Ideology and agency in ethnic identity negotiation of immigrant youth

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Gerard Duveen's conceptualization of the relationship between social identity and social representations invites empirical investigation concerning the interrelated aspects of being identified and making identifications. In the present paper we compare two empirical studies of ethnic minority identity development at different levels. Study 1 assesses macro-level ideological boundary developments through an examination of changing majority-minority representations in public discourse, while Study 2 analyzes the meso-level through identity negotiation and positioning in focus group discussions among immigrant youth in Oslo. Convergent findings between the two studies challenge the imperative/contractual dichotomy which Duveen and others have used to illustrate how social representations impose different kinds of obligations upon social identities. Our analysis suggests that the particular relationship between ethnic identity and social representation should be modified in order to better understand agency within ideological constraint and agency in the form of resistance.

The relationship between social identities and social representations is a source of ongoing debate in social psychology (Deaux & Philogène, 2001; Moloney & Walker, 2007; Marková , 2007). Gerard Duveen's insistence that social identities are functions of social representations places these two central concepts in a mutually constituting, yet hierarchical relationship (Duveen 1993; Duveen, 2001). Generally speaking, his position infers that socially shared knowledge (social representations) about groups precedes and frames the individual's development of an understanding of her/his position in society (social identity). This perspective inspires our research because it invites theoretical and empirical questioning of a particular 'space' which may also be articulated as mutual interaction between macro (ideological) and meso (interactional) levels of analysis (Deaux, 2006; Doise, 1986; Verkuyten, 2005). However, empirical investigations which attempt to combine these two levels are seldom prioritized in social psychological research. In addition, as there have been few empirical studies on ethnic identities within social representations theory we suggest that integrating two studies at different levels is a useful but relatively unexplored approach to understand how social ethnic identities involve both being identified and making identifications (Duveen, 2001).

Our paper will first combine a theoretical understanding of the social representation-social identity relationship with that of ethnic identities as embedded in a social dialectic process between ideology and agency (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Jenkins, 2007; Verkuyten, 2005). We then present a mixed-method analysis of two empirical investigations involving the construction and negotiation of immigrant youths' ethnic identities in Norway at different levels. Using the particular case of immigrant youth, we explore how a comparison of the two studies might enlighten our understanding of the mutual relationship between macro-level ideological representations of groups and ethnic identity negotiation at the meso-level.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOCIAL REPRESENTATIONS AND SOCIAL IDENTITY

According to Moscovici (1984), social representations in modern societies provide and dictate the shared cultural framework for classifying individuals, communities and cultures by endowing social categories with meaning, content and value. In the developmental perspective outlined by Duveen, upon entering the social world, we are immediately given certain social identities based upon our membership in different social categories, such as gender, age, class or ethnicity, which are constructed or framed by social representations.

Although he claimed that "representations precede identities" prior to birth (Duveen, 2001, p. 268), the relationship throughout development may be best characterized as mutually constituting or dialectical (Breakwell, 1993, 2001; Howarth, 2002; Marková, 2007) because of the role of agency to 're-present' or resist social representations when negotiating social identities (Duveen, 2001; Howarth, 2004, 2006; Nadim, 2005). For example, when constructing an identity, the symbolic resources used at the individual level are considered to be constrained by but may also challenge social representations (Zittoun, et al., 2003).

Duveen and Lloyd (1986, 1990; Lloyd & Duveen, 1992) were among the first social psychologists who discussed and investigated social representations and social identities in relation to each other (see also Hewstone, Jaspars, Lalljee, 1982; Breakwell, 1993). Their insights were derived from an empirical focus mainly on children's, parents', and teachers' construction of gender identities (Duveen & Lloyd, 1986; Lloyd & Duveen, 1992) or the relationship between gender and social interaction in children (e.g. Leman & Duveen, 1996, 1999; Psaltis & Duveen, 2006). The ubiquitous nature of gender as a social categorization in all social encounters (the gender binary) led them to emphasise that many identities are obligatory throughout development, thus stressing the power of social representations to influence agency. In the case of gender, 'universal physical sex differences' are given culture-specific 'gender meanings' signified by social representations which individual's must negotiate in the construction and development of a gender identity (Duveen & Lloyd, 1986).

To account for variations and differences in social identities, the external obligation to develop gender identities was used to justify a seemingly universal dichotomy[1] between imperative or contractual obligations which are imposed by social representations (Duveen & Lloyd, 1990; Lloyd & Duveen, 1992; Duveen, 1993; Duveen, 2001)[2]. Imperative obligations occur "where individuals are generally constrained to construct prescribed social identities" (Lloyd & Duveen, 1992; p. 24) by others and are automatically assumed, often related to some form of visibility (Deaux, 2001). Examples of age, class, and ethnicity are provided, but we have found little empirical work which supports the distinction beyond gender. On the other hand, contractual obligations involve when "an individual joining a social group contracts to adopt a particular social identity," and are seemingly voluntary, but also "interiorized" (Lloyd & Duveen, 1992, p. 24). In this case, occupation via psychoanalyst was consistently provided as an example.

