successful. Diversity in the workplace has recently been receiving lots of attention from policy makers and intellectuals in Sweden with lots of new literature being published (Reyes, 2001; Essemeyr, 2001), and there seem to be good reasons for organisations to employ a diverse workforce. USBE has recognised the value of diversity and has put in place a strategy to promote internationalisation (Umeå University, 2002).

As soon as differences exist in groups, different social identities develop and categorisations take place and these could be used to explain certain phenomena that occur. Looking at student populations at the USBE building, it is easy to notice the diverse ethnicities that make up the student body and it is also interesting to notice the ratios of
these different groups. It is therefore important to examine the effects of these ratios where all other factors are assumed equal. At USBE for example, all students in master programs have been admitted on competitive basis. They all hold qualifications that the school recognises as qualifying them for studies at the school. And the School does not make any decisions based on information about students’ nationalities, so everyone has the same status in the eyes of USBE. So we can say that USBE practices a policy of equal opportunity for all students and potential students. However, differences in ethnicity are nonetheless highly visible on campus, and different ethnic ratios have a part to play in the issues that necessitate this study. The results could be important for informing educational policy and planning.

There are relatively few studies on student diversity in Swedish higher education. In the United States however, there are lots of studies and models about Diversity management, given the fact that the United States are essentially a diverse society. In Sweden however, experience of diversity is still in its early stages because it has a relatively shorter history of ethnic diversity. An interesting way to look into diversity in an organisational context is to look at how certain aspects of diversity impact performance in business schools. So therefore, this study focuses on the attitudes that minority students develop towards their studies as a result of diversity and other related factors such as cultural and socioeconomic realities associated with these different groups.

1.2 Choice of Subject

So what are the reasons for choosing this subject? Interest in this subject is primarily motivated by the researcher’s interest in diversity. This is probably because he is a member of an ethnic minority. This implies that the perspective of the researcher could be more in-depth, probably because of his own experiences. It can be a positive thing because a high level of interest is shown towards the research area which creates a huge desire for knowledge and understanding of the area. However, there is the risk that the study may be biased because the researcher has a risk of losing objectivity. As a result, great care is taken to ensure that the discussions are as critical as possible.

1.2.1 Why Social Identity

In their study of higher education and minorities in the UK, Connor, Tyers and Modood (2004) did not find any evidence that racial discrimination or race relations had any positive or negative effects on the performance of minority or white students. It is therefore a better option to use the ideas proposed by social identity theory to try to explain these difference in outcomes among different student groups. For one thing, people tend to group themselves based on the most similar or the most visible characteristics they posses, which in many social contexts could be by ethnicity. It is therefore more likely that people with similar ethnicity have more common cultural elements than if people are grouped using
other criteria- for example, two Mexicans could have more in common no matter their age than two 10 year olds, one from china and one from Mexico. However, it is important to recognise the importance of physical attributes in assigning categorisations. For example, the term ‘African American’ refers to descendants of Africans transported to the Americas but does not apply to descendants of Caucasian Africans from South African or Zimbabwe, as well as it does not apply to North Africans, who are often classified as Middle Eastern. But Caribbean Immigrants to America are also often labelled as African Americans. Also, second generation immigrants of European parents fall among the dominant "white" group when minorities are considered, while great-great-great grand children of Mexican and even Native Americans are still classified as minorities. We would therefore be inclined to say that such categorisations are based on physical attributes. What is being said here simply is that outward physical characteristics are very important for developing social identities, except in a case where there are more salient defining characteristics, such as in a highly professional organisation.

We should also consider status differences among different ethnic categories and their salience. Offspring with one minority parent are often still categorised as a minority. Also, it is interesting to consider that the minority is not always at a disadvantage (whites in South Africa, Russians in central Soviet Asia, Alawis in Syria, etc).

1.2.2 Why attitudes?

According to Thurstone (1928, pp. 530-531), an attitude is a complex affair which cannot be properly described by any numerical index. However, he suggests that scientists can use the term to refer to "the sum total of a man's inclinations and feelings, prejudice or bias, preconceived notions, ideas, fears, threats, and convictions about any given topic". He further cautions that it is a subjective and personal affair. Notwithstanding, we can still use attitudes as a guide to studying student behaviour. Attitudes are important in this study because they can sometimes be used as a guide to predicting, or in this case, explaining behaviour.

1.3 Research Question:

Does ethnicity play a role in educational performance in a Swedish University?

1.4 Objectives

The purpose of this study is to examine the causes of the performance gap between ethnic groups by understanding the attitudes that students develop towards the university and towards their studies. The idea is that social identity factors as well as additional factors can
be used to explain how these different attitudes come about. And then these attitudes determine to a great extent, the level of effort that a student puts into their study. So we can start to define the objectives of the study:

1) To describe the social identity processes that are likely to be salient in a business school setting.

2) To explore the attitudes of students towards their studies based on their ethnic background.

3) To evaluate levels of satisfaction among students.

4) To gain understanding of how social identity processes come into play in determining attitudes.

1.5 Layout of the study
This study has 6 chapters. Chapter one offers some background to the study, reasons for choosing the subject and describes the objectives. Chapter two describes the methodological considerations and discusses reasons for the choices made. Chapter three develops the theoretical framework that we will employ in our analysis. Chapter four is a presentation of the data, followed by the analysis and conclusions in chapters five and six.

1.6 Definition of key concepts as used in the study.
Ethnic minority in this study is defined on the basis of ancestral origin, such as African, Asian, Hispanic or some other non European ancestry. Several researchers dealing with student diversity have classified students by using criteria similar to the above. Swail, Redd & Perna (2003, p 2) in their paper about retaining minority students in higher education use categorisations such as ‘African American’, ‘Hispanic’ and ‘Native American’, noting that their performance has always lagged behind ‘white’ and ‘Asian’ students. Loo and Rolison (1986) used categories such as ‘ethnic minorities’, ‘white’ and ‘black’. Even though there are other indicators of ethnicity such as nationality, native language, ethnic self identity, and native language of the parents (Umans, Collin and Tagesson (2008), p 247) in this study, I only use two categories: individuals with European ancestry, which I sometimes refer to as the majority group and individuals with non-European ancestry (minorities). Using such a categorisation is easier considering that this is a qualitative study with a constructivist and interpretivist inclination. Having a more detailed measurement of ethnicity would be suitable for a qualitative study where statistical relationships are primary. Using colour as a categorisation before the civil rights movements was more common in the United States because colour has been the basis of many legal considerations which went a great deal in determining group cultures and keeping such cultures separate. However, this has not been the case in European countries. So when I
discuss previous studies from American, I use colour as a measure of diversity, just as the authors did. Sometimes, if the respondents perceive colour in their environment as being an important factor, it could be important to consider it in understanding the subject. But for simplicity, I define ethnicity on the basis of ancestral origin.

Thurstone defines an **attitude** as the "sum total of a man's inclinations and feelings, prejudice or bias, pre-conceived notions, ideas, fears, threats, and convictions about any specified topic" (Thurstone, 1928, p. 531)

**Social identity** deals with a collection of theories and discussions concerning how people develop identities, form groups and how these identities affect their interaction with each other and with their groups. A full discussion of social identity is given in section 3.1.

**USBE** is the Umea School of Business. It has an enrolment of approximately 1500 students (www.usbe.umu.se, 2010). USBE offers one undergraduate and six master programmes in English, to both international and Swedish students. it also offers other Swedish undergraduate courses.
2: Methodology.

The aim of this chapter is to present the various methodological considerations and standpoints which are used in this research. The study sample will be described and data collecting procedures are also discussed.

2.1 Research Philosophy

2.1.1 Epistemological Considerations:
Epistemology is concerned with the question of what people can consider to be knowledge in an area of study (Bryman & Bell, 2007 p. 16). A central issue is about how to study the social world: should it be studied using the same principles and procedures as the natural sciences, or should the subjective nature of human behaviour be taken into consideration. Epistemology consists of two seemingly opposing standpoints, positivism and interpretivism.

Positivism implies that the methods of the natural sciences should be used in the study of the natural sciences as well as in the social sciences (Bryman & Bell, 2007, p. 16). Even though different authors differ on what they consider positivism, there are some principles that are important:-

1) Only phenomena confirmed by the senses can be genuinely warranted as knowledge (phenomenalism).

2) Theories are used to generate hypothesis that can be tested to provide explanations (deductivism).

3) Knowledge is got from gathering information which provide the bases for theories (inductivism)

4) Science must be conducted in a value free manner (it must be objective)

5) There is a difference between scientific and normative statements, and the scientist is concerned with scientific statements.

On the other hand, we have interpretivism, which exists primarily because of the long standing debate as to whether human behaviour can be studied using the natural scientific
model. It is a contrasting epistemological position to positivism. The interpretivist view holds that the study of the social world requires a research strategy which takes into account the differences between people as against the natural world.

One key identifiable difference between positivism and interpretivism concerns the reason for or purpose of the study. Positivism tries to form explanations of human behaviour based on gathered information while interpretivism looks for understanding of human behaviour.

One thing that is important in interpretivism is how individuals make sense of the world around them. This is captured by the philosophy of phenomenology, which further asks the researcher to keep aside his own understanding of the world or social medium he is studying.

This study deals with the behaviour of different students in a business school environment. Different students may have different understandings of their environment. Given the subjective nature of human nature and also the subjective nature of the social interactions between students, it is therefore necessary to take on an interpretivist epistemological position in this research. So, more focus is placed on understanding the behaviour revealed in the study than trying to explain it.

2.1.2 Ontological Considerations:

Social ontology is concerned with the nature of social phenomena and categories and how they relate to peoples subjective views of the world. The main distinguishing point here is the question of whether "social entities can and should be considered objective entities that have a reality external to social actors or whether they can and should be considered social constructions built up from the perceptions and actions of social actors". These standpoints are often referred to as objectivism and constructionism respectively.

Objectivism, as stated above, is an ontological position that views social phenomena as external factors which exist independent of social actors and their influences. Organisations come to mind when we talk of objectivism. They have rules and regulations which actors must follow and prescribe best practices or standard procedures for carrying out things. Organisations have a reality and an existence that is independent of the individuals that populate it. Individuals are brought into the organisation to assist in achieving the objectives set by the managers. They might even be forced to leave the organisation if they do not meet certain obligations. The same can be said of a culture. Cultures provide guidelines within which individuals try to balance their behaviour. A culture is seen as an object in itself, thus having a separate reality.
Constructionism or constructivism refers to a contrasting position to objectivism which asserts that social phenomena and their meanings have no meaning on their own but are realised by the actors involved. Proponents of this view believe that social actors not only shape these phenomena, but constantly define them through their interactions. Contrary to objectivism, constructionism views organisations not as a pre-existing characteristic, but something that is worked at and defined by social actors. As a result, the social order is constantly changing. The same view can be held about culture. Instead of a fixed external reality, it is viewed as an "emergent reality in a continuous state of construction and reconstruction" (Bryman & Bell, 2007 p. 23).

For the purpose of this study, a constructionist ontological point of view is found to be suitable. This is because student interaction has very few, if not, no formal rules or guiding principles. As a result, the student culture (if at all one can identify such a common culture among the students) is formulated by the students through their interactions.

2.1.3 Background of author and impact on approach.

I find it important to include a section with some information on my personal background and how it affects the study. I am a Cameroonian by birth. I lived in Cameroon and had my Bachelor’s degree from a Cameroonian University three years before coming Umea to do a masters degree at Umea University.

In the beginning, I found it difficult to adapt to a new society during the same time as trying to adapt to a new educational system. Also, being in a country where almost everyone around looks and talks different from me made me more interested in my identity and the issues surrounding me as a foreign student. I also noticed that when I asked some of my friends where they came from, they would say their parents’ nationalities, even though they were born and raised in Sweden.

During a course on diversity (People, the Human Side of the Organisation), I became interested in the academic field of diversity. I started to read a lot of literature and I found out that academic and socio-economic outcomes always differed between different races or ethnic groups. So I felt that I should do this study to improve my own understanding and to prepare myself for a career in diversity or non-profit organisations.

Being a member of a minority group probably had some effects on the study. First, the interviewees probably withheld or talked more openly about certain things because they felt less or more comfortable talking to me about them. Also, the respondents of the survey could have been affected by my presence when filing out the questionnaires, and could possibly have tried to sound ‘polite’ or subjective. On the other hand, I tried to be as critical as possible when discussing the results by always backing up my arguments with appropriate reference sources.
2.2 Research Approach

When carrying out a research project, the approach used depends on the relationship between theory and research. In general, two approaches can be identified: Inductive or deductive. Deductive theory represents the view that the researcher deduces a hypothesis on the basis of what is already known, and then subjects this to an empirical observation. The process of deduction (Bryman & Bell, 2007, p. 11) can be illustrated as follows:

1) Theory
2) Hypothesis
3) Data Collection
4) Findings
5) Hypotheses confirmed or rejected
6) Revision of theory

Inductive theory, on the other hand represents an opposite movement: from empirical observations, conclusions are drawn that are used as a basis for creating new theories. The difference between deduction and induction can be pictured in terms of general and specific knowledge: deduction involves moving from the general to the specific (gravity exists, so if I throw up an object, it will fall down); induction involves going from the specific to the general (every time I throw up an object, it falls down: so something must exist that pulls it down- gravity)

So which approach is better for management research? In the past, the dominant research tradition in management has tended to be based on testing theories using quantitative data gotten from surveys of the subjects (Quinton & Smallbone, 2006, p. 6). This data are then subjected to extensive statistical analysis. This approach is described as deductive and positivist. However, Quinton and Smallbone recognize that there is another approach that has gradually gained acceptance. This method seeks to derive theory from data and used a different method of data collection whereby more detailed information is gotten from a lower number of respondents. Often, the analysis is detailed but not statistically based. This approach is described as inductive and phenomenological.

However, Quinton and Smallbone (2006, p. 6) believe that in reality, there is no sharp divide between these two research approaches. Rather, there is a continuum between both approaches within which most researchers have to find a suitable position to situate themselves. The actual tools that a researcher will end up using will most likely be a combination of both inductive and deductive aspects.
The choice of research philosophy depends to a large extend on the choice of topic or on the tools that the researcher has within his abilities. So, given that the research is based on social phenomena, an inductive approach is the main approach used here: studies will be carried out and the results will be used in generating theories. That notwithstanding, there might be some elements of deductive research, since existing theories are used to guide the choice of what to survey.

2.3 Research strategy

Two main strategies used in research can be identified. These are quantitative and qualitative. Some researchers view this distinction as false while others view it as a fundamental contrast (Bryman & Bell, 2007 p. 28). Quantification (measurement) is often thought of as a key distinguishing factor between these two strategies, but other differences exist. The differences can be shown in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relationship between theory and research</th>
<th>Quantitative</th>
<th>Qualitative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Deductive, testing of theory</td>
<td>Inductive, generation of theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Epistemological orientation</td>
<td>Positivism</td>
<td>Interpretivism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ontological orientation</td>
<td>Objectivism</td>
<td>Constructionism</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Research Strategies.

So given the previous choices of ontology, epistemology and research approach, it is logical to say that this research takes on a somewhat qualitative approach.