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[1]Directly attributed to Moscovici in Duveen & Lloyd (1990; p. 8), and later stressed as not exhaustive (Duveen, 2001).

[2]Also somewhat confusingly explained as imperative or contractual types of identities, or different forms of relationships between social representations and social identities (Duveen, 1993; Duveen, 2001).

Both imperative and contractual obligations on identity involve the use of socially shared knowledge in the 'internalization' of social identities, but while the first involves external or societal pressure, the latter is a result of some degree of choice[3]. However, while ethnicity was classified by Duveen and Lloyd as possessing an imperative obligation it has rarely been studied within the social representation-social identity framework. The applicability of the imperative/contractual relationship for ethnic identities could thus benefit from more concrete investigation (Duveen, 2001). One of the central aims in this paper, is thus to ask what kind of imperative, but also potentially contractual, obligations do we find at the macro- and meso-levels for the negotiation of ethnic identities? It is thus necessary to expand upon a broader conceptualization of ethnic identities before presenting and comparing our empirical studies.

ETHNIC IDENTITIES: IDEOLOGY AND AGENCY

Ethnicity has become a key, but contested analytical concept in the wider social sciences and an increasingly important aspect of social identities in everyday multicultural contexts (e.g. Billig, 1995; Gullestad, 2006; Eriksen, 2002; Jenkins, 2007; Verkuyten, 2005). Many scholars seem to agree that ethnicity concerns the classification of people and group relationships in which myths or ideas of a common origin or history are used to draw boundaries between certain groups (Eriksen, 2002; Verkuyten 2005). Jenkins (2007) emphasises that although ethnic groups and boundaries are 'imagined' social constructions, they are rather ubiquitous historically, and near universals of the human condition. Yet, similar to the construction of nation states (Billig, 1995), there does not seem to be a set pattern for the construction of ethnic groups. Depending upon the contextual and historical salience of group belongingness, a number of interrelated group boundaries can be used to imagine common descent. The 'boundary markers' (Jenkins, 2007) which 'define' ethnic groups may thus involve national, racial, religious, or other culturally shared characteristics (e.g. language, norms, or values).

According to Verkuyten (2005), the genealogy element of ethnicity can be further conceptualized along the circumstantial and primordial dimensions. The circumstantial dimension highlights that there are ideological pressures between groups which frame, legitimize, or manipulate the manifestation of ethnicity based upon power relations.[4] Ethnic

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[3]Often referred to as ascribed vs. achieved identities (e.g. Deaux, 2001; Huddy, 2001)
[4]Our present use of ideology is understood as beliefs, opinions, values, and social practices that support certain representations and constructions of the world which uphold or challenge hierarchical relationships between groups (Augoustinos, Walker, & Donaghue, 2006; Nafstad, Blakar, Carlquist, Phelps, & Rand-Hendriksen, 2007; 2009; Phelps et al., submitted).

identities are thus a function of the ideological construction of group boundaries salient in a particular society at particular points in time. As contemporary ethnic identities are often taken for granted based upon 'racial' criteria, ethnic groups may be constructed, legitimized, and naturalized using skin colour, or outsider origins to support 'white' or 'western' hegemony (Gullestad, 2006; Jenkins, 2007).[5] However, instead of viewing race or even nationality as ubiquitous ethnic boundaries, we agree with Jenkins (2007) who conceptualizes racism and nationalism as ideologies which are "historically specific manifestations of ethnicity" (ibid, p. 86). Thus, the understanding of ethnicity applied in our study is based on origins/descent, but not purely synonymous with or only confined to groups on the basis of visibility or membership to a nation state. Certain ethnic ideologies may exist, or be constructed which are neither racist nor nationalist.

The primordial dimension of ethnicity, on the other hand, illustrates the emotional aspect of ethnic identities, as they provide individuals and groups with meaning through solidarity, a sense of belonging and kinship (Verkuyten 2005, see also Tajfel, 1981). Such emotional needs motivate behaviour as individuals seek to understand, control, and potentially change their environment (e.g. Bandura, 2000; Fiske, 2004). Thus, within the primordial dimension emphasising psychological 'needs' the potential for agency and resistance in articulating social identities may also be located (Alexander, 1996; Coté & Levine, 2002; Duveen, 2001). The process of ethnic identification is thus intertwined with ideological group boundaries 'imagining' descent which help frame how individuals as agents with emotional needs make sense of who they are and where they belong.