2.4 Primary Sources of data

For this study, the sources of primary data are interviews and questionnaires. While interviews are typical qualitative, questionnaires have a somewhat quantitative nature. The reason for employing two methods is to increase the validity of the study. This approach is known as triangulation. Triangulation entails using multiple methods or source of data in social research (Bryman & Bell, 2007, p. 412). Even though triangulation is widely used in quantitative research, it can be applied successfully in qualitative methods as well. It can be employed to check findings from an interview to see if there is a misunderstanding or if a new perspective has to be adopted in order to account for the two results if they are different. It can also be employed to confirm results from one source.
2.4.1 Questionnaires

Questionnaires are a great source of primary data. The self completion questionnaire will be employed to gather data to support the data gotten from the interviews. The advantages of questionnaires when compared to interviews are:

- they have fewer questions so that respondents do not get bored,
- they have closed ended question, which are easier and faster to answer.
- they are shorter than interviews and easier to administer.

Using these advantages as criteria for designing questionnaires, additional data can be gotten to support the interviews. The questionnaire is included in the Appendix. It contains questions relating to attitudes towards studies, diversity and group work, as well as expectations of finding a job. It also includes categorical questions for classifying the respondents.

2.4.2 Interviews.

2.4.2.1 Choice of Interview type

In qualitative research, there are a number of methods available for use in collecting primary data. These methods include interviews, focus groups and participant observation. The interview is probably the most widely used due to its flexibility. Interviews can be very time consuming and involve a lot of work to be able to transcribe and analyse them, but they are still a very useful tool. A focus group is similar to an interview, but instead of having a single interviewee, there are usually at least 4 (Bryman & Bell, 2007, p. 510) A focus group is essentially a group interview. However, there are some differences. A group interview is basically an interview with several respondents at a time while a focus group treats the group as a single entity, or views members as members of a group. In participant observation, the researcher observes social actors' behaviour directly, rather than using research instruments such as interviews and questionnaires. The main advantages of this method are the degree of reality in which the researcher is surrounded and the fact that the researcher is able to better conceptualise the phenomena which they observe first hand. However, I reason that such observation needs to be carried out over a stretch of time that is not realistic for a study of this nature. Interviews on the other hand can be carried out within a shorter time frame and are less tedious. It would have been better for the study if interviewing, focus groups and participant observation could be applied. But the time, cost and scope associated with this study place limitations on the practicalities in collecting the data. Therefore, interviews will be used as the main source of primary data for this study.
There are several classifications of interviews, but in qualitative research, interviews are said to be unstructured or semi-structured. These two types are often classified by researchers as qualitative interviews (Bryman & Bell, 2007, p. 472). These stand in contrast to the structured interview which is employed in quantitative research. While structure is used in quantitative research to generate answers to specific questions, less structure and more generality is employed in qualitative research in order to gain a better understanding of the respondents’ own ideas and perspectives. So instead of focusing on the researcher's concerns, qualitative interviews pay attention to the interviewee's point of view. Therefore, it is often beneficial to allow interviews 'ramble' or talk extensively so as to gain insights that the researcher was not looking for in the first place. The researcher can even depart from the interview guide with a certain degree of freedom.

However, some sort of guide would be necessary to organize the interview. As such, this study employs a semi-structured interview approach. According to Bryman & Bell (p. 474) the researcher has a list of questions on topics to be covered, but at the same time, the interviewee has a high degree of freedom in how to answer the questions. Also, questions do not have to follow the same order as they appear in the guide, and additional questions may be included depending on the direction that the interview is going.

For this research, the semi-structured interview is best suited because it balances the need for the interviewer to have some guidance with the need for the interviewees to be able to respond freely. Also, the interview guide can be prepared based on the theoretical framework of the study.

**2.4.2.2 The interview guide.**

In order to carry out successful interviews for this study, interview guides have to be prepared. These are basically memory prompts to ensure that all the necessary issues are touched during the interview process. Even though an interview guide does not have to be a formally written document, it will be clearly written out for the purpose of this study so that copies can be made available to supervisors, respondents and also in the appendix. Based on recommendations from Bryman & Bell (2007, p. 483) the following points are taken into consideration when preparing the interview guide:

- To create a certain amount of order on the topic areas (but be prepared to be flexible).

- To formulate questions that will provide answers to the research questions.

- To use language that is relevant to the interviewees.

- To avoid leading questions (that point the respondent towards specific answers).
- To record information about interviewees (age, gender, ethnicity, etc.)

2.4.2.3 Carrying out the interview
The interviews were recorded with a digital recorder and later transcribed. The transcripts are included in the appendix. It is important to transcribe interviews because it is impossible to remember everything thing that the respondents said. Transcribing is also important for the process of coding.

2.5 Choice of the sample for Primary Data
For the interviews, three respondents were selected. This number seems small, but it is still valid since the purpose of the study is to gain understanding and not to make generalisations about the population. One Swedish student was selected. Two minority students were selected, because the purpose is to understand their attitudes. Another reason is that having many respondents for a qualitative study may lead to results that are confusing and hard to make sense of. That’s why questionnaires are needed.

For the questionnaires, 30 respondents were selected. For a quantitative study, a bigger number would have been necessary to improve the statistical power. But in a qualitative study such as this, all we are interested in is to spot differences. Stratified sampling was used. The population was divided into two categories; Europeans and ethnic minorities. Respondents were than selected at random with an equal number from each category. The questionnaires were then entered into SPSS. The case report is presented in the appendix. Discussions on the limitations of the sample size can be found in the limitations in section 6.4.

2.6 Sources of Secondary Data.
For the study, secondary information was used as a source of background knowledge, theories and also as a guide to methodology. The secondary sources were the course text books and articles found through Google Scholar. Articles were also searched for using the University library’s database, and also through www.emeraldinsight.com.
3: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.

The aim of this chapter is to present the theoretical background or basis for the study. In this section, various theories are described and connections are drawn with the study area. It is important to understand these connections because they will be used in later chapters to explain findings and contextualise results.

3.1 Social Identity Theory.

Because this study uses a social identity perspective to understand minority students' attitudes, it is important to first discuss the various theories that are important for an understanding of this topic. Social identity researchers are beginning to focus more and more on organisational contexts (Hogg & Terry, 2001, p 1). USBE, being a business school and an organisation with a very diverse population, provides a very good example for us to use in studying and applying these theories in different contexts. These theories are also very relevant in the USBE contexts especially when it comes to themes such as motivation, stereotyping, categorisation, social influence, norms, attitudes and behaviour.

Simply put, an individual's sense of identity and belonging are determined largely by the category into which one falls. Such a category could be nationality, age group, gender, social class, job description, preferred football team, etc. Most people have a number of pairs of shoes, maybe some sneakers, boots or slippers, maybe a whole basket full of different shoes. We pick shoes depending on the weather or the event. Some shoes are best for some circumstances while totally unfit for others. In the same way, individuals in organisations have a number of "shoes" in this case known as "social identities" which they switch depending on the situation. Certain identities are important during certain situations, and are then said to be salient. So individuals will change their identity depending on which one seems to be the most salient. These identities go a long way to prescribe self perception and behaviours for the individual. For example, two students find that they have a certain model of Nike shoes on. And they listen to the same music, T-Pain, for example. They would find it most convenient to socialise as "hip-hoppers". Also, others may start to form stereotypical conceptions about people they find exhibiting certain behaviours and traits. This generally leads to evaluation of people's characteristics to find a suitable, easy to understand group or category within which to place others. This could be referred to as
categorisation, and could also lead individuals to adopt certain behaviour patterns in order to place themselves into certain groups.

In the following sections, various aspects relating to social identity theory will be discussed. These are mostly the themes that are helpful to understanding students' attitudes towards their studies and the mechanisms by which such attitudes develop.

3.1.1 Minority-Majority Relations.
It has been recognised by researchers that being in groups with different proportions could have positive or negative effects for group members and ultimately for the organisation as a whole. In an educational setting, for example, such negative effects could serve as demotivational factors for ethnic minority students. However, it should be noted that ethnic minority students are not necessarily the numerical minority. That said, minority students could be a source of conflict and frustration especially in groups setup for assignments, or they can serve as an opportunity for gaining multiple perspectives on a task.

Kanter (1977, p. 966) classified groups based on the proportions of the majority and minority groups, assuming that there were two main groups. Table 2 shows the different types of groups with exemplifications.

Kanter was interested in groups with highly skewed sex ratios. USBE does not have highly skewed sex ratios. But as far as ethnic minorities are concerned, we can make the assumption of a skewed group because the cultural influence of the majority on the minority could be strong. Kanter proposes three perceptual phenomena and three interaction dynamics which are associated with the skewed ratio (Kanter, 1977, p. 971). The perceptual phenomena could be described as follows:

- **Visibility**, which implies that minority students feel different. This leads to certain pressures to break stereotypes or to meet certain standards;

- **Polarisation**, which refers to the contrasts between different students and how it affects their relations;

- **Assimilation**, where a member of a group is ascribed with certain characteristics and they are then forced to display certain behaviour as a result of that.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group Type</th>
<th>Proportion</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Uniform Groups</td>
<td>100:0</td>
<td>Contain only one type of significant social type.</td>
<td>Gender specific groups such as the Oxford and Cambridge club in London.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skewed Groups</td>
<td>85:15</td>
<td>Contain a large predominance of one type (dominants) who influence the smaller group (tokens) as far as group culture goes.</td>
<td>The only woman in an engineering firm or an ethnic minority in a football team.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tilted groups</td>
<td>65:35</td>
<td>Are not equal in proportion but not as extreme as skewed groups. Sub groups usually referred to simple as minority or majority. The majority is usually large enough to affect group culture.</td>
<td>A few women in an engineering firm or a few ethnic minority students in a football team.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balanced groups</td>
<td>60:40 - 50:50</td>
<td>Contain two groups which are quite similar in size, such that one group cannot influence the other group’s behaviour.</td>
<td>Male and female students at USBE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Kanter’s Classification of groups by ratios

Hewstone, Martin, Hammer-Hewstone, Crisp, & Voci (2001, p 72) include the concept of perceived variability. It says that members of one group perceive the members of the other group to possess homogeneous characteristics, known as out-group homogeneity.

Sometimes, the opposite might occur, known as in-group homogeneity. So a German student might believe that all American students are hardworking for example, while acknowledging that some of his American friends are lazy. On the other hand, the German
student might exhibit in-group homogeneity by believing that all his fellow German students are hardworking. This might push a fellow German student to become hardworking, which is an example of assimilation.

3.1.2 Self Categorisation and Work Group Socialisation.

Work groups, loosely, are teams that make up an organisation. At business schools in Europe, a lot of the course work consists of group assignments and seminars. The goal of this section is therefore to discuss the effects that self categorisation among students might have on how they socialise with other students, what feelings they develop, and ultimately what attitudes they develop towards studying in groups. In general, a lack of social contact in schools might lead to a lack of a sense of belonging. This might be the case for exchange students who may have so little time that they are forced to leave just when they start to develop a feeling of being at home.

Groups are important in course work because they provide the opportunity for socialisation. Socialisation is important because it provides members of different groups with information about other groups' behaviour. In the absence of socialisation, individuals turn to other sources of information. For example, during a welcome address for new students at a business school, a study coordinator gives a talk on cultural differences. As an example, she talks about one group of students being event-driven while the other group is time-driven. The underlying message is that one group of students is expected to be late for group meetings because they have other activities to finish first. So in the absence of socialisation, such information is used to create stereotypes which are often misleading.

For our study, it is important to study one model of how group socialisation occurs in order to guide our suggestions in the subsequent chapters. The model is built on three psychological processes: Evaluation, Commitment and Role Transition (Moreland, Levine, & McMinn, 2001, p. 92). Evaluation occurs when individuals of the group access each others 'rewardingness' and try to improve it. This can lead to feelings of commitment. After a certain level of commitment is reached, a role transition occurs. These are exemplified below. A small group of students are assigned to write a term paper. Each person opts to perform a certain duty or hold a certain responsibility. Evaluation involves looking at each individual's contribution. Did A. send the emails on time? Did B. summarise the articles correctly? Did C. proofread the assignment properly? C in turn realises that he did not correct all the errors last time, so he tries to step up his performance on the next editing session. The entire team finds that their performance is improving and that their evaluative processes are rewarding. This may lead to feelings of commitment to the group by the individual and vice versa. This commitment creates more understanding within student
groups. These processes take time however, and most student groups may not last long enough to exhibit commitment. However, a student may feel demotivated to work if they find that they are contributing more than other members or that they put in more than they get out. Student C. had become so good at proofreading, and has gained the trust of the group. One day, after a good job, everyone agrees that C. has done a good job. He is playfully declared the groups proof-reader. A role transition has occurred.

Categorisation occurs in individuals as a way of making sense of their environment. It is important because it enables a rapid response to stimuli, without the need to extensively ponder every situation. It is also important because it helps individuals to develop a social identity.

### 3.1.3 Commitment and Work Behaviour

Social identity literature provides some interesting discussions on commitment and work behaviour in groups. In educational contexts, this discourse can be involved in two levels. On a higher level, one can consider the behaviour of students at a level of the school as a whole. This would relate to how they feel involved with the organisation and how they translate these feelings into actions that serve the interests of the school. For example, if students like the school and feel very involved, they are more motivated to put in greater efforts so as to live up to the reputation or expectations of the institution. This would probably be the case with "big name" universities such as Oxford, Harvard and Princeton. On the other hand, students on "low pride" institutions may not feel very motivated and exert minimal effort because they do not feel that their efforts contribute to a meaningful higher objective. On a lower level, however, commitment and work behaviour may be related to groups formed among students to carry out specific tasks such as assignments. When all the students feel involved, they are motivated to work together to achieve the best possible score. However, if an individual feels that they are not being appreciated, they may exert minimal effort, just as much as to get along without facing penalties. This is quite common and is commonly referred to as "free-riding"

Organisational or group identification should predict the extent to which individuals strive to achieve the group objective or even to stay within the group or to continue to be a part of the organisation. (Ashforth & Mael, 1989, p. 26). This can explain the tendency for social loafers who may feel left out of groups. However, the role of different cultures should be considered. It is believed by some researchers that individuals from collectivist cultures such as Asian cultures are more likely to work for collective goals than people from individualist societies such as America and some parts of Europe (Earley 1989, p. 557). However, Earley also showed in his study that group cohesiveness is closely tied to identification in both cultural contexts. However, other researchers such as Abrams, Ando & Hinke (1998, cited in Moreland, Levine, & McMinn, 2001, p.109) conceive that these
differences are more connected to individual values than they are a shared cultural characteristic.

Also, different forms of commitment have been described by different researchers, affective commitment is found to be the most relevant form in terms of prediction organisational behaviour (Allen & Meyer, 1996, Meyer, Paunonen, Gellatly, Goffin & Jackson, 1989, cited in Moreland, Levine, & McMinn, 2001, p. 109), implying that how a student feels about a group will be the most important determinant of their behaviour.

To ease discussion and description of the subject, Mael & Ashforth (1992, p. 104) proposed that the term identification be used to indicate an awareness that one shares common characteristics with a group, while the term commitment is generally used to indicate a sense of affective involvement with the group (Moreland, Levine, & McMinn, 2001).

The connection between social identity and commitment is that certain group features may influence identity, which then results in changing levels of commitment. For example, if a student feels like he is the only male in a group and does not succeed in finding an identity with the group, then he may not value the well being of the group as an outcome and thereby display low levels of positive affect for the group.

3.1.5 Cooperation

An important question in social science concerns why people cooperate when they find themselves in a group setting. In higher education, a lot of coursework is carried out in groups. In fact, it would be impossible to complete almost any course at USBE without working in a group on a significant portion of the course requirements. So the question arises as to which social identity processes come into play during group processes that shape cooperative behaviour.