Levels of analysis models (e.g. Cornish, 2004; Deaux, 2006; Doise, 1986) provide a plausible framework in which to articulate ethnic identification within macro-level ideological processes and meso-level interaction (Coté & Levine, 2002; Verkuyten, 2005). Ethnic identities may thus be situated in a social dialectical process (Berger & Luckmann, 1966) involving ideology and agency at the two levels. To be more concrete, ideological boundaries of a common history are produced and (re)constructed 'imagining' social groups and may be articulated at the macro-level because they are beyond direct control of a single individual and to a large extent reflect status and power interests of 'dominant' ethnic groups. These understandings of groups are reified and 'internalized' via the communication of shared social representations at the meso-level where membership in (imagined) ethnic groups can provide

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[5] This is parallel to the way in which Duveen and Lloyd have argued that imperative gender identities are ideologically constructed, legitimized, and naturalized using biological differences, heterosexuality and the gender binary which often support male hegemony and hierarchical gender relationships (Duveen & Lloyd, 1986; Lloyd & Duveen, 1992).

individuals with ethnic identities through a sense of continuity and connectedness (Liu & Hilton, 2005), but also exclude those constructed as not belonging (Gullestad, 2006; Tajfel, 1981). However, identities are more than a simple mirroring of the dominant representations of our society. Individual actors can thus reproduce or resist social representations which frame ideological boundaries of ethnic groups when negotiating identities at the meso-level. Agency through resistance can thus potentially change these very same ideological boundaries (Brah, 1996; Hall, 1991, 1992; Howarth, 2006), and even the content of identities (Deaux, 2001; Duveen, 2001; Moloney & Walker, 2007).

MACRO- AND MESO-LEVEL INVESTIGATIONS OF IMMIGRANT YOUTHS IN OSLO

The potential inter-relationship between ethnic identities and social representations runs parallel to accounts of the ideology-agency dialectic, and needs further empirical investigation. Immigrant youth are chosen as an interesting group to examine ethnic identity for a number of reasons. There has been a marked increase in the number of immigrants[6] in Norway over the past 30 years (Daugstad 2009). Children of immigrants, who have had all or most of their upbringing in Norway, have thus become an increasingly significant demographic group (Andersson, 2003) especially in Oslo which has the largest population of immigrants in the country (Øia, 2007). Most importantly, questions of ethnic identity are central for immigrant youth because issues of belongingness and origins are not straightforward. The changing social representations used to classify immigrant minorities in Norway have created both permeable and impermeable boundaries of group belongingness and contradictory ideologies of assimilation, multiculturalism, and exclusion may co-exist, further complicating identity negotiation (Phelps et al., submitted).

At the macro-level immigrant youth may be ideologically 'categorized' or construed as belonging and originating both 'inside' and 'outside' of Norwegian society (see also Jacobson, 1997; Vassenden, in press). They may therefore negotiate multiple ethnic identities and possess a certain degree of agency to trace origins or descent based upon membership in a number of groups, which may carry contractual obligations in certain contexts (Vadher & Barrett, 2009). At the same time, they are faced with imperative pressure limiting potential

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[6]Even though the word immigrant implies that one is 'outside' and not necessarily an integral part of society it will be used throughout this paper because it is a common word used in Norwegian. It also resonates with salient boundaries in public discourse and how participants in the focus group discussions described themselves.

identifications based upon race and outsider origins (Andersson, 2003; Gullestad, 2006; Nadim & Howarth, submitted). This uncertainty thus frames our investigations of the types of obligations social representations may place on immigrant youth's ethnic identities.

Social representations theory is one of few social psychological traditions which has been characterized by the use of multiple methods from its conception (Moscovici 1961/2008)[7]. For example, Duveen (1998) and Marková (2007) have argued that studies of social representations and social identities in particular need to combine analysis of both communication processes in media and social interaction. Our paper thus attempts to develop a more nuanced understanding of the mutual relationship between how immigrant youth are represented (identified) in public discourse at the macro-level and how they understand themselves (make identifications) at the meso-level. Employing a mixed method design (Hanson et al., 2005; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009) our studies of ethnic identification aim to compare data on the historical ideological boundary developments of majority-minority representations in public discourse with that of identity negotiation in group discussions.

Data collection for each study occurred in two concurrent processes which were independent in design. Each study has been reported separately in relation to patterns of intergroup boundary developments in Norway (Phelps et al., submitted) and possibilities for agency and resistance in immigrant youth identity negotiation (Nadim, 2005; Nadim & Howarth, submitted). The complimentary nature of the two for examining the social representation-identity relationship supported integration, as each study captured a different level of the ethnic identity dialectic.

We have used a parallel mixed data analysis strategy (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009) of data consolidation/merging (Caracelli & Greene, 1993) which occurred in two phases. First, findings from both studies were discussed and interpreted in collaboration. The two studies are reported separately as an attempt to articulate each respective level similar to parallel track analysis (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). Study 1 examines macro-level ideological developments of group boundaries relevant to immigrant youth through a longitudinal analysis of language change in Norwegian public discourse. Study 2 investigates meso-level group discussions with immigrant youth concerning their own ethnic identities and place in the Norwegian society. The second phase of comparison focuses upon linking the two levels through convergence of descriptive findings and re-analysis (Andrews, 2008) by examining

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[7]Further exemplified in Duveen's own work ranging from ethnography to experiments and also evident in present day post-graduate training in methods on the Social Representations Euro PhD program (http://www.europhd.eu/html/_onda02/07/00.00.00.00.shtml)

imperative and contractual obligations between social representations and ethnic identities which emerged in both studies.

Study 1: Ideological developments of group boundaries: Longitudinal changes in language use

Mass-media has become an increasingly important arena of ideological influence in modern society (e.g. Thompson, 1990) and has also been a traditional source of investigation for social representation theorists (e.g Moscovici 1961/2008; Marková , 2007). Study 1 analyzes Norwegian public discourse in order to capture historical developments at the macro-level, and hence ideological developments of social representations relevant for ethnic identity. It makes use of archival methodology through the analysis of mass-media language in which the interrelationship between ideology and language is taken for granted. Hence, language change in public discourse provides a powerful indication of ideological developments in society (Nafstad et al., 2007; 2009; Rand-Hendriksen, 2008; Phelps et al., submitted). Study 1 has a longitudinal design as it maps newspaper language from 1984 until 2005 to correspond with the year in which Nadim (2005) held focus group discussions. Thus, we aim to highlight the construction and transformation of salient group boundaries throughout a 22 year time period to cover the period slightly before the immigrant youth in the focus group study were born and up to the point of group discussions in Study 2.

Shifts in language usage are examined by mapping new words and expressions and changes or stability in frequency of occurrences of key words in newspaper articles. Words included in this analysis were chosen to reflect minority and majority representations which both described and contextualized potential ethnic identity boundaries relevant for immigrant youth based upon origins and group belongingness (Jenkins, 2007). Words were selected from two sources: (1) Boundary developments found in Phelps et al. (submitted) based on immigrant (and general) otherness, race (visibility), the nation state (Norwegianness), and the multicultural (potentially new possibilities organizing origins) (2) Identity words and other expressions developed in relation to Nadim's (2005) focus group interaction and other Norwegian studies on immigrant youth and ethnic identity (e.g. Andersson, 2002a, b; 2003; Gullestad, 2002; 2006).

To examine developments of the identified search words, we employed the web-based database Retriever which has archived a substantial catalogue of Norwegian media (www.retriever-info.com). The Oslo-based newspaper Aftenposten was chosen as the context

of investigation because it is archived in Retriever until 1984, the second most read newspaper in Norway (apart from the tabloid VG), and covers a variety of national and local societal issues relevant to multicultural issues. Moreover, all of the immigrant youth in Study 2 lived in Oslo at the time of investigation. Hence we argue that Aftenposten provides an adequate historical barometer of the public discourse throughout their development.

Utilizing Retriever's search engine, one can determine the number of articles satisfying specific search criteria (e.g. a word '*immigrant*' or phrase '*immigrant youth*') within a pre-defined search period within the database. Retriever generates a list of articles within the search context, which creates a basis for determining the development of changes in usage of words or phrases across different periods of time. We map this development using a meta-search system that reports and tracks the frequency of occurrences through the total number of articles including a search term for each calendar year. Furthermore, the system also applies crucial adjustment procedures to ensure validity of results, and thus controls for variations in article length, number of articles in a given year, and idiosyncratic usages of words or phrases. When discussing developmental trends and numbers, we do so based on these adjustments (see Rand Hendriksen, 2008 for a more detailed explanation).

Developmental change is further reported through four key statistical calculations. Trends are described by (1) Percentage change in the usage of search words from 1984 to 2005, indicating the magnitude of changes over time; (2) correlations with linear time, i.e. how strongly the developmental pattern for a particular search word (the time series data) correlates with the annual time series itself (1984, 1985, 1986, … 2005); (3) estimated mean annual change (EMAC) which allows for the comparison of the relative change size for different words over the 22 year time span[8]; and (4) peak usage and peak year in which a word appears in public discourse which help provide reference points to compare a term's usage across a time period and illuminate discernible ideological developments, indicating ideological turning points, saturation of an ideology, or the need for other or further linguistic labels to capture or enhance ideological development.

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[8]Based on the linear regression line calculated from each particular developmental trend, EMAC is an expression of the relative change size approximating the mean annual percentage change of the frequency of articles for the developmental trend of a word or expression (Nafstad et al., 2007, 2009; Rand-Hendriksen, 2008).