From social identity theory, we see that people join groups to help define themselves or access their self worth (Tyler, 2001, p. 149). As a result, members of a group are motivated to maintain a positive view of themselves by joining and contributing to groups that enhance these views that they have about themselves. This is therefore an indication that people will cooperate with organisations or groups depending on how the outcome of the group affects the social identity which they try to create and maintain.

There are two key types of cooperative behaviour. They are the willingness to act in ways that help the group and the willingness to avoid acting in ways that will harm the group (Tyler, 2001, p.150).
There are two key types of motivation for behaviour: prosocial and altruistic behaviour (Tyler, 2001, p. 151). Prosocial behaviour involves motivation to act in favour of the group, no matter what the cause of the motivation is. Altruism on the other hand is concerned with moral reasons for behaviour rather than loss or gain.

3.1.6 Status

The word ‘Status’ is often used in the context of social status. In multi-group settings, evaluation of performance and feedback might lead to different groups being linked to better performance or better results, and then assigned a higher status. When this happens, it is often possible to tell which groups have higher or lower status. There are three assumptions which social identity theorists consider. These are: in-group bias, compensation assumption and the assumption of homophily (Jost & Elsbach, 2001, p. 195).

**In-group bias** refers to a phenomenon where group members tend to evaluate themselves more favourably than members of other groups, mostly because their self concept depends on the group’s well being. On campus, some groups of students might feel that other students have negative preconceptions about them, so they could make statements to each other in their defence so as to maintain their self esteem. So **compensation assumption** (Ashforth & Mael, 1989, p. 33) implies that members of low status groups need to regard themselves more highly so as to compensate for the threat to their self concept that comes from receiving less favourable evaluation. Student groups that seem to have more positive evaluations would not need to attempt to reinforce their self concept by making reassuring statements. **Homophily** therefore further implies that members of low valued goods are more likely to interact with each other.

3.1.7 Limitations of social identity theory.

As with all scientific attempts to study the social sciences, social identity theory has its limitations in explaining human behaviour. The main concern is that human beings are essentially unpredictable. There are several situations where individuals succeed against all sorts of social disadvantages. Also, individuals are unique and every situation has its own reality with different factors affecting it. In this study therefore, factors other than social identity factors are examined, so that a more realistic picture can be made.

3.2 Attitudes and behaviour

L. L. Thurstone (1928) carried out a study to address the problem of measuring attitudes or opinions. In attempting to measure attitudes, it is first of all important to first of all describe what an attitude or opinion is. As mentioned earlier, an attitude is a complex affair which cannot be wholly described by any numerical index. This is similar to saying that a man or a table is a complex affair which cannot be easily measured. However, we can find some property to measure such as height or weight that can be measured and used to compare
different tables or men. So, when attitudes are measured, it should be stated or implied exactly which aspect of that attitude is being measured.

So Thurstone proceeds to define an attitude as the "sum total of a man's inclinations and feelings, prejudice or bias, pre-conceived notions, ideas, fears, threats, and convictions about any specified topic" (Thurstone, 1928, p. 531). It is a subjective and personal affair. Also, he uses the term opinion to mean the verbal expression of an attitude. However, there are some issues concerning the use of people’s expressed opinions or statements as a measure of their attitudes. People may sometimes lie about what they really think, or they might modify their statements to reflect a somewhat more socially acceptable standpoint. As a result, an individual’s actions would be a better indication of attitude. This would imply that participant observation is the preferred method of gathering data for such studies. Unfortunately, the time and cost of this study does not allow participant observation. So therefore, we must content ourselves with using opinions. And so to continue with our study, we must assume that people give us truthful opinions.

However, Thurstone acknowledged that understanding attitudes as expressed by an individual’s opinions does not necessarily predict the way in which he will act. It is therefore likely that there will be inconsistency between what people express and what they do but this should not be a problem for us because we do not seek to predict behaviour. However, we can assume that an attitude has a large impact on how a person will act towards the thing about which he had the attitude. We can also assume that the problem of predicting behaviours from attitudes lies in the problem of defining what a person’s actual attitude is. If we can make these assumptions, then we can continue with the study, especially given that it is a qualitative study: our aim is to gain understanding of the social world rather than scientific accuracy.

Also, we must consider that in some cases, people's opinions about certain subjects will be multidimensional. In such cases, the opinions cannot be simple described using "more" or "less", since the different standpoints scatter in many dimensions. However, to be able to measure, we need to define a dimension or a continuum within which to place various attitudes so that they can be compared. With these guidelines in mind and with data from interviews and the questionnaire, we can then try to evaluate the various attitudes of ethnic minority students towards higher education.

3.3 Contributions from Previous Research

3.3.1 An American Point of view

In the United States alone, there have been several studies published on the situation of ethnic minority and white students’ attitudes and perceptions in American schools.
Comparative studies have mostly been carried out between various white populations or between white populations and one ethnic group. Loo and Rolison (1986) studied the alienation of ethnic minority students at a predominantly white university and from their findings we recognise some factors which could cause academic difficulties for ethnic minorities: less preparation in previous studies force them to study twice as hard to catch up and socioeconomic; cultural differences between white students and ethnic minorities is another source of differing performance. Although these difficulties are not directly tied to academics, the energy required to adapt to a new cultural setting takes time away from studies. Also, they found that equal proportions of both white and ethnic students felt like dropping out at some time, but for different reasons. The reasons were mostly academic for white students while ethnic students cited academic reasons as well as socio-emotional dissatisfaction as reasons for wanting to drop out. They also found that minorities felt that they were not adequately supported by the university. Other research (Cummins, 1995, p. 103) highlights three sets of interactions that are believed to impact academic life for minority students:

1. The classroom interactions that teachers and the students partake in,
2. Relationships between the institutions and the minority community as a whole,
3. Power relations between minorities and others in the society as a whole.

According to a review of research from USA, Europe and Canada by Cummins (1995, 103), the extent to which minority students experience academic failure varies but it is almost always statistically reasonable to believe that the academic performance of minority students is always inferior to that of the dominant group of students.

Ogbu (1978) proposed a typology which attempts to explain these variations. He argued that involuntary or caste-like minorities who find themselves in the United States or under United States jurisdiction against their will display different behaviour from those who migrated to the United States willingly. Caste-like minorities tend to develop an opposition to mainstream identity in response to a ‘glass ceiling’ imposed by mainstream society. As a result, such involuntary minorities fail to observe the connection between educational success and job access.

3.3.2 A European Point of View.

Eldering’s (1997) study of Dutch minority students’ performance show the levels of performance of different groups of minorities compared to Dutch students. According to his study, Surinamese students performed better than students originally from Morocco and Turkey, even though Dutch students had had better grades than Surinamese students. In other words, Dutch students performed best and Moroccans and Turks performed worst, while Surinamese fell somewhere in between. Also, Moroccans were the most likely to quit
school, with Dutch students least likely and Surinamese students still falling in between. The same pattern applies to the labour market. While this study shows that school success is highly correlated to ethnicity, there are several hanging questions as to why. One reason could be the level of language proficiency prominent among different minority groups depending on their migration history. In a broader sense, cultural similarity with the dominant group seems to play a role in the degree to which minority students relate to educational systems and subsequently to organisational life. Surprisingly enough, only Dutch mothers stated that social skills and personal development were important for the educational life of their children. Moroccan and Turkish mothers did not answer this question at all, probably because they had no previous experience with schooling. Overall, Eldering concludes that factors in the immediate environment as well as in the educational context could account for the variability of school performance among minority students and subsequently influences competitiveness in the job market. His findings seem to contradict the above mentioned Ogbu’s typology because despite a long history of slavery and exploitation, Surinamese students outperform voluntary immigrants from Morocco and Turkey. However, the cultural differences between these groups may be great enough as to over shadow the effects of Ogbu’s typology. Research from Bristol University in the UK (Connor, Tyres, Modood, 2004) shows different patterns of higher education participation among different ethnic groups. Surprisingly, a higher percentage of ethnic minorities are more likely to engage in higher education than White students, even though the levels of participation vary greatly within the minority groups. Regardless of their higher participation, their school performance is still considerably lower than that of white students and their subsequent participation in the labour market is similarly lower. It could be reasonable to assume that minority students attend school due to lack of other opportunities, and given equal opportunities in the job market or in economic society as a whole, school participation could carry a whole different meaning.

So, after considering the results of several studies, it is almost universally true that minority students always have lower academic performance. However, extensive research Connor, Tyres & Modood, 2004; Eldering, 1997) suggests that the degree of variation varies by ethnic groups. This signifies that different ethnic groups have different sociocultural emotional and economic factors which affect their educational life, thereby suggesting that it would be important to break down minorities into different ethnic groups for further studies.

3.3.3 In Sweden.

Umans, Collin and Tagesson (2008) carried out a study of diversity in a Small Swedish university. They studied groups of students with gender and ethnic diversity that were working on a complex task. The results indicate that gender diversity has positive outcomes for the group. On the other hand, ethnic diversity seems to have negative effects on the
groups’ outcome. Methodological difficulties made it hard to establish relationships between variables such as group communication, conflict and effectiveness in problem solving, and how these variables led to outcomes. However, the negative effects of diverse groups have been established. The study however, does not try to identify who is the victim or who is the culprit. Since it is a tendency for ethnic minorities to exhibit lagging performance, it is important to try to examine what factors could possibly be affecting them.

3.4 Summary of theoretical framework

![Figure 1: Summary of theoretical framework.]

A good way to summarise the theoretical framework developed in this chapter is to illustrate and present it in the form of a model.

The outermost layer represents the **indirect factors** that affect students. Such factors can be defined as those could possibly affect a student’s performance but which is outside the control of USBE. Such factors could include socio-economic factors and power relations in society, or even cultural differences, as pointed out by Eldering (1997).
The next layer represents the **direct factors** that affect students in the educational environment. These factors are directly under control of USBE and so can be altered by the school. Such factors could include student-teacher communication, as pointed out by Cummins (1995, p.103).

Within this direct layer, the **individual students** form groups based on their social identities, and at the core we have the **social identity processes** that affect the students.

Other than social identity factors, the other factors that are likely to affect minority students can be identified from the previous studies from Europe and America (Loo & Rolison, 1986; Cummins, 1995; Eldering, 1997; Connor, Tyres & Modood, 2004) While Ogbu’s typology offers interesting insight, using it would increase the scope of the study. So we avoid it to keep the study practicable within the limitations.

After the study has been completed, a more detailed version of the model will be presented, showing exactly what factors have been found from the data to be affecting students.
4: Empirical findings.

This chapter presents the data that has been collected through the interviews and questionnaires. The objective of this section is to organize the data in an order that reflects the methodology so that it can be easily understood by the reader and to set the stage for the analysis that follows in the following chapter.

4.1 Semi-structured questions.

The table below shows some information about the respondents who were interviewed for the study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Date of interview</th>
<th>Duration of interview</th>
<th>Age of Respondent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Malin Helg</td>
<td>2009-10-19</td>
<td>27 min.</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daniel Chingang</td>
<td>2009-10-20</td>
<td>31 min.</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AK (not his real name)</td>
<td>2009-10-21</td>
<td>27 min.</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: The Respondents

4.1.1 Malin.

1) Background.

Malin is a Masters student of Leadership and organisation at Umeå University. She has previously studied for 3 years in a Swedish University. She is 22 years old and Swedish. She describes herself as a “procrastinator”, but at the same time, she’s driven and always tries to reach her goals. About her identity, she sees herself mainly as a student. To her, gender is not that important at all when it comes to school. Even though she admits that she is among the younger students, as most of the members of her courses are in their 30s, it still is not so important for her identity. At first, when she just found out how old they were, she felt a bit threatened:

“I was like ‘oh no... they’ll see me like that little child’”.

But once she got to know them, it didn’t seem to matter anymore. Also, she feels that being Swedish is important for her identity. She felt especially Swedish when she made a trip to the United States.

“I mean, I’ll always be Swedish, but I don’t have to be in Sweden to be Swedish, you know what I mean?”
The question arises as to how her identity affects how she behaves when in class. Since most of the students in her class are older and clearly have a better work experience than she does, she tends to be an introvert or less outgoing because she usually doesn’t have much to say compared to them. So when she tries to find friends, she tends to go towards those who are more outgoing or extrovert because it is easier to connect with them. So when she picks friends, it is based on how easy it is, rather than age, gender or race. She thinks age is important but doesn’t matter anymore at her age.

2) School satisfaction.

Malin believes that she is most definitely studying the right thing. She thought she studied the wrong thing when she was on her bachelor’s. Then, it was more business administration. But now that it’s more about management, she feels like this is really what she wants to do. She thinks it is important for her future and she plans to work in the Human Resource department of a big international company. About the chances of that happening, she thinks it depends on if she would be ready to move. And since she doesn’t have a family, it will be easy to move, so she believes her chances of getting a job after she finishes are high. She is quite positive and very satisfied, as we can say.

About the course, she thinks it is “kind of o.k.”, because they had fewer lectures and more group work, so they didn’t get to interact with the lecturers that much, and had to read everything by themselves. However, she feels the course is good in terms of its suitability to her previous education.

Also, about her teachers, she feels that they are good enough. She states that she has no problems communicating with her lecturers.

“…we’ve had 4 or 5 teachers, may be one of them was pretty weird but the rest of them were good”

She thinks if she had a problem, she would definitely find help from one of her teachers; she would not be sure who to talk to because there is a lot of help available, in addition to the course website.

Also, she thinks the educational system is not so different from her previous studies, so it is not a big deal for her to have to adapt. However, she thinks there are some differences. This is a much bigger school and the organisation is better, so the changes are for the better. It is not so hard to adapt. And about support in case of problems, she has no experience with having problems and needing some sort of support, meaning that she finds the organisation to be almost perfect. She thinks if she had such a problem, she could speak to the teachers,
ask others in class or even go to the course website. Everything is on the website and she thinks it is really clear.

However, she thinks that she needs to have more lectures in her courses so as to get the textbooks explained, not just read them, because it is easier when you both read it and hear someone talk about it.

Malin had an extra job before in her previous studies, but she doesn’t have one now. She would like to have a job now, because life is kind of hard and textbooks are expensive. Also, she was asked whether any external factors (maybe climate, transportation, social problems, etc) were affecting her studies negatively.

“...not right now”

So she finds it easy and comfortable to study in her own socio-cultural surroundings. She also found it easy to study abroad as well. In the US, they had a lot of support, they had a coordinator, the teachers were good, the classes were small and they had great relationships with the teachers.

About the social atmosphere at school, she finds it pretty normal. In fact, she hasn’t been thinking about it a lot. And since she has so few lectures, she hasn’t been at school so much, so she can’t really say what the social atmosphere at school is like.

3) Majority-Minority Relations.

Malin’s class is not so diverse in terms of ethnicity. Almost everyone is from Sweden, one from Germany or one from Russia, but everyone is pretty white. However, she expects everyone to behave in a way that she finds normal. She would expect everyone to be on time for meetings.

“...since he’s here, he has to do it like it’s done here.”

However, she does not have a lot of experience with dealing with foreign cultures. However, when she went to the United States, she wanted to adapt to how they did things, so she expects people who are here to do the same. She went abroad to see how people lived in another culture, so she doesn’t see why she would be abroad and still want to be the same Swedish person. She sometimes feels like people should be a little easy on others if they have a hard time adapting to new cultures, but not when it comes to late coming, it gets in the way of work. But she would be willing to talk and see what they can do to help. But she doesn’t think she would have a problem working with others if she wasn’t from Sweden, indicating that she expects everyone to deliver the same level of performance.
4) Workgroup Socialisation.