Results and Discussion

The term 'immigrant' (*innvandrer*) is commonly used when referring to people of a cultural or national origin other than 'Norwegian', and may also refer to immigrant youth even if they are born in Norway. Peaking in 1995 with 1436 articles, when Study 2's participants were reaching school age, the root "*innvandr*" (capturing derivatives of immigrant, immigration, and immigrate) increased by 150 percent, appearing in 488 articles in 1984 compared to 1218 in 2005. Gullestad (2002; 2006) suggests that "*innvandrer*" (immigrant) has shifted meaning from being relatively neutral in the beginning of our time period to gaining increasingly negative and racial connotations in the 1990's and mid-2000's. In that time, the media has been accused of predominantly framing immigrants in a negative manner, especially regarding lack of integration, violence and criminality, and traditions which are oppressive to women (Andersson, 2002b, 2003; Gullestad, 2006). With this contextual information in mind, the developments of three other expressions further suggest that the immigrant boundary, as most likely connoting 'stigmatized' visible otherness, became more particularly salient and reified at key developmental transitions for Study 2 participants (i.e. first years of school). The combinations "*innvandrerungdom*" (immigrant youth) and "*innvandrerforeldre*" (immigrant parents) both increased and peaked in 1998, while "*innvandrermiljø*" (immigrant environment) also increased in usage, peaking in 2002.[9] Statistical information concerning developmental patterns for each word or expression included in the present analysis can be found below in Table 1.

Further illustrating the salience of otherness boundaries without the 'immigrant' signifier, "*utlending*" (foreigner), increased markedly between 1984 and 1993 (peaking with 1217 articles), but declined steadily thereafter before stabilizing in the late 1990s, while the term "*neger*" (negro), also peaked in 1993 (60 articles) and has steadily declined by thirty-seven percent. While these expressions stabilized or declined others focusing explicitly on origins and otherness, such as "*utenlandsk opprinnelse*" (foreign origin) and the root "*etnis*" (ethnic or ethnicity) both peaked in the late nineties and increased respectively by 1213 and 416 percent throughout the time period. Moreover, in the early, 2000s, we find evidence of changes to boundary words, as the expressions "*etnisk minoritet*" (ethnic minority), "*hudfarge*" (skin colour), and derivatives of "*mørkhud*" (dark skin) increased significantly

and peaked in 2001.[10] The latter two indicate a shift in the development of the racial boundary from the general racial term "negro" to a specific focus on "skin colour" and that the boundary was at its most explicit closest to when Study 2 participants were reaching adolescence (Table 1). Highlighting Duveen's (2001) 'world of representations,' our findings suggest that certain symbolic representations for classifying immigrant minorities became increasingly based upon origins in outsider otherness and visibility throughout the formative years of identity development for immigrant youth participants in Study 2.

In 2005, when focus group discussions took place, different immigrant words reached peak usage. A multitude of expressions which further specified immigrant 'outsider' boundaries were still apparent as the expressions "*ikke-vestlig innvandrere*" (non-Western immigrant), "*andre generasjons innvandrer*" (second generation immigrant) and "*innvandrerbakgrunn*" (immigrant background) increased substantially (Table 1). Thus, there were continued tendencies marking immigrant origins, despite the fact that the latter two expressions denote people like immigrant youth who were born, or who had spent the majority of their lives in Norway.

Nonetheless, different expressions of societal belongingness also peaked as "*flerkulturell*" (multicultural), "*flerkulturellbakgrunn*" (multicultural background), and "*minoritet*" (minority) all increased dramatically between 1984 and 2005. Thus, a potential acceptance or 'opening up' of 'multicultural' boundaries was also observed. These symbolic representations may indicate alternative constructions of ethnic groups based upon origins and belongingness 'inside' Norwegian society, albeit as a minority.

Systematic patterns around constructions of 'Norwegianness' were also found. Derivatives of the root '*norsk*' (Norwegian) decreased significantly over time by 14 percent, while the expressions "*nordmann* OR *nordmenn*" (Norwegian as a group of people) did not undergo a significant developmental trend, but peaked in 2005. Despite the lack of clarity of "*norsk*" or "*nordmann*" (Norwegian) we find linguistic evidence of the increasing salience and dominance of expressions combining other national origins and Norwegianness. Similar to the multicultural boundaries, allowing potential space for other forms of Norwegianness, hybrid constructions like "*norsk-pakistansk*" (Norwegian-pakistani) and "*norsk-somalisk*" (Norwegian-somali) steadily increased.

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[10] We were unable to produce reliable searches on two other racial boundary words, "*rase*" (race) and "*farget*" (coloured) because each word has more than one usage thus highlighting a potential limitation in the present method.

Moreover, indicating the overall salience of the "Who am I?" question, *"identitet"* (identity) peaked and increased by 93 percent in 2005 when it appeared in 804 articles. However, the construction *"norsk identitet"* (Norwegian identity) was seldom used and did not undergo a significant development over time. This suggests that a 'Norwegian identity' was taken for granted and left unspoken in public discourse (see Billig, 1995). In contrast, what seemed necessary to be said or marked was the term *"etnisk norsk"* (ethnic Norwegian) which of all search words included in the present analysis, increased most dramatically and frequently throughout the time period investigated, apart from the much less used "Norwegian Somali" (see EMAC score in Table 1). Its increasing salience highlights the ideological significance of the origins boundary. Furthermore, it indicates the necessity for a linguistic expression to denote the majority and that boundaries of Norwegianness were not just re-drawn to accommodate minorities. This may suggest a presence of a 'Norwegianness' hierarchy in which new expressions of Norwegianness still, at least to a certain degree, indicate 'outsiderness' and could lead to exclusion on the basis of origins and visibility (Gullestad, 2006; Lane, 2009; Phelps et al., submitted). Thus, ethnic Norwegian, as a dominant identity marker represents an aspect of the Norwegianness boundary which was both extremely salient for, but most likely excluded immigrant youth.

The developments of these expressions provide a macro-level, longitudinal barometer in which to articulate the world of representations in which immigrant youth negotiated ethnic identities. Findings suggest ideological ambivalence concerning group boundaries in the public discourse by 2005, illustrating a certain degree of uncertainty about how categorizations of 'immigrant' others should be made in Norwegian society. Increasing and potentially imperative pressure was observed through 'otherness' boundaries of immigrant and outsider origins and race. The emergence of "ethnic Norwegian" further signifies that the origins/descent boundary was of great importance to mark majority members as well. Yet, there was also additional evidence of equally increasing multicultural and Norwegianness boundaries. Taken together, although this type of language change analysis provides a powerful indication of potential, changing 'identifying' pressures and boundaries at the macro-level, we are left with a limited understanding of the concrete communicative and meaning-making processes individuals use to negotiate ethnic identities in their everyday lives. Thus, to deepen an understanding of the ethnic identity dialectic for immigrant youth, we now investigate the role of agency in articulating ethnic identities at the meso-level.

Search word	Adjusted no. occurrences in 2005	% increase/ decrease since 1984[11]	Correlation with linear time (year)[12]	Est mean annual change (%)	Peak year	Peak no. adjusted occurrences
innvandr*[13] (immigrant/immigration)	1218	150	0.83***	2.72	1995	1436
innvandrerungdom* (immigrant youth)	29	228	0.77***	6.83	1998	70
innvandrerforeldre* (immigrant parent)	14	1168	0.83***	9.53	1998	38
innvandrermiljø* (immigrant environment)	65	1417	0.95***	9.24	2002	85
utlending* (foreigner)	773	3.5	-0.43ns	-0.86	1993	1217
neger* (negro)	29	-37	-0.61**	-1.05	1993	60
utenlandsk opprinnelse (foreign origin)	58	1213	0.92***	11.36	1998	84
etnis* (ethnic/ethnicity)	537	416	0.78***	5.50	1999	758
etnisk minoritet (ethnic minority)	46	317	0.92***	6.55	2001	59
hudfarge*(skin colour)	88	41	0.52*	1.68	2001	166
mørk hud(dark skin)	50	131	0.44*	1.73	2001	83
ikke-vestlig innvandr* (non-Western immigrant)	47	new	0.88***	19.89	2005	
innvandrerbakgrunn (immigrant background)	155	new	0.97***	15.80	2005	
andregenerasjons innvandr* (second generation immigrant)	24	new	0.93***	11.81	2005	
flerkulturellbakgrunn (multicultural background)	17	new	0.96***	15.32	2005	
flerkultur* OR multikultur* (multicultural)	248	2674	0.95***	10.10	2005	
minoritet* (minority)	525	111	0.89***	3.25	2005	
norsk*(Norwegian)	20896	-14	-0.92***	-1.04	1984	24233
nordmann* OR nordmenn* (Norwegian)	4348	32	0.20ns	0.19	2005	
norsk-pakistansk* Norwegian-pakistani)	119	5244	0.81***	16.00	2005	
norsk-somal* (Norwegian-somali)	26	new	0.79***	22.05	2005	
identitet*	804	93	0.96***	2.06	2005	
norsk identitet (norwegian identity)	15	579	0.41ns	1.52	1994	17
etnisk norsk (ethnic Norwegian)	143	new	0.79***	21.63	2005	

Table 1: Search words used in the longitudinal (1984-2005) analysis with number of articles observed in Aftenposten in 2005; percentage increase/decrease since 1984; correlations (Pearson's r) with linear time (year); and estimated mean annual change (EMAC) for each search word.

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11 Percentage calculation is based on adjusted number of articles (see pg).