Malin has done a lot of group work; 5 weeks of the semester. They choose their own groups by themselves. They were sitting in a group of 10 to 15 and they were talking about what they wanted to write about. So those who wanted to write about the same thing fell into the same groups. So her choice of group was based mostly on the subject they worked on rather than age or any other factor. She is motivated by hard working group members and unmotivated by when someone is lazy.

“I think it’s better to work with one group, maybe not for the whole time, but its different stages in group works so you have to pass through all these stages before you can be a good working group. I think you should have at least 6 months before you can really be a good group, or before you can come out with maximum performance. I think it’s a slow process to form a group. I’m reading about that right now, about groups, teamwork. That’s why I think like that.”

When they form a new group, the first thing is to decide what to write about- to pick a subject. And then they just sit down and get to know each other. Then they exchange email addresses and numbers. Then they define what kind of output they want. But she thinks it is important to get to know each other before they start to work. Malin thinks a good group is a group where everyone is honest, trusts each other, tells each other if something is wrong and that everyone feels secure. She hates “free riders”. She does not want to sit back and rely on the others because she doesn’t like people that do that. If someone chooses to go to school, they shouldn’t expect others to do the work for them. And besides, free riding means more work for her. However, if she finds herself in a group that she doesn’t like or where people are not behaving the best, she thinks the time is too short to do anything about it, so she would still do what is expected of her.

5) Status

We now follow Malin’s discussion of status. She defines status as

“I would say that it’s about the things that you surround yourself with that make up pretty much a part of your image.”

For her, status goes with experience. Those with more experience have a higher status, especially if they have work experience that goes in line with their study program. So she thinks that her group needs to have a higher status.

“…yeah, I would rather be with [those with a higher status], because I would feel that I could learn something from them. But it’s more about experience than race or age or any other factor. I think it’s interesting to mix up sometimes, with different
nationalities and stuff. Sometimes, I think some people could have some sort of status by being ‘cool’ or ‘in’ but that has nothing to do with when I pick a group in school. Money always gives status.”

Also, she also believes that money or material things somehow contribute to status. She thinks if she were really poor and had bad clothes, it would affect her self esteem. But if she looks professional, that is a boost for her. And also, she thinks it is easier to work with those who have a similar level of status.

4.1.2 Daniel
1) Background.

Daniel is Cameroonian. He is a student of Marketing at the Umeå School of Business and economics. He is 25 years old. This is the first time he has studied at a Swedish University, and at the time of the interview, he had studied for 2 months. He describes himself as a Cameroonian from Africa. He is Christian and describes his background as humble. He had his bachelor’s in Cameroon in 2006, stayed unemployed for 2 years, before deciding to come to Sweden to further his education. In terms of his identity, he sees himself mainly as an African, and he thinks it is important for him because of his skin colour.

“I present myself as a man, though still dependent, and as an African. I think it’s important that I’m from Africa because that’s my identity and I know my colour has a great part to play in my identity and I just believe that I can’t hide from that, I have to identify myself as an African.”

However, being African doesn’t create a big problem with making friends, even though he finds it easier to make friends with a black guy. Also, it is possible to notice from his interview that being from African certainly has some effects on his self esteem.

“…yeah, I feel sorry to say this because firstly, knowing fully well that I come from Africa and there is some kind of notion that Africa is kind of backward and still developing compared to Europe, America and Asia so I have this sort of complex about it. So it’s sometimes a big challenge for me presenting myself as an African because I already know the perception of most people from other parts of the world about Africa. It’s kind of disturbing sometimes…”

2) School satisfaction

Daniel feels that he is studying the right thing now. He had his bachelor’s in Management which he thought was too broad, and he wanted to do something more specific. So he took CIM (Chartered institute of Marketing) courses which are professional courses, then he felt
he needed a Masters degree in Marketing. He believes that the course is well designed, focused and has clearly set objectives, thanks to the educational system. Also, he thinks that after he gets his Masters’ degree, it would be nice to have some international experience in the marketing field. So he hopes to finish in June 2010 and start to look for a job by the summer of 2010. He admits it will be hard to get a job but he’s still optimistic.

“…Right now, I think the chances are really very slim, knowing fully well that we are facing some economic difficulties in the world today and we really have to work harder to find work. So I think the chances are pretty slim. And even though there are few opportunities around, I am still optimistic about getting a job.”

About the communication with teachers, he thinks it is quite good as an individual, even though he thinks some African students might have some difficulties. He thinks the teachers are doing their job really well. He thinks the course outline is very good and he appreciates it. He thinks it is a very practical programme. And he thinks the methods of teaching (using video conferencing, PowerPoint slides) are more effective than what he is previously familiar with. Also, he thinks there is enough student support available. And he finds it really great that education is free, even though it would be nice if he had a job on the side to pay for his extra expenses.

There are some extra-curricular factors that affect his school performance.

“…first of all, as I foreigner, the climate is quite tough, especially the cold. Even though the cold does not affect us inside buildings, but sometimes, it is very difficult to make up your mind to leave home for school because it is very unpleasant outside… other aspects such as family background are important. …there may be some misunderstandings between family members and even friends and such problems can also affect you when you study…”

However, he thinks the social atmosphere at school is quite good. He finds the Swedes to be quite welcoming and cordial; when you have questions, most of them are happy to help, and they are willing to help you find a solution should you have a problem. Also, night clubs, pubs and restaurants on campus help to make the environment very sociable and friendly.

3) Majority-Minority Relations

There are more ethnic minorities in Daniel’s class than white students. Most come from Asia, a good number come from Europe or Sweden, while he thinks his own ethnicity is not represented. There are just three black students in Daniels class at the time of the interview. When it comes to interaction with other ethnicities, Daniel identifies language barrier as the
main barrier, despite acknowledging the existence of several cultural differences. For example, he thinks it is difficult to understand someone from Pakistan when they talk in English, both in terms of their accent and their sentence construction. As for European students, he thinks their spoken English is good, even though he thinks their written English is not as good. So language barriers are a source of communication difficulties between students.

When Daniel joins a group, he makes an effort to adapt to their work ethic.

“... when I join a group, I struggle to adapt to what they do because I have never been used to group work, so it’s kind of like... I’m a follower. I just watch what they do and I follow because it’s really a new experience for me”.

So due to his inexperience, he prefers to follow along. He uses group work as a learning experience. However, he doesn’t always want the majority to expect him to follow them. He would expect them to consider that he has a different background, and does not want to be held to the same standards as the others.

“...it’s an experience I had just a couple of day ago. I was in a group and we had a group meeting late at night, I think it was at 9 pm in the library. I told them I couldn’t make it so the following day they were so mad at me, trying to make me understand that it’s a group effort and that if I don’t want to work, I should let them know so we could change groups, but I felt so bad because it wasn’t as if I didn’t want to participate, it was just because some other factors came into play and I thought they were more important to me.”

He thinks this would not be true if he were Swedish, because he would have come up in a Swedish system and would have the same set of values and priorities as the others.

About the different ethnic groups in class, Daniel feels that many of the Asian students are “lukewarm” to group work, or are kind of slow. He has not had much experience with this group, but he arrives at this conclusion from the experience of others. He has worked with Swedish students and he finds them to be hard working, because they learn from their experience, and they are very familiar with group work. About his own group, he thinks that they are hard working enough, and they are adapting well. He admits that he was not very effective in group settings but that as time goes on, he is getting better and better. He learns to understand his role and also understand how to appreciate leadership. However, he still prefers to work as an individual.
4) **Group work.**

In his courses so far, Daniel has done a lot of group work. The first one had a few group assignments while the second course has one big group paper. During the first course, the teacher put the groups together systematically, while on the second course, they were free to pick out their own groups. Daniel describes how his choice of groups comes about:

“…from the first experience, it was just coincidence. I was really eager to make new friends so I wanted to socialise also, maybe with female members of my age group. So when I choose groups, it's mostly so I can improve my social skills, maybe with the opposite sex. And I like to work with people from other cultural backgrounds so I could understand their own way of doing things, instead of working with people [that] I already know or who come from the same background as me.”

If he has a good experience with a person, then he would like to work with that person again. So he likes to maintain the same people around him if the experience is positive. However, if the people around him are lazy, it pushes him to work harder because he doesn’t want to fail. It is important to understand each member’s strengths and weaknesses and to take time to know who is good for doing what. When they form a new group, they first exchange contacts. During the first meeting, they sit down to get to know each other better and to discuss how they will carry out the work. A good group for Daniel is a group where

“…everyone is given a chance to express themselves and where everyone is objective and proposes ideas from their own points of view.”

Daniel feels that it is very important to participate in group work. But sometimes, he feels left out of the group, for example, when he finds the topic boring. But he enjoys participating all the same. If he finds it hard to find his place in the group, he would go up to the teacher and ask to change groups, or he would try to have a talk with the group to try to fix the conflicts.

5) **Status**

For Daniel, status means social class.

“…in my opinion, most of us who are students fall within the same social class because we all dress similarly and we all use bicycles, we all live in the same type of accommodation and its really the same with everybody…”

And he admits that social class is just not an issue when it comes to class work.
4.2.3 Ak

1) General.

AK is a Masters’ student in Marketing from Pakistan. He is 27 years old. He had studied in Sweden for 2 months at the time of the interview. He prefers to remain anonymous. One of the first things you notice when you talk with him is that he had an accent which is difficult to understand and his proficiency in English is noticeably low, so he didn’t or couldn’t provide as much information as the others. Generally, he feels good about being on campus. And he finds it easy to make friends with almost everyone, even though he spends most of his time hanging out with his friends from Pakistan and Bangladesh. He is Muslim and says his prayers regularly, facing the east. He keeps regular communication with his family back in Pakistan.

2) Satisfaction.

Ak feels that the scope of what he is studying is too broad.

“… It’s a huge scope of marketing but the main thing is that your background has to be good in the field to better appreciate what we are studying here…”

His main problem relates to the fact that on the current course, the level of statistics is too high for him. So he believes that there should be some sort of basic statistics courses in the masters program, so that those people who are not so good at statistics can join in the class. He feels that to be able to cope with the course work, he will need the help of his friends and class mates who have a better understanding of the course. Also, the educational problem is different from what he is used to and it poses a huge problem for him. From the quote below, it is quite clear that the he is not properly adapted for the Swedish Educational system.

“… when I studied in Pakistan, there was a uh… the whole study consisted of only ‘retta’…do you understand… ‘retta’ means you are just remembering the questions and just write the answers without remembering how it’s done so the main problem is that umm… ummm…. The concepts are the concepts are not clear and you cannot do ‘retta’ here.”

After the study, he plans to run a small business here in Sweden. However, knowing his level of English and the fact that he doesn’t speak Swedish, it is worth considering what the chances of that will be.
“well, I have learned about some of my friends that the government has some policies or loans for new entrepreneurs and that’s why I’m hoping that I can get such a loan and start a small business here…”

Well, he plans to sell jackets and sports equipment, and he says he still needs to do more research before he can say what the chances of owning such a business are.

He thinks that some of the teachers are good at supporting the students, but he does not think all are good at it. He thinks the main problem is the communication. All teachers come from all over the world and so their proficiency in English is not very good.

“You know, here, all classes are in English, if the teacher doesn’t know how to teach and speak in English and how can they deliver their experiences to the students?”

He also feels that a big problem is that he can’t find part time work here. It would be easier if most students could find some extra work, and he think it would be more difficult when they start to pay fees. In addition to financial aspects, there are other extracurricular factors that affect his performance.

“…when we talk about the weather and the social factors like I came from Pakistan and I feel very homesick here, and emm..., lots of times I remember my family but I can only talk to them on the phone and internet so you can say it’s like a barrier. But I have enough friends here, even though most of them are from my native land…”

“...yeah, I’ve studied here for 2 months and it’s very difficult at first if you don’t have any exposure internationally when you come from a different culture and a different educational background and find yourself in a new environment with new exam pattern, so it’s difficult, but with time, it becomes easy.”

He thinks the social atmosphere is quite good, but he admits two problems:

“but the main thing is the time problem…and I think that students should be willing to work with you and work for you.”

This means that he wants other students to be more flexible when it comes to time and that others should be willing to help others in their work.
3) *Majority-Minority Relations*

In his class, AK finds a mixture of Pakistani, Cameroonians, Swedes, Germans, Chinese, Japanese and Russians. And he thinks his own ethnic group is neither big nor small: medium. He thinks that in groups, understanding is important. For example, when it comes to late coming, it becomes a problem if it happens too often. But if it happens sometimes and there is a good reason, then it’s forgivable. He thinks that of his own ethnic group, 40 to 60 percent are hard working, but he knows that in general, the Swedish students are the most hard working and most advanced in their readings and assignments. He admits that he faces no problems from being Asian.

4) *Group work.*

AK had 2 group assignments in his first course and 1 group assignment in the current course. It seems that ethnicity is not very important to him when it comes to choosing groups.

“...in the first module, the teacher choose the groups and in the second module, with the past experience with the last group, we made our new group. I would prefer to choose based on who I can understand more; that we have better communication and can work together. But if I don’t know anyone from before, I think it should be a combination of male and female, but I will start from those sitting next to me, since I would not know anyone... It doesn’t matter if they are Swedish or Asian or anything. Gender is a bit important; I’m more comfortable with male so I can understand them better”

AK finds it important that a group should have a leader to guide the efforts of the group. He participates in group work because he wants to learn. He would leave a group if no one wants to participate. However, if there is someone who is not up to the task, he should be supported, because he thinks a good group should be supportive.

5) *Status*

AK links status to social class.

“I understand status to be linked to social class, some sort of artificial patterns in the world that you find wherever you go. Here in school, there is quite a bit of the status thing but not so much. I don’t think intelligence is a social class thing, maybe your family background has more to do. But we can assume that with the attitudes, like if someone has more money or is status conscious, then he or she may feel more proud and not want to socialize with others”
However, when he forms groups, he would prefer those students who are more hard working. It is not so difficult to spot hard working students, and sometimes, just by looking at a group of students, you can tell that they will be hard working.
4.2 Structured Questions.

1) Attitudes towards studies

Respondents were asked to choose one option which best described their attitudes towards their studies. The results are shown on the table bar chart below. Overall, we see that European students have a higher mean score for attitudes towards their studies. The score is 4.27 for European students and 3.80 for ethnic minority students.

![Bar chart - Attitude towards studies](image)

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics, Attitudes towards studies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EUROPEAN</td>
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<td>4.27</td>
<td>.458</td>
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<tr>
<td>Valid N (listwise)</td>
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<tr>
<td>MINORITY</td>
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<td>3.80</td>
<td>.676</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valid N (listwise)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2) Expectations

The respondents were asked to rate their expectation of getting a job after their studies. We can see that European students are mostly positive about getting a job after they finish their education. European students had an overall mean score of 4.53 for their expectations, while minority students scored only 3.80.

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics, Expectations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expectations</td>
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<td>4.53</td>
<td>1.060</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valid N</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MINORITY</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expectations</td>
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<td>3.80</td>
<td>1.207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valid N</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3: Bar Chart of Expectations
3) External factors

From the questionnaires, it appears that minority students got a bigger boost from the Swedish socio-cultural environment. The information is presented below in the bar chart and the table below.