12   ns = non significant; * = significant at .05 level; ** = significant at .01 level; *** = significant at .001 level

13 * means that the word string searched is truncated.

Study 2: Focus Groups with young people with immigrant backgrounds

Nadim (2005) explored how certain identities and category memberships were negotiated, elaborated and resisted in the everyday life of immigrant youth. Twenty-three young people between the ages of 14 and 23 (average age of 17) and with parents from diverse national backgrounds (Ghana, Turkey, Iran, Vietnam, Macedonia (FYROM), Morocco, India, Thailand, Iraq (Kurdistan), Pakistan, Eritrea, Kenya and Gambia) were interviewed. All participants were 'visible' immigrants, making issues of imposed identities and stigma particularly relevant. All were Norwegian citizens. A majority moved to Norway before school age and half were born in the country. They belonged to different youth centres and organisations in Oslo which to different degrees focused upon empowerment and creating positive identities. Participants were deliberately recruited from settings where it was expected to find evidence of reflexivity and critical thinking. Participants knew each other beforehand and the use of natural groups was intended to ensure a familiar setting for discussing issues of belonging, and thus providing insight into how identities were negotiated, elaborated and resisted in everyday life. Furthermore, the moderator's[14] background as a young, non-white Norwegian-Iranian researcher hopefully encouraged openness and trust in potentially difficult discussions.

In total, four focus groups were conducted with between 5 and 7 participants in each group. One focus group was all male, one all female, and the two remaining consisted of all male participants and one female. Thus, there was a predominance of male subjects in the study. Discussions focused on three main issues: identity and belonging, perception of representations and possibilities for resistance. A 'bottom-up' or data-driven thematic analysis was used in order to explore the concepts, patterns and structures which emerged from the data. Each group was first analysed separately, but the material was subsequently treated as a whole because no thematic differences were found between groups (see Nadim, 2005; Nadim & Howarth, submitted).

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[14]Second author

Belonging and ethnic identity

Issues of belonging, origins, and ethnic identities emerged as important and reoccurring themes in all focus group discussions. Feelings of belonging were often characterised by ambivalence and contradiction, as many participants seemed to struggle to position themselves in relation to a concept of 'Norwegianness':

> *A: We are not Norwegian, but we really do feel Norwegian, we have lived in Norway for a long time. So, we are a part of the Norwegian society. When Norway plays football and Italy plays football, we don't support Italy, we support Norway.*
> *B: You do*
> *(Laughter)*
> *A: Most do. But when you aren't in Norway, on holiday, you, like, miss Norway. Because you feel that Norway is your home, like, your second home, after where you originally come from, right. Like many of us haven't seen their home country. So we feel that Norway is not…like, it's our home. (All-male focus group)*

In this discussion one of the male participants gave examples of when he feels Norwegian. He mentioned sports and holidays as specific contexts where a Norwegian identity becomes particularly salient for him (see Vadher and Barrett 2009). At the same time, when describing a feeling of belonging and identification with Norway, he stressed his origin from "outside" "where you originally come from". In fact, one of the most striking issues throughout the focus group discussions was the ambiguity regarding belonging and *where* participants placed themselves in the social landscape.

Moreover, when discussing belonging and ethnic identity, positions would often shift during the course of the discussion, and participants would seldom unambiguously claim an ethnic identity. Issues of origins and belonging were continuously negotiated:

> *If somebody asks me 'well, where are you from?' and I say 'Norwegian', I don't mean that I'm originally Norwegian, but that I'm from Norway, I live in Norway, that's what I mean, it's not that we're saying that we're Norwegian, originally Norwegian. But we live in Norway, right, and then we're amongst Norwegians. Anyhow we have Norwegian passports and that makes us Norwegian (All-male focus group).*

Again it becomes clear that there was a difference between feeling a sense of belonging and identification with Norway and actually declaring that one was Norwegian (see Brah 1996). Although many of the participants felt Norwegian to some extent, they were cautious about proclaiming a Norwegian ethnic identity. Participants expressed various degrees of, and often context-dependent, identification with a country of origin and Norway. Most articulated a sense of belonging in Norway, yet none referred to themselves as only Norwegian or "truly" or "ethnic Norwegian". In other words, none of the participants lay claim to an unproblematic Norwegian identity.

Throughout the focus group discussions it became clear that the nature of ethnic identities was not fixed, and ethnic identities were not articulated in terms of mutually exclusive categories. Rather ethnic identities seemed to be experienced as ambiguous in different ways. First, they were contextual and dependent upon the salience of the participants' immigrant background in a particular situation. Second, it was possible to be Norwegian to a certain extent; most participants expressed that they felt Norwegian without making claims to an unproblematic Norwegian identity. In other words, it was possible to be Norwegian in certain respects, and at the same time be outside Norwegianness in others. However, the criteria determining membership or identification with the category Norwegian were seldom clear. To understand participants' negotiation of ethnic identities, it was thus necessary to examine how the category 'Norwegian' was generally understood and constructed.