![Bar chart for External factors](image)

**Table 6: Descriptive Statistics, External Factors**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EUROPEAN</td>
<td>External factors</td>
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<td>2.80</td>
<td>1.146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Valid N (listwise)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MINORITY</td>
<td>External factors</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>1.363</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Valid N (listwise)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4) **Ethnicity and diversity effects**

European students were very neutral about their ethnicity having an effect on their studies. They also showed a better attitude towards diversity. Minority students on the other hand felt that their ethnicity had a somewhat positive effect on their studies, even though they had a less positive (but still positive) attitude towards diversity than european students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EUROPEAN</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity effects</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude towards diversity</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MINORITY</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity effects</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude towards diversity</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valid N (listwise)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5) **Attitude towards group work**

Also, minority students were found to have a better attitude towards group work; european students scored a mean of 2.53 while minority students scored a mean of 3.87

![Bar chart showing attitude towards group work.](image)
Table 8: Descriptive Statistics, attitudes towards group work.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>x1-Ethnicity</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>x6-Attitude towards group work</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EUROPEAN</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Valid N (listwise)</td>
<td>2.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MINORITY</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Valid N (listwise)</td>
<td>3.87</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6) Role in Group work

When asked about what role they would typically play in group settings, European students were more likely to want to be leaders than minority students. Minority students on the other hand feel that everyone should share the work equally.

![Figure 6: Role in Group work](image-url)
5: Analysis and Discussions

In this chapter, comparisons will be made between the two categories of students to identify similarities and differences.

The transcripts were read through thoroughly and codes were written in the margins corresponding to various concepts and categories that were identified. These codes were then used for finding differences and similarities. The theories discussed in the theoretical section were used as the main points of differences and similarities.

5.1 Social Identity.

5.1.1 Minority-Majority Relations.

Malin’s class is not very divers, but she has experienced being in the minority group before, when she travelled to the United States. She believes that she was flexible at the time, so she expects people who fall in the minority group here to adopt the dominant way of working. She feels that people could however be considerate if others are having a hard time adapting to the dominant culture.

In Daniel’s class, he falls into a very small group: there are only three of his own ethnic group in class. So we can say he definitely falls into the minority. One of the main drawbacks he acknowledges is that of the language barrier between him and the majority. He finds it hard to adapt to the dominant culture, so he often finds himself just following along and just doing the minimum required of him. He believes that the group experience would be better for him if he were a part of the majority. And he also faces difficulties with the majority trying to push him to comply with their norms. He identifies three groups; Africans, Asians and europeans; he believes that the europeans are the dominant majority and that the Africans and Asians fall into the dominated minority.

In AK’s class, he identifies a mixture of Pakistani, Cameroonian, Swedes, Germans, Chinese, Japanese and Russians. He believes that his own group is medium, but we can deduce that his culture is the dominated culture, because the Swedish form the majority of his class and their culture can be said to be the dominant we are using a Swedish context. He admits that he faces no major problem being Asian, but acknowledges that Swedish students are the hardest working and the most advances in class work, while only 40 to 60 percent of his own group are hard working.
Furthermore, from the questionnaires, we can see that European students have a mean score of 2.67 when asked if they think their ethnicity has an effect on their studies. On 5, this figure is close to the average, indicating that they are somewhat neutral about what effects their ethnicity has on their studies. Ethnic minorities have a score of 3.00, which deviates further from the average and indicates that they feel that their ethnicity has effects on their performance.

Now, we have to consider the above in the light of the theoretical framework in section 3.1.1. We can say that applying Kanter’s classification; the minorities at USBE form a somewhat skewed group, meaning that they are about 15 to 20 percent of the student population. However, it is not only the number that is important, but the cultural balance between the two groups that justifies this statement. To further explain, the fact that USBE operates in a Swedish educational system reinforces the dominance of Swedish culture.

Kanter also discusses certain perceptual phenomena which we can now examine after looking through the data. These phenomena can be listed as:

- Visibility,
- Polarisation
- Assimilation, as well as
- Out-group homogeneity and
- In-group homogeneity.

Visibility refers to how minority students’ behaviour is affected by the fact that they feel different. When asked about what effects they felt about being a member of their ethnic group, European students were quite neutral, while minority students indicated that they felt some effects. Such a feeling of difference could serve as motivation or de-motivation.

Daniel sometimes feels disturbed because he believes that people have certain stereotypes about him.

“…So it’s sometimes a big challenge for me presenting myself as an African because I already know the perception of most people from other parts of the world about Africa. It’s kind of disturbing sometimes…”

Daniel feels that if he was from Sweden, it would be easier for him to cope with the school work because he would have been used to it. But Malin feels that she would have no problem in her work even if she were not from Sweden. So this contrast in how they perceive themselves might create a difficulty in how they relate to each other. This is known as polarisation. This manifests when there are cultural differences, such as when Daniel could not make it for a group meeting. The other members of the group were mad at
him, but he felt that they as a group did not make an effort to understand his own culture and priorities.

“...I told them I couldn’t make it so following day they were so mad at me, trying to make me understand that it’s a group effort and that if I don’t want to work, I should let them know so we could change groups...”

We notice how he uses the word “they” instead of specifying someone or the particular person who was talking. Also, Both Daniel and A.K. believe that all Swedish students are hard working. When they ascribe this characteristic to all members of the out group, they may then feel pressure to display those characteristics. This could be a motivational factor for European students to step up their game in group situations. Out-group homogeneity can be noticed clearly, as both Daniel and A.K. make generalisations about Swedish students, failing to realise that there could be lazy Swedish students or even those who are equally suffering from family problems, financial problems or even the weather.

5.1.2 Self categorisation and Workgroup Socialisation

We now try to analyse how self categorisation affects workgroup socialisation. We have seen that at some point, students are likely to categorise themselves, whether consciously or unconsciously. For Malin, she had seen herself as a young person, as well as a Swedish person at two different times.

“I was like ‘oh no... they'll see me like that little child’.

“I mean, I’ll always be Swedish, but I don’t have to be in Sweden to be Swedish, you know what I mean?”

For Daniel, masculinity, African heritage, and financial freedom are what he finds important for his identity at this stage in his life.

“I present myself as a man, though still dependent, and as an African. I think it’s important that I’m from Africa because that’s my identity and I know my colour has a great part to play in my identity and I just believe that I can’t hide from that, I have to identify myself as an African.”

One of the limitations of the interviews is AK’s English proficiency, which is low and limited the depth of his interviews. However, it is evident that he holds gender as part of his identity.

“Gender is a bit important; I’m more comfortable with male so I can understand them better”
So how do these self categorisations affect socialisation in workgroups? For Malin, when it comes to choosing groups, the only factor that she finds important is experience or knowledge. And she clearly states that ethnicity or other factors do not matter when it comes to group work. And we clearly see that being Swedish has nothing to do with when she forms groups, and that she feels it is important to mix culturally.

“...But it’s more about experience than race or age or any other factor. I think it’s interesting to mix up sometimes, with different nationalities and stuff. Sometimes, I think some people could have some sort of status by being ‘cool’ or ‘in’ but that has nothing to do with when I pick a group in school...”

For Daniel, gender as well as cultural background is important when he chooses a group. First, he wants to socialise. And so he feels that it is nice to have the opposite sex as well as other cultures in his groups. Also, he feels that it is important to have a group with experienced people.

For A.K., choosing a group is purely a matter of chance at first. But the subsequent times, he goes by experience. If he has positive experiences with group members, then he will like to work with them again. Interestingly though, the questionnaire shows that ethnic minority students have a more positive attitude towards group work than european students.

From the survey, we can further see that european students feel that their cultural background had no positive or negative effects on their educational performance, while minority students thought that their background had positive effects on their educational performance. Both groups of students also indicated positive attitudes towards working in culturally diverse groups.

So having looked at the data collected, we can now discuss self categorisation and work group socialisation. We saw how each student categorised them self. When it comes to workgroup socialisation, we can conclude that in USBE, it is motivated primarily by experience. We can see from the survey that some cultural background has no negative impact on group socialisation: it is either neutral (as europeans indicated) or positive( as minorities indicated). Students want to ‘socialise’ based on who is good at school work, or who they have had a good experience working with. Additionally, diversity can only have positive effects on group socialisation.

5.1.3 Commitment and Work Behaviour

It is important to remind ourselves of the difference between identification and commitment. Identity can be used to indicate awareness that one shares common
characteristics with a group, while commitment can be used to indicate a sense of affective commitment with the group (Mael & Ashforth, 1992; Moreland, Levine, & McMinn, 2001).

For Malin, we see that commitment comes when everyone in the group is hard working. She gets motivated if her group members are hardworking and unmotivated if otherwise. Also, commitment is strengthened if she has a group that

“...trust[s] each other, that [is] honest, that tells each other if something is wrong, that makes everyone feel secure”.

For Daniel, we see that commitment also comes if everyone is hard working. But cultural differences in one of his groups seriously undermined his commitment. He prefers to follow along because he does not have enough experience. And they also had a dispute over his behaviour that made him less eager to want to participate. Furthermore, he believes that some group topics are not interesting to him.

For A.K., commitment is encouraged by a hard working group where everyone participates. Good leadership also encourages commitment, even though he would leave a group if other members would not participate.

So we can see that cultural differences and the inability to reconcile them can seriously affect a student’s commitment to his group. Malin may not have that problem because she rarely works with minorities. It is more noticeable with Daniel, probably because he feels dominated in his group.

5.1.4 Cooperation

There are two key types of cooperative behaviour in groups; the willingness to act in a positive way; and avoiding actions with negative effects for the group. All the respondents agree that they participate because they want to learn, and also to complete their tasks. However, Malin says that she avoids uncooperative behaviour because she

“...hates ‘free-riders’...”

Free riders are students who are in a group but hardly participate at all. They are otherwise known as ‘social loafers’. Malin believes that they add more work to the students who actually do the work. A.K. believes that those who are weaker or behind in their work should be supported by the others. Daniel on the other hand admits that he tends to be uncooperative if the topic is not interesting to him, and even though he wants to contribute, he does not feel very inspired by the topic.
So we can see that cooperation is highly valued by all students, irrespective of ethnicity. We also see that un-cooperative behaviour can come as a result of not feeling involved with the objectives of the group.

5.1.5 Status

From the interviews, we come across different understandings of status. For Malin,

“…it's about the things you surround yourself with, that make up pretty much a part of your image…”

For Daniel, it is means social class. For A.K., it is

“…some sort of artificial patterns in the world that you find where ever you go.”

However, we can define status in an educational context as having high educational aptitude. All the respondents agreed that in forming groups, the most important aspects were educational aptitude and hard work. And looking at status from a social class point of view, the respondents did not think it was important. Daniel and A.K. thought that all students fall within the same social class. Malin thought that money brings status sometimes, but she noted that it was just not important for her decisions. We can further discuss how the concepts of ‘in-group bias’, ‘compensation assumption’ and ‘homophily’ are manifested among minority students. In-group bias implies that members of low valued groups would tend to evaluate themselves more positively. However, we notice a degree of objectivity in how the students assign status, and how no one relates it to ethnicity. Little evidence of compensation assumption can be found. Also, homophily is also not noticeable, because students value educational aptitude more highly than other factors. So we can conclude that status is not connected to ethnicity but to educational aptitude.

5.2 Students’ Satisfaction and Expectation.

At this stage, we compare and contrast the level of satisfaction of the students and also what expectations they have after their studies. We evaluate satisfaction by looking at certain cues that might indicate feelings of being contented or discontented. We look at individual satisfaction and try to use it as an indication the general level of satisfaction within a particular group. The interviews were coded by assigning numbers to statements that relate to certain concepts or ideas, which could be listed as follows:

1) Studying the right thing
2) Get a job after studies
3) Satisfied with teachers
4) Comfortable with surroundings (adaptability)
5) Good student support

**Studying the right thing:** Malin thinks that she is definitely studying the right thing. She feels like it is really what she wants to do, unlike her last program. And she feels that it is important for her future plans. Daniel also feels that he is studying the right thing. His previous degree was too broad so this helps to narrow it down. And he thinks the international experience is a very positive thing for him. Ak. thinks the scope of the program is not so suitable for him. And he believes that he needs a better educational background to be able to cope with the program. From the survey, we also see that European students in general indicated a better attitude towards their programme of study (4.27) than minority students (3.8).

**Get a job after studies:** Malin is quite positive that she can find a job after she finishes her studies. It depends on if she is willing to move, and that’s very possible for her since she does not have a family. Daniel is optimistic that he can find a job after he finishes his Master’s, but he admits that he thinks it will be difficult. He believes the chances are slim because of the economic difficulties but he is ready to work harder to find one. A.K. plans to run a small business in Sweden after school. However, he is neither fluent in English nor in Swedish, so the chances of success are automatically limited. We can confirm the conclusion by looking at the survey data. European students indicated a higher expectation of getting a job in Sweden after their education (4.53) while minority students had lower expectations of finding a job (3.8).

**Satisfied with teachers:** Malin thinks her teachers are good. She faces no communication problems with them. Daniel personally thinks the teachers are good. But he thinks some other African students could face some difficulties. A.K. thinks some of the teachers have a problem with communicating with students. He thinks it is mainly a language problem because most teachers come from different parts of the world.

**Comfortable with surroundings (adaptability):** Malin finds it easy to study in her own environment, as well as abroad in the United States. This is an indication of adaptability. Daniel thinks the weather is very harsh, and he has some family problems that affect him negatively, even though his family is miles away. A.K. is also affected by the climate. Also, he feels homesick because he can only talk to his parents on the phone. The survey indicates the opposite. Minority students indicated more positive effects of their Swedish surroundings (3.0), while European students indicated slightly lower but still positive effects (2.8). How do we explain this apparent contradiction? It would be interesting to use bigger samples and do more interviews to get more understanding. However, it could be interesting to note that Swedish weather, especially in Umea is considerably different from
other European countries, and the european person in the interview is Swedish. This small sample is one of the limitations of this research.

**Good student support:** Malin believes that it there is enough support available. If she has a problem, she could talk to several people and can easily find a solution on the website. Daniel feels there is enough support, especially since the education is free. A.K feels that there is not enough support from the teachers. He believes that all teachers may be good at supporting students, but that the language barrier is a big problem for him.

### 5.4 Students’ Attitudes

From the survey, it is noticeable that european students generally have a more positive attitude towards their studies. They had a score of 4.27 against 3.80 for ethnic minorities. Also, European students also had more positive expectations after their studies. They have a score of 4.53 against 3.80 for minorities. Also, in group work, European students were more likely to say that they wanted to assume a group role in group work. Furthermore, European students had a higher score for their attitudes towards diversity, with 4.47, against 3.87 for minority students.

However, we can also see that minority students show a better attitude towards group work (3, 87 for minorities against 2.58 for European students). But we can conclude that European students overall develop a better attitude towards their studies than ethnic minority students. An explanation for this could be that minority students are more vulnerable to other factors as language barriers and cultural differences, as examined above.

### 5.5 Summary of Analysis.

**Table 9: Summary of Analysis**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Majority</th>
<th>Ethnic Minority</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social Identity</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Majority-Minority</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minority Relations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We find a skewed ration of minority students: decision based on numbers and cultural dominance.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European students find it positive to mix cultures. But they expect things to be done their way. However, they are willing to be flexible.</td>
<td>We see that minorities find themselves dominated by the educational culture. This can affect their academic performance negatively or push them to work harder to achieve more. They also find it positive to mix culturally.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Self</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We see that all students at some point categorise themselves by their</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>categorisation and workgroup socialisation</strong></td>
<td>nationality, ethnicity or both. However, when it comes to work group socialisation, the most salient basis for choosing groups was educational experience. European students were mostly indifferent to their ethnicity, feeling that it had neither positive nor negative effects. We also see that European students are more likely to want to lead a group.</td>
<td>We see that sometimes, ethnic minorities might feel that their identity might be a drawback. But they still reported positive feelings towards working in mixed groups.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Commitment and work behaviour</strong></td>
<td>We see that both minorities and majorities are positively motivated to work hard if the other group members are hard working. We also see that cultural differences and the inability to reconcile than can lead to serious problems for all students. They would expect everyone to display the same behaviour</td>
<td>Minorities generally expect others to be flexible in their interactions and display more understanding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cooperation</strong></td>
<td>Cooperation is highly valued by all students irrespective of ethnicity or background. They typically have negative feelings towards ‘free-riders’.</td>
<td>Minority students can become uncooperative or dormant when they feel that: -They are dominated and when -They do not appreciate with the topic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Status</strong></td>
<td>Most students feel that status from a social class perspective is not so important or visible on campus, and that it does not have any effects on academic life. From an educational point of view, status can be linked to educational aptitude. Status is also found to have no connections to ethnicity. Some majority students are inclined to believe that looking professional can give you a better image and better academic interaction with your classmates.</td>
<td>Minorities believe that all students have the same social status.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Satisfaction and Expectations**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Studying the right thing</strong></th>
<th>Most believe they are on the right track</th>
<th>Most believe they are on the right track, but some could face difficulties due to lack of previous preparation or a new educational system.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Job prospects</strong></td>
<td>Very positive</td>
<td>Not so positive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Good teachers</strong></td>
<td>Very positive about teachers and communication</td>
<td>Positive, but some language barriers, probably in spoken English.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Comfortable with environment</strong></td>
<td>Well adapted</td>
<td>Problems with climate and culture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student Support</strong></td>
<td>Very satisfied</td>
<td>Very good, but some communication problems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Attitudes</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Attitudes towards studies.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Generally very positive. Sometimes, they felt distracted, but did not relate this distraction to external factors, so we assume they must be academic.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6: Conclusions and Recommendations.

This chapter presents conclusions based on the analysis of the data and linked to the objectives of the study. Also, some recommendations and suggestions for further are given. Some limitations from the study are presented.

6.1 Conclusions

First, we need to revisit the objectives of the study so as to access how thoroughly they have been addressed. We can restate the objectives of the study below:

1) To describe the social identity processes that is likely to be salient in a business school setting.

2) To explore the attitudes of students towards their studies based on their ethnic background.

3) To evaluate levels of satisfaction among students.

4) To identify factors which have an effect on the school performance of ethnic minority students.

We can then proceed to present conclusions based on the analysis which we have done in the previous chapter.

After analysing the data, we can now conclude that there is a clear difference between how minority and majority students are affected by the social identity processes. We conclude that minority students are culturally dominated by the educational culture of majority students. Culture in this context can include aspects such as work ethic and time keeping, study approaches and academic interests. This is reinforced by the fact that they are more Swedish students than ethnic minorities on campus. Different social identity issues have been examined and the effects on the different ethnic groups have been described. Generally, it is quite clear that ethnic minorities are more inclined to feel that their ethnicity is a drawback; while European students are vastly indifferent to their ethnicity. Minority students expect other students to be flexible when there are differences; European students expect everyone to display the same behaviour. Also, minority students have a tendency to participate in group efforts less when they feel dominated.

Students’ attitudes were studied through a survey and with the help of interviews; it is noticeable that European students generally have a more positive attitude towards their
studies than minority students. Minority students do have a positive attitude, but they are vulnerable to external factors such as social or economic difficulties.

We also conclude that European students are more satisfied with their studies. This is indicated by higher evaluation of their job prospects, better relationships with teachers and a feeling of being well supported by the institution. Minority students have lower job prospects, not-so-good relationships with the teachers and feel that they are not adequately supported. This could be explained by language and communication barriers stemming from cultural differences.

Some factors have been reported by minority students as having an effect on their academic life. Such factors include

- lack of financial support (including difficulty of finding part time jobs),
- language barriers,
- lack of preparation for the course during previous studies,
- cultural adaptability,
- difficult climate and
- lower motivation due to lower evaluation of their job prospects.

### 6.2 Model Development

A good way to summarise the conclusions arrived at after the analysis in the previous chapter is to present it in the form of a model with three layers. The outermost layer represents the indirect factors that affect students. Indirect factors can be defined as factors that are not directly related to the everyday life at school but which affect the students’ education. Such factors are out of the control of the school. The next layer represents the direct factors that affect students in the educational environment in their everyday life on campus. Such factors can be modified by the school. There is a third layer within which the individual students form groups based on their social identities; and at the core of this layer, we have the social identity processes that affect and govern the interactions between students. Figure 7 presents an illustration of the model.
6.3 Recommendations

Several suggestions have been made as to how relations between both groups can be improved. In a student context, creating a better psycho-social state for the minority students could give them a better attitude towards their own studies and hence improve the general quality of education in the institution as a whole. The main suggestions include working on group contact and changing social categorisations. More steps could be taken to improve the group work experience for all students. Also, steps could be taken to reduce the salience of cultural differences. For example, formal rules and time tables could be set up for group work so that expectations and roles are more clearly defined. However, an important part of the training is for students to be able to work independently and be self-organising. Still, imposing some degree of order on group work would eliminate certain negative effects.

Also, it would be very helpful if orientation courses could be given, so that by the time students begin their actual courses, they would have familiarised themselves with the educational system.
6.4 Limitations of the study

There are several limitations that I faced while undergoing this study. First, it was a matter of time and scope. To be able to carry out a fully comprehensive study of this nature, more empirical evidence is required. Collecting and transcribing interviews is a very time consuming process. It would have taken too much time to take enough interviews, transcribe and analyse them.

It would have been much better to gather data from a number of higher institutions in Sweden. But due to the cost, it was easier and more practical to limit myself to UBSE which is closer and more accessible.

The time also put limits on the methodological options available. An ethnographic study or a detailed participant observation would yield better results, but it would be too time consuming and it would probably exceed the scope of this thesis.

One other limitation is the truthfulness of the respondents. Diversity can sometimes be a sensitive topic, and students might not always say exactly what they feel about it for fear of giving a bad image. Also, students might be reluctant to make statements about their work ethic, especially if it is not as good as they would like it to be. To handle this limitation, three interviews were collected and an additional survey done so as to ensure consistency in the results. The biggest limitation of the survey was the number. Only 30 respondents were used. This choice was made because it is first and foremost a qualitative study and statistical accuracy was not a primary concern… the aim was to identify differences and to cross-check findings. This limitation, coupled with the fact that respondents might be sensitive about the subject of ethnicity could undermine the validity of the survey.

Also, grounded theory poses a methodological challenge. Even the founders of grounded theory do not fully agree on how it should be carried out (Bryman and Bell). Therefore, I had to adapt some of the ideas from grounded theories into a practicable form.

6.5 Future Research

This study leads to some questions which need answering. First of all, it would be interesting to carry out the same study using a wider sample and employing more intensive research methods. Also, it would be better to have some social experiments conducted to establish causes and effects. One area which would be interesting to include in further research is the case of ethnic minority students that have grown up in Sweden and have a somewhat Swedish culture combined with traditions from their parents or grandparents.
Reference List


[http://www8.umu.se/international_office/Pdf/Policy_for_internationalisation_english_version.pdf] [Retrieved 2009-12-10]
Appendix 1: Interview Guide.

General Questions:
- What is your name?
- Would you like anonymity?
- What do you study?
- How long have you studied in Swedish universities?
- How would you describe yourself?
- How does this affect you dress, behaviour?
- Does it affect your choice of friends?

1) Minority-Majority Relations:
- In your class, do you find more native Swedish Students or more ethnic minorities?
- What are the various ethnic groups that you can identify in your class?
- If you were in a group setting with people from other cultures, would you expect them to adopt your culture (be on time, be less relationship oriented, etc) or would you be flexible?
- Do you have any experience on this to share?
- Do you think it would be less different if you weren’t/were Swedish? Do you think everyone is expected to perform the same? Can some behaviour be tolerated of others?
- Do you think your group is hardworking? What problems do you face belonging to your group?

2) Self categorisation and workgroup socialisation.
- How much group work do you have in your courses so far?
- Did you start to develop preference for some people to work with? What basis? Gender? Age? Ethnicity?
- So when you form a group, are you motivated by some of the members that are in your group? What if you think they are lazy/hardworking: how will that affect your motivation?
- Do you sometimes feel that it is better to work with the same group all through or to form new groups each time? Do you think it is a slow process to ‘bond’?

3) Cooperation
- So, when you have to form a group, can you discuss the process of how you organise your work?
- So what constitutes a good group for you? (Bonding?)
- Why do you feel that you have to participate, why don’t you just ‘free-ride’?
- What if you found yourself in a group that you don’t like?
4) Status
- what do you understand by status?
- do you think there are certain groups that have certain advantages? (cultural, social, educational)?
- if there are, what do you do to moderate these differences?
- Do you think there are status differences among students? (Male, female? cool, uncool). What are some of the bases?

5) Satisfaction
- Do you feel that you are studying the right thing?
- Do you feel that your efforts will be rewarded?
- what are your plans after your study?
- Do you feel the course if properly suited to you? Can you discuss this?
- Do you think your teachers understand you?
  - can you talk about the educational system? Are you familiar with it? How does it differ with what you have studied before?
- Do you think there is enough support available?
- What would you like to see changed so that it can be more useful to you?
- financially? Balance work and school?
- Any external factors you think might be affecting your school work?
- Advantages of studying in your own culture? Experiences abroad?
- What do you think about the social atmosphere at school?
Appendix 2: Interview transcripts.

1) Malin

Me: hi. Now I’m recording. What is your name?
Malin: Malin. Is that enough, or do you want my last name as too?
Me: not necessarily.
Malin: ok
Me: Would you prefer to remain anonymous, because when I write, I would like to give some background information about you.
Malin: no, it’s ok.
Me: So what do you study?
Malin: Leadership and organisation, master’s programme.
Me: So how long have you studied in a Swedish university?
Malin: 3 years
Me: and how would you describe yourself?
Malin: [giggles] I am procrastinator, but I’m driven. I always try to reach my goals.
Me: And how do you see yourself, do you do you see yourself first as a girl or just a student or you know, a young person, an old person or the like, when do these different things come into play. I mean, do you see yourself primarily as a Swedish person…?
Malin: I know what you mean. I think I know…
Me: we could start with [gender], when you go to class, do you see yourself mainly as a girl or do you even think about that?
Malin: I’m more a student.
Me: Are there any circumstances where you start to see yourself as a girl?
Malin: not in school. I don’t think so, no. I am a girl all the time [so I never pay attention to that].
Me: how about the age group, do you sometimes feel like you are among the older ones or the younger ones?
Malin: Not really, but I think I would be [among the younger ones] because the other members of my group are around 30 but it didn’t matter when I got to know them. At first when I just found out how old they were, I was like ‘oh, no… they’ll see me like that little child’
Me: and what about seeing yourself in terms of your nationality? Do you feel it sometimes gets important?
Malin: yeah, it is important, and I felt really really Swedish last year after my trip to the US. I felt more Swedish. I mean, I’ll always be Swedish, but I don’t have to be in Sweden to be Swedish. You know what I mean?
Me: I understand. So the way you see yourself sometimes, you know, in terms of gender or age or whatever, does it affect your behaviour, maybe how you dress when you go into class?
Malin: Well, I think most of the other students in class are older and more experienced, so I often don’t have much to say compared to them. So maybe I tend to be more introverted or less outgoing.
Me: and how does it affect your choice of friends?
Malin: err… I guess I’m trying to find friends who are more extrovert and outgoing because it’s easier to connect to them.
Me: so when you pick friends, it’s more on the basis of that, not age or gender or anything?
Malin: no, it’s more like how easy it is. Of course it’s easier to get to know people in your own age but it doesn’t matter as much anymore. It was more important when I was like 15, 18 but now the difference is not very big.
Me: so we will go to another set of questions, another discussion. There questions are about how you find your studies. Do you think that you are studying the right thing?
Malin: Yes, definitely.
Me: did you choose it yourself?
Malin: yeah. I thought I was wrong when I choose my last program, my bachelors. Then, it was more about business administration. Now, it’s more of Management and it feels like this is really what I want to do.
Me: so do you think you will be rewarded after you finish studying? Do you think what you are studying now is going to be important for your future?
Malin: yeah, it will be.
Me: OK, great. So what plans do you have after your studies?
Malin: I want to work in an HR department in a big company, maybe international.
Me: and what do you think are the chances of that happening?
Malin: Emmm… it depends on if I would like to move, right now when I don’t have a family, I can do that. My first stop will be Stockholm… chances are bigger there.
Me: so you are quite positive that you will find a job.
Malin: yes I am.
Me: Do you think your program or courses are well adapted to you?
Malin: What do you mean? I don’t understand…
Me: Do you think the course was designed for people like you in mind? Or do you think it was meant for more experienced people for example?

Malin: well, I think it’s kind of OK, but I think on this course, we only have like 6 lectures so it was more like group work and a home exam so we didn’t get to get a picture form the professors, you know, we had to read everything ourselves, do you understand?

Me: yeah I understand what you mean, but em… do you think they need to change some things so that the course could be better or more useful? Because sometimes a lot of people go to class and they feel that the course is not designed for them. Like sometimes when I go to class I feel like some of the courses are designed for people who have worked for a couple of years…

Malin: OK, I see. This one is good in that way.

Me: And do you think your teachers understand you? Do you think the communication with your teachers is good enough?

Malin: Yeah, we’ve had 5 or 4 teachers, maybe one of them was pretty weird but the rest of them were good.

Me: so you have no problems communicating with your teachers?

Malin: no.

Me: so you think if you had a problem you would find it easy to go up and talk to someone and expect to get help?

Malin: yeah, but I’m not sure about who I would talk to because it’s a lot of them, but yes, the connection is good.

Me: ok, and what about the educational system that you are working with right now, do you think you are familiar enough with it? You know, the way the courses are organised, the way the school is run?

Malin: yeah, it’s pretty much the same [like what I’ve experienced before].

Me: so it’s not really a problem for you to have to adapt.

Malin: no its not

Me: but do you think its different from the way you studied before?

Malin: emm… it’s a bigger school now, that’s a difference, the organisation is better, because they reorganised my whole school in the other school and it was just confusing, so I think its much better now. Its not vey hard to adapt.

Me: I see. And do you think there is enough support available for you? For example, if you have some kind of problem with a test or with how to choose a course…

Malin: I don’t know, I don’t have any experience.

Me: so you think it’s just so good that you don’t even need extra support?

Malin: yeah, I’ve never been in such a situation.

Me: But if ever you find yourself in such a position, do you think it would be difficult to find someone to talk to?

Malin: No, and even if I couldn’t speak to the teachers, I could just ask someone in the class. And we have the course website where everything is on so everything is really clear.

Me: ok, so do you think there is anything in your course that can be changed to make it better for you?

Malin: I would prefer to have more lectures, that I could get the book explained, not just read it… I think it’s easier when you both read it and hear someone talk about it. That would be much better.

Me: Now we move to another topic. What about the financial load, do you think its hard to balance work and school, that is, if you work, and do you face difficulties with the cost of your studying, such as buying textbooks, class trips,?

Malin: it is just this school or the Swedish system?

Me: well, you can feel free to discuss it.

Malin: Well, I’ve had an extra job before in my previous studies, but I don’t have one now. I think I would have time to have another job, I want to have another job, because its kind of hard and the text books are expensive.

Me: OK, do you think that there are any external or extra factors that might be affecting your performance at school? You know maybe weather, transportation, personal problems with family and friends, social problems?

Malin: not right now

Me: so from what you say, you find it very comfortable to study in your own sociocultural surroundings. That’s great. Now, did you study abroad before?

Malin: yeah

Me: did you find it difficult or strange?

Malin: No, I found it easy as well. We had a lot of support. We had a coordinator at school, who we could go to when we had problems, the teachers were good, there were small classes, so we had close relations with the teachers and everyone was open so they just let us in.

Me: what do you think about the social atmosphere at school, do you think its great for studies?

Malin: I think its pretty normal, I haven’t been thinking about it. And I haven’t been at school so much because we’ve had so few lectures so I don’t really feel what the social atmosphere at school about.

Me: now, we talk about another topic, that of some sort of minority groups. In your class, from what you can see, what can you say are the different ethnic groups that are represented, what are the ratios?

Malin: I think almost everyone is from Sweden, there is one from Germany and one from Russia, I think that’s about it… everyone in the class is pretty white.

Me: OK, let’s say the Russian guy speaks Swedish, but has a lot of the Russian culture in him, and then you had to perform a group task together, would you be ready to bend or be flexible towards his behaviour if it conflicts with yours, or would you expect him to bend to suit you?

Malin: I would expect him to behave in a way that I find normal… I would expect him to be on time for group meetings. Since he’s here, he has to do it like it’s done here. But unfortunately, I don’t have any experiences with that. But when I was in the U.S. I wanted to adapt to how they did things so I expect people to be able to do the same here. Mean I went abroad for a
reason, to see how the people lived and to see another culture and how they live… so why would I go there and still want to be the same Swedish person… you know what I mean?

Me: OK, I see what you mean, but didn’t you expect people to go a bit easy on you in case you had trouble adapting? Like, we know how she is, so maybe we can understand

Malin: Yeah but not if it comes to late coming and stuff because that gets in the way of the work. I mean, here, I would try to compromise, you know, try to ask why and see if we could do something, that would benefit all.

Me: so do you think you would have problems working in your class if you weren’t from Sweden?

Malin: no.

Me: Alright. Now, we move to another topic, that of socialisation in your workplace. How much group work have you had so far? Did you choose your groups by yourselves?

Malin: 5 weeks of this semester… that’s a lot. And half of the course is group work. Yeah, we choose our own groups by ourselves. We were sitting in a big group, like 10 or 15, and we were talking about what we wanted to write about, and so those who wanted to write about the same things fell into the same groups. So the choice was based mostly on the subject. That’s why I’m in a group with 30 year olds.

Me: do you get motivated if the others are hard working.

Malin: Yeah, I get motivated when someone is hard working and unmotivated when someone is lazy.

Me: Do you think it’s better to stick to one group or to form new groups all the time?

Malin: I think its better to work with one group, maybe not for the whole time, but its different stages in group works so you have to pass through all these stages before you can be a good working group. I think you should have at least 6 months before you can really be a good group, or before you can come out with maximum performance. I think it’s a slow process to form a group. I’m reading about that right now, about groups, teamwork. That’s why I think like that.

Me: Now, I’ll ask you a couple of questions about cooperation in groups. When you form a new group, how does it go to start working together?

Malin: At first we were deciding what to write about, to pick out some subjects… and then we just sat down and tried to get to know each other, you know, talk about other stuff that school like who we are and stuff… than we exchanged emails and numbers. Then we tried to define what kind of output we want… you know, taking a step at a time. I think its important to get to know each other before you start to work.

Me: so what do you think forms a good group?

Malin: that you trust each other, that you be honest, tell each other if something is wrong, and don’t do anything to be in a different way. That you feel secure enough to do that.

Me: OK, and what pushes you to contribute to the group effort… if you have, say, seven members, why don’t you just lay back and let everyone else do the work?

Malin: because I hate free riders. I hate when someone relies on the other ones, so I don’t want to be that person. I hate them because I think that if you have chosen to go to school, you shouldn’t expect other people to do the work for you, and if you and I are going a job and you are a free rider, then that means more work for me.

Me: so what if you found yourself in a group that you don’t like, what would you do?

Malin: I don’t think I’d do anything… I mean, I wouldn’t free ride, I would still do what is expected of me, but I would not do anything about the group since its so short time.

Me: so what do you understand by the word status?

Malin: I would say that its about the things you surround yourself with, that make up pretty much a part of your image,

Me: so in you class or school, and from the way you perceive things, do you think you can find different groups with different status?

Malin: for me, its all about experience, those that have more experience have a higher status. If I know that they have worked with what we are doing before, then I know they got more experience.

Me: so would that influence you if you had to pick a group? Would you like to go towards those that you think have more experience?

Malin: yeah, I would rather be with them, because I would feel that I could learn something from them. But it’s more about experience than race or age or any other factor. I think its interesting to mix up sometimes. With different nationalities and stuff. Sometimes, I think some people could have some sort of status by being ‘cool’ or ‘in’ but that has nothing to do with when I pick a group in school. Money always gives status.

Me: yeah, it does, somehow. Do you think if you were really poor and couldn’t afford good clothes and stuff, would that give you some sort of status?

Malin: Yeah, kind of… if someone looks professional, then you can think they are, even if they aren’t. I would feel more professional if I know that people saw me that way.

Me: so you think if you had a higher status it would make you work harder? And do you think you would be pulled towards others with the same types of status symbols?

Malin: I think it would be easier. But that’s because of the expectations. When you work with those with experience, you learn more, but they might feel that you are slowing them down, and it’s the same when you work with those that have less experience… you may feel like they slow you down.

Me: that’s the last question. Do you have any comments?

Malin: no

Me: thank you very much!

Malin: you welcome.

2) Daniel

Me: hi. Now we begin the interview. The purpose of the study is to understand the different attitudes that different students have towards their
Daniel: Chingang Daniel.

Me: would you like me to report information about you or would you prefer to remain anonymous?

Daniel: I think I have no problem if you use my information, its OK with me.

Me: what do you study?

Daniel: I am a masters student in Marketing at the business school at Umeå university.

Me: how long have you studied in a Swedish university?

Daniel: This is my first time in a Swedish university and I have been studying for 2 months.

Me: How would you describe yourself?

Daniel: I will describe myself as a Cameroonian, from Africa, errr … I’m 25 years old, I had my bachelors in 2006 and I was unemployed for over 2 years before I came to continue my education. And I come from a very humble background. I am a Christian.

Me: so when you are on campus, how do you see yourself in relation to others?

Daniel: I present myself as a man, though still dependent, and as an African. I think it important that I’m from africa because that’s my identity and I know my colour had a great part to play in my identity and I just believe that I cant hide from that, I have to identify myself as an African.

Me: Does it affect how you dress or how you behave?

Daniel: for sure, it does.

Me: does it affect how you choose friends?

Daniel: Well, I don’t have a problem choosing friends, but sometimes I think its kind of complicated making friends with white students and I think it’s much easier for me to make friends with a black guy.

Me: that’s very interesting. So you think that the fact that you are from Africa has a big effect on you?

Daniel: yeah, I feel sorry to say this because firstly, knowing fully well that I come from Africa and there is some kind of notion that Africa is kind of backward and still developing compared to Europe, America and Asia so I have this sort of complex about it. So its sometimes a big challenge for me presenting myself as an African because I already know the perception of most people from other parts of the world about Africa. Its kind of disturbing sometimes.

Me: ok. Do you feel like what you are studying right now is the right thing?

Daniel: errr … yeah, I think I’m really studying the right thing now because I had my bachelors in management and I knew it was a very broad field. So I had to be more specific in what I’m doing. So I started doing a professional program, Chattered Institute of Marketing, which is British based and I was so happy when I was offered a place to do my masters in marketing. So it’s kind of building up a career in marketing.

Me: do you think that your efforts will be rewarded after you finish studying?

Daniel: Yes, I think here the system is quite good because the course is very focused professionally and your goals are really clear because the objectives are very clearly set when you are doing anything here. For example, in my courses, I really understand the practical implications and I see how I could apply them if I am in a real job. So I think what I’m studying now is very useful.

Me: so what plans do you have after you study?

Daniel: well, firstly, there are many factors in play right now, because as an African, I’m really interested in having that international experience in the marketing field. So firstly, I should finish my masters in a year’s time, that is, by June 2010. So by the summer of 2010, I should be searching for a job and hopefully, I will pick up one.

Me: and what do you think are your chances of picking up a job?

Daniel: Right now, I think the chances are really very slim, knowing fully well that we are facing some economic difficulties in the world today and we really have to work harder to find work. So I think the chances are pretty slim. And even though there are few opportunities around, I am still optimistic about getting a job.

Me: what do you think about the communication with your teachers, do you face any difficulties in that respect?

Daniel: I think with some of the teachers, there’s no problem. They understand us and I think we do understand them as Africans in particular, but we still have some problems, especially with some lecturers who don’t get us, but I think as an individual, the communication is quite good. I think the teachers are really doing their job well, and I think the relationship between the teachers and the students is really good.

Me: do you think the course is properly suited to you and your experiences?

Daniel: yeah, certainly. I think I have spoken about that earlier in the interview. I think the course outline is so good and I really appreciate it. It’s really sounds practical for me.

Me: and what do you think about the educational system here, do you think its different from what you studied before?

Daniel: the educational system here is kind of good because there are enough facilities that are employed in, for example, the way the lectures are presented. I think it’s very good. Like the use of PowerPoint slides and video conferencing. And I praise the organisation of the university because they are offering quality education to the students.

Me: so do you think there is enough support available?

Daniel: yes, there is definitely enough support. Its good, just for the fact that the education is free, its great for us students. It would be great to have a job on the side to take care of some other things.

Me: so are there any factors that are not directly linked to the education that affect how you study? For example, family or social problems or with the climate?

Daniel: yeah, there are many factors that affect me, first of all, as I foreigner, the climate is quite tough, especially the cold. Even though the cold does not affect us inside buildings, but sometimes, it is very difficult to make up your mind to leave home for school because it is very unpleasant outside. And also, some other aspects such as family background are important. Many Africans come from very large families sometimes, there may be some misunderstandings between family members and even friends and such problems can also affect you when you study.
Daniel: well, I think there are so many differences with other people from different cultural backgrounds when you work as a group, and most of our groups have people from different ethnic groups. I think the main differences we encounter are languages. I think there is sometimes a language barrier, for example, the way someone from Pakistan speaks English might be hard to understand, in terms of both the accent and the sentence construction, especially for me who is not a native English speaker. Some students have a problem framing their questions or their sentences. So we have difficulties in communication.

Me: how about with the Swedish students?

Daniel: I think the Swedish students are OK, its just a little problem with their written English. But when they speak, I think its quite good.

Me: when you work as a group, do you expect the other people to work the way you work or do you try to adapt to their work ethic? What can you say about that?

Daniel: errr… when I join a group, I struggle to adapt to what they do because I have never been used to group work, so its kind of like… I’m a follower. I just watch what they do and I follow because its really a new experience for me.

Me: would you be mad if everyone wanted you to behave like them and they didn’t want to understand that you have a different cultural background?

Daniel: yeah, I’ll feel bad because… its an experience I had just a couple of day ago. I was in a group and we had a group meeting late at night, I think it was a 9 pm in the library. I told them I couldn’t make it so following day they were so mad at me, trying to make me understand that it’s a group effort and that if I don’t want to work, I should let them know so we could change groups, but I felt so bad because it wasn’t as if I dint want to participate, it was just because some other factors came into play and I thought they were more important to me.

Me: Do you think it would be different if you were Swedish? Do you think things will go easier for you?

Daniel: yeah, I think if I were Swedish, it would have been a completely different story because; from the onset, I come from a different setting where our own way of doing things is quite different from the way the Swedish do theirs, so I think if I came up in the Swedish system, I would have been doing the way the majority would expect me to.

Me: so what do you think about the social atmosphere at school? Do you think its very conducive?

Daniel: alright. You said there were different groups in you class, mainly the white, black and Asian students. Which do you think are the hardest working and which do you think are the laziest?

Daniel: err… its rather unfortunate for me, I havn’t worked with asian students, but from my experience or what others say, many asian students are kind of like warm to group work or are kind of slow. But I’ve worked with Swedish students and I think they are kind of hardworking because they learn from their experiences and they are very used to group work because they have been doing it since their undergraduate studies. So I think they are the most effective group workers.

Me: so, emmm… what about your own group, do you think you are hard working enough? You and your people?

Daniel: yeah, I think we are hard working an I think I’m progressing because from my first group work, I wasn’t that effective, but with time I come to understand the role I have to play in a group, even though generally speaking, its not easy to work in a group because there is always that difference and you sometimes feel like someone is drawing the group back but it is important to have a leader. When you have a leader in a group, things go faster. But if you don’t have, it becomes slow and difficult.

Me: so do you think that the fact that your own ethnic group is not well represented enough makes it difficult for you when you work in groups?

Daniel: well, for me, I prefer to work as an individual because working in a group is much harder. So if more people are added to the group, it will become unproductive.

Me: but as someone from Africa, what problems do you face or do you think other Africans will face in groups?

Daniel: well, there are not so many of us and as far as I know, the others are finding it Ok working with their group members. I think its going well on their part.

Me: how much group work has the been in your courses so far?

Daniel: this is the second course I’m taking. The first course I had was consumer behaviour and we had a good number of group assignments, but the second course which is market research has just one group assignment so far and I think it will last throughout the entire course. So there is quite frequent group work in my courses.

Me: do you choose your own groups yourself or is it done by some automatic process?

Daniel: at times the teacher forms groups, for example, the first course I had, the teacher had to form our groups. But the second one, we had to form the groups by ourselves.

Me: so when you want to form a group, how do you choose members? Do you do that in the basis of race, gender age or what?

Daniel: well, from the first experience, it was just coincidence. I was really eager to make new friends so I wanted to socialise also, maybe with female members of my age group. So when I choose groups, its mostly so I can improve my social skills, maybe with the opposite sex. And I like to work with people from other cultural backgrounds so I could understand their own way of doing things, instead of working with people I already know or who come from the same background as me.

Me: so when you form a group, are you motivated by the members of the group?

Daniel: yeah, when I form a group, I’m motivated if I know hey kind of people I’m working with. If I have a good experience working with a person, I would like to work with that person again, so I like to maintain the same
people around me if the experience has been positive. If my group members are lazy, it will push me to work harder because I will not like to fail. So it's a challenge for me to become a leader in the group and maybe become the most responsible one.

Me: do you think it takes time before you group can produce good results or do you think you can immediately be effective when you form a group?

Daniel: I think you need time to first understand the members and everyone’s strengths and so you have to take your time to know who is good for doing what.

Me: the next set of questions will be about cooperation. When you form a group what is the process that you go through before you start to work?

Daniel: its just simple. First we get to exchange contacts and get to know ourselves formally. So during the first meeting, we get to know ourselves and maybe sit down and make some decisions on how we are going to be cooperating.

Me: what makes a good group for you?

Daniel: a good group is a group where everyone is given a chance to express themselves and where everyone is objective also propose ideas from their own points of view. And its also good when you finally come to a consensus.

Me: so do you sometimes feel like you don’t want to participate, you just want to hang around and let others do the work for you?

Daniel: I think that’s a bad experience I have had. I don’t like to do that. But at times, when the group chooses a topic and you find it boring, you know, not everyone in the group will be interested in the same subject, so some people will be motivated while others will not find the work very interesting. But in most cases, I always like to really involve myself in the group work and have something to contribute to make the work go smoothly.

Me: so what will you do if you find yourself in a group that you don’t like?

Daniel: I think it will be difficult to find myself in a group that I don’t like because it’s the teacher that has formed the group, and if in case I find myself in a group that I don’t like, I’d rather go up to the teacher and complain so I can change my group, or I will try to sit down and talk things out with the group to fix the conflicts.

Me: what do you understand by the word status.

Daniel: well what do you mean… status as in people or? …. Well, when you talk about status, its just your class. For me, I look at it like your social class.

Me: do you think there are certain groups in school that have a different social class from others? Do you think males have a better social class than females or is it a matter of race or what?

Daniel: in my opinion, most of us who are students fall within the same social class because we all dress similarly and we all use bicycles, we all live in the same type of accommodation and its realy the same with everybody, so I just consider that its all the same social class.

Me: do you sometimes feel like you don’t want to participate, you just want to hang around and let others do the work for you?

Daniel: no, definitely not

Me: Well, this is the end of the interview. Thank you very much for your time.

Daniel: you are welcome.

3) AK.

Me: hi, what is your name?

Ak: my name is ak* (not the real name)

Me: what do you study?

Ak: I’m in marketing. Masters program in marketing.

Me: how would you like to remain anonymous for the purpose of this study?

Ak: I think it is better if I remain anonymous. I don’t want to have my name in the study. So you can just say it’s a student who studies marketing.

Me: so where do you come from?

Ak: I come from Pakistan.

Me: how old are you?

Ak: 27

Me: how long have you studied in a Swedish university?

Ak: 2 months.

Me: how would you feel about yourself here on campus?

Ak: I feel very good, when I go around on campus, meeting Swedish people and all the others, I feel good.

Me: what kind of friends do you prefer to have?

Ak: any kind, it doesn’t really matter.

Me: do you feel that you are studying the right thing?

Ak: I think err… it’s a huge scope of marketing but the main thing is that your background has to be good in the field to better appreciate what we are studying here. Like now, we are studying research marketing, the problem is that there is a huge amount of statistical data, and if you are not strong in that field you can’t really do the course. So I think there should be some basic statistical or marketing courses that should be included in the master programmes. So that those persons who are not good in statistics can also join the class and have a good performance.

Me: ok. So do you think it will be easy for you to finish the program?

Ak: I think err… it’s a huge scope of marketing but the main thing is that your background has to be good in the field to better appreciate what we are studying here. Like now, we are studying research marketing, the problem is that there is a huge amount of statistical data, and if you are not strong in that field you can’t really do the course. So I think there should be some basic statistical or marketing courses that should be included in the master programmes. So that those persons who are not good in statistics can also join the class and have a good performance.

Me: so how do you think it will be after you study?

Ak: oh yeah, I am quite a bit… because ummm… when I studied in Pakistan, there was a uh… the whole study consisted of only ‘retta’… do you
understand... 'retta' means you are just remembering the questions and just write the answers without remembering how it's done. So the main problem is that umm... ummm... The concepts are not just clear and you cannot do retta here.

Me: so what do you plan to do after you study?

Ak: after I study, I'm planning to ummm... First of all I plan to make some... ummm some small business here, and umm... but ummm...

Me: so what do you think are the chances of that?

Ak: well, I have learned about some of my friends that the government has some policies or loans for new entrepreneurs and that's why I'm hoping that I can get such a loan and start a small business here.

Me: what kind of business?

Ak: well, jacket-like things like selling these jacket and sport-like things like jogging, etc.

Me: do you think it will be easy?

Ak: I can't say anything about that because the future is always unpredictable, but when I do my statistics and analyse the data, then I can better answer that question.

Me: so you don't think it depends on the fact that you come from another country?

Ak: I don't think so because in Sweden ummm... I learned that it is an industrial country and they prefer investors to come here and invest more and more so that unemployment will reduce and GDP will increase.

Me: and how is your relationship with your teachers, do you understand each other?

Ak: there are some teachers that are very supporting to the students, but I don't think that the whole of the teachers are good in it. Maybe all are good but the main thing is that there is a problem in communication. The problem is that we have teachers from different parts of the world and their proficiency in English is not as good. You know, here, all classes are in English, if the teacher doesn't know how to teach and speak in English and how can they deliver their experiences to the students?

Me: how do you handle the financial aspects of your studies here in Sweden?

Ak: the big problem is that we don't have part-time jobs here. If the students have part-time jobs, they can survive here. But I want to add that when the fees will... when they start to pay fees here, it will be very difficult to survive here, because most students coming from all over the world come here because education is free and the quality is good, so I don't think that when they will start to pay fees, I don't think there will be so many students here.

Me: so do you think there are any other factors that affect how you study?

Ak: obviously, when we talk about the weather and the social factors like I came from Pakistan and I feel very homesick here, and ummm, lots of times I remember my family but I can only talk to them on phone and internet so you can say it's like a barrier. But I have a few friends here, even though most of them are from my native land, because ummm... ya.

Me: so do you think it's easy to study abroad, or in a cultural setting that's now yours?

Ak: yeah, I've studied here for 2 months and it's very difficult at first if you don't have any exposure internationally when you come from a different culture and a different educational background and find yourself in a new environment with new exam pattern, so it's difficult, but with time, it becomes easy.

Me: what do you think about the social atmosphere?

Ak: I think the social atmosphere in school here is quite good and umm... but the main thing is the time problem... and I think that students should be willing to work with you and work for you.

Me: so, the next set of questions about ethnicity. What are the different ethnicities in your class?

Ak: I think there is a mixture of all types, there are many Pakistanis, Cameroonians, Swedish, German, Chinese, Japanese, Russian, there is a mixture of students in your class? I think that most are Swedish, then Asian, then other EU countries.

Me: what about your own people, do you think there are many of you?

Ak: I think its not very big but not small either, its medium.

Me: so if you had to form a group with people from other cultures, would you expect them to try to adapt to you or would you try to adapt to them? Are you flexible? For example, if you are always late for group work, would you expect to try to change if the others wanted you to or would you want them to tolerate it?

Ak: I think the main thing is the understanding of the group. If it happens most of the time, then it's a problem. But if someone is late because he's having some problems and he told the other members of the group about the problem, it can be managed.

Me: so do you think everyone is expected to be on their best behaviour, or should it be like "oh, they are used to being like this, so we can forgive them"?

Ak: ummm... maybe... I see it like when I'm late, if I had a good reason for getting late, then its ok, but if you don't have any good reason, then there should be no excuse. Everyone should be on time.

Me: no this is a tricky question... which is the hardest working ethnic group in your class?

Ak: I think that most of the people from my land, 40 to 60 percent are also working hard, but mostly I know that the Swedish people are more advanced in their readings and assignments and they finish as early as possible.

Me: do you face any problems being asian?

Ak: I don't think so.

Me: these questions are about work groups? How much group work have you done?

Ak: ummm... There was 2 assignments in my first module and 1 group assignment in the second.

Me: so how do you choose members to form a group with?

Ak: in the first module, the teacher chooses the groups and in the second module, with the past experience with the last group, we mad our new group. I would prefer to choose based on who I can understand more, that we have better communication and can work together. But if I don't know anyone from before, I think it should be a combination of male and female,
but I will start from those sitting next to me, since I would not know anyone, male or female. It doesn’t matter if they are Swedish or Asian or anything. Gender is a bit important. I’m more comfortable with male so I can understand them better.

Me: next set of questions, how do you organise yourself as a new group?

Ak: the main thing is that there should be a leader. There should be a main key player who can guide the efforts of the group so that the work is done before the time.

Me: ok, so why do you participate when you have a group, why don’t you just sit back and let others do the work?

Ak: emmm… the main thing is that I want to learn, that’s why I participate. If there is someone who has more knowledge, I want to learn from him. I would leave a group if no one wants to participate. In the masters level, everyone should be more mature and responsible, so if people have problems like someone lacking in the studies. So if there is one member who is behind, the other members can cover his or her lacking. There should be some support, there is a problem if the group is not supportive.

Me: next set of questions. What do you understand by status?

Ak: I understand status to be linked to social class, some sort of artificial patterns in the world that you find wherever you go. Here in school, there is quite a bit of the status thing but not so much. I don’t think intelligence is a social class thing, maybe your family background has more to do. But we can assume that with the attitudes, like if someone has more money or is status conscious, then he or she may feel more proud and not want to socialize with others.

Me: if you want to form a group, would you prefer to go towards the hard working students, or do you feel like you want to look at what the other groups are doing, or can you see a group and judge if they will have good results or not?

Ak: yeah, that’s all true.

Me: thank you so much, this is the end of the interview.

Ak: you are welcome
Appendix 3: The Questionnaire.

Hello, I am a Masters student in management. In order to complete my thesis, I need your help in completing this survey. Please take a few minutes to answer all the questions.

1) How old are you? __________
2) Gender: __________
3) Which of the following best describes you. Please mark using an X, and choose more than one if you are of mixed descent?
   □ African (black) □ Asian
   □ Caucasian (white) □ East Indian
   □ Hispanic/Latino □ Middle Eastern
   □ Other _______
4) Which country have you spent lived in for most of your life? ______________

5) How do you feel about your program of study? Please select one option with an X
   __ I absolutely hate it
   __ It is boring
   __ I just do it because I have to
   __ It is somehow interesting
   __ I love it… cant wait to go to class!

6) How will the course help you? Please pick one.
   __ I sometimes feel like I am wasting my time
   __ I am doing it just in case: no one really knows tomorrow
   __ I might find work in another country
   __ If I am lucky, I will find work in Sweden
   __ I am sure I will find work after I finish

7) Do you feel that the Swedish socio-cultural setting has an impact on your school work? Please choose one.
   __ I try to work hard by I sometimes get distracted
   __ It makes no difference whether I am in Sweden or not
   __ It is easy to get along by using minimum effort
   __ I find it very easy to concentrate and participate in school work

8) Do you think your ethnic or cultural background has an effect on your school performance? Please use a number from 1 to 5, 1 indicating a very negative effect and 5 indicating a very positive effect. _____

9) Do you like group work during your courses? Please use a number from 1 to 5, 1 indicating a very negative feeling and 5 indicating a very positive feeling. _____

10) Do you think it is important to work with a culturally mixed group for the sake of diversity or to work in a homogeneous group to make the processes go smoother? Please use a number from 1 to 5, 1 indicating a very negative effect for mixed groups and 5 indicating a very positive effect for mixed groups. _____

11) Would you rather form a group with hard working students so you benefit from their efforts, or with lazy students, so you can be the ‘boss’?
   __ hard working
   __ lazy

12) Would you rather be the leader and do most of the work, or share out the work, or have a free ride?
   __ leader
   __ every one shares the work equally
   __ I’m a free rider most of the time, even if I don’t mean to.

Thank you very much for your time!
## Appendix 4: Case Summaries

These are the summaries of the individual questionnaires. The report was generated from SPSS, after the data was entered.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>x1-Ethnicity</th>
<th>x2-Attitude towards studies</th>
<th>x3-Expectations</th>
<th>x4-External factors</th>
<th>x5-Ethnicity effects</th>
<th>x6-Attitude towards group work</th>
<th>x7-Attitude towards diversity</th>
<th>x8-Role in Group work</th>
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<td>It is somehow interesting</td>
<td>I am sure I will find work after I finish</td>
<td>It is easy to just get along</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Leader</td>
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<tr>
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<td>WHITE</td>
<td>It is somehow interesting</td>
<td>I am sure I will find work after I finish</td>
<td>I try to work hard but I sometimes get distracted</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>All are equal</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>WHITE</td>
<td>It is somehow interesting</td>
<td>I am sure I will find work after I finish</td>
<td>I try to work hard but I sometimes get distracted</td>
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<td>All are equal</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>I love it...!</td>
<td>I am sure I will find work after I finish</td>
<td>It makes no difference whether I am in Sweden or not</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>It is somehow interesting</td>
<td>I am sure I will find work after I finish</td>
<td>I try to work hard but I sometimes get distracted</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>I try to work hard but I sometimes get distracted</td>
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<td>I sometimes feel like I am wasting my time</td>
<td>I try to work hard but I sometimes get distracted</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>I am sure I will find work after I finish</td>
<td>It makes no difference whether I am in Sweden or not</td>
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<td>I am sure I will find work after I finish</td>
<td>I try to work hard but I sometimes get distracted</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>5</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
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<td>If I am lucky, I will find work in Sweden</td>
<td>I find it very easy to concentrate</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>All are equal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
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<td>It is somehow interesting</td>
<td>If I am lucky, I will find work in Sweden</td>
<td>It is easy to just get along</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>All are equal</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>WHITE</td>
<td>It is somehow interesting</td>
<td>If I am lucky, I will find work in Sweden</td>
<td>I find it very easy to concentrate</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>All are equal</td>
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<td>I try to work hard but I sometimes get distracted</td>
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<td>16</td>
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<td>It is somehow interesting</td>
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<td>I find it very easy to concentrate</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>All are equal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>MINORITY</td>
<td>I just do it because I have to</td>
<td>I might find work in another country</td>
<td>It is easy to just get along</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>All are equal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>MINORITY</td>
<td>It is somehow interesting</td>
<td>I am sure I will find work after I finish</td>
<td>I find it very easy to concentrate</td>
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<td>All are equal</td>
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<td>19</td>
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<td>It is somehow interesting</td>
<td>I might find work in another country</td>
<td>It is easy to just get along</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>All are equal</td>
</tr>
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<td>20</td>
<td>MINORITY</td>
<td>I just do it because I have to</td>
<td>I might find work in another country</td>
<td>I try to work hard but I sometimes get distracted</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>It is somehow interesting</td>
<td>I am sure I will find work after I finish</td>
<td>I try to work hard but I sometimes get distracted</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>All are equal</td>
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<td>22</td>
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<td>I might find work in another country</td>
<td>I try to work hard but I sometimes get distracted</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>All are equal</td>
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<td>I love it...!</td>
<td>I am sure I will find work after I finish</td>
<td>It makes no difference whether I am in Sweden or not</td>
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<td>It is easy to just get along</td>
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<td>All are equal</td>
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<td>I try to work hard but I sometimes get distracted</td>
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<td>27</td>
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<td>I love it...!</td>
<td>I am sure I will find work after I finish</td>
<td>I find it very easy to concentrate</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>MINORITY</td>
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<td>I am sure I will find work after I finish</td>
<td>I try to work hard but I sometimes get distracted</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>All are equal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>MINORITY</td>
<td>I just do it because I have to</td>
<td>I am doing it just in case...</td>
<td>I feel very distracted by other things</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>All are equal</td>
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<td>30</td>
<td>MINORITY</td>
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<td>I am doing it just in case...</td>
<td>I try to work hard but I sometimes get distracted</td>
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