Boundaries of Norwegianness

The symbolic boundaries of Norwegianness were pertinent for participants when articulating ethnic identities. The ambiguity illustrated above in their ethnic identifications, was linked to an uncertainty about what criteria determined category membership. It became clear in the discussions that the participants found it hard to explicitly mark the boundaries delimiting who could be seen as Norwegian.

Following Jacobson (1997) the boundaries or criteria that participants focused upon can be described as *civic, cultural* or *racial* (see also Vadher and Barrett 2009, Vassenden in press). All participants in the study were Norwegian citizens, and many emphasised their formal membership in the nation-state when discussing belongingness and ethnic identities. For instance the participant in the quote above struggled to articulate an ethnic identity before

reaching a (preliminary) conclusion by relying on a civic definition: "(…) *we have Norwegian passports and that makes us Norwegian*".

In addition to the civic argument, participants highlighted *cultural* criteria for membership in the category Norwegian. The following excerpt shows how two male participants drew upon cultural arguments to determine how they placed themselves in relation to Norwegianness:

A: Norway is like a part of us. We too are Norwegians, even though we are

not originally Norwegian, but we have lived here so long and therefore feel really (Norwegian) to put it like that. We feel like we're Norwegian, but we are automatically like Norwegians. We have lived here so long, understand? We work in the country. Family has lived here so long…

B: And you speak the language. It's clear, you understand how the Norwegian society is, you get Norwegian morals and ….

Interviewer: Yes…

B: Just like how Norwegians see their own country to put it that way…

(All-male focus group)

In this quote participants discussed what makes one Norwegian using criteria such as having lived in Norway for a long time, language skills, knowledge of the society, and more generally acculturation and sharing Norwegian values. This parallels what Jacobson calls a *cultural boundary* as Norwegianness is discussed as "a matter of the culture, values or lifestyle to which one adheres" (Jacobson 1997, pp 181). Yet, participants experienced that cultural criteria like behaviour, life-style and values did not necessarily make one a Norwegian:

And then they say: 'Integrate, get a job, learn the language and this and that and that'. OK, we learn the language, go to school, integrate to that extent, speak Norwegian and all of that. To an extent it's enough, but for the final cut it's not enough. (All-female focus group)

It was, in part, their visual markers of difference that excluded them from an unambiguous Norwegian identity:

> *So when I every day hear that 'No, you're …you're black, you're a foreigner' then you don't feel Norwegian in Norway, when I hear something else. Hey, I have the Norwegian passport and I'm 'Norwegian' like, but… (All-female focus group)*

Thus neither the civic criteria (citizenship) nor the cultural criteria were experienced as sufficient to unambiguously define a 'Norwegian' ethnic identity. There was strong agreement that having a Norwegian passport, speaking the language and having lived in Norway for a long time made one Norwegian, but only to a certain extent. It was not enough to identify as a 'true' Norwegian. Issues of ancestry, "blood" and the representation of Norwegian as *white* sometimes prevented the participants from seeing themselves as truly Norwegian; in other words there was an additional 'racial' criteria for Norwegianness and subsequently for their own ethnic identities (Jacobson 1997). Yet this 'racial' boundary, was not completely unchallenged. The issue was discussed extensively in the all-male focus group, and there were several challenges to a racialised definition of Norwegianness:

> *A: Who said that Norwegians have to be white?*
> *B: Have you ever seen a really black Norwegian?*
> *[…]*
> *C: If you start thinking like this, that Norway is for white people, that only white people are Norwegian, then you're approaching Nazi tendencies*
> *(All-male focus group)*

Although participants highlighted that Norwegians were often assumed to be white, they also experienced attempts of difference being downplayed by majority members and being included in the "Norwegian" category, especially in the context of school. Some responded to these attempts of inclusion by asserting an immigrant identity and dismissing a Norwegian identity:

> *But I get to hear: 'you're Norwegian', and then I say: 'No, I'm not Norwegian', and then it's like: 'Yes, you're Norwegian because you speak Norwegian fluently and this and that'. And then I'm thinking: 'No I'm Eritrean, but I have a Norwegian citizenship. That's it!' (All-female, focus group).*

The statement above made reference to the civic criteria, but this female participant explicitly stated that citizenship was not sufficient to define herself as Norwegian. Several participants strongly identified with their parents' place of birth, and origins or roots outside of Norway were often taken for granted:

> *Interviewer: OK, you're saying that, at least some of you are saying that you would have said Norwegian, but originally from Morocco or wherever. Is it a feeling of being a bit of both, or how is it?*
> *A: No, Moroccan. Done. Don't make me into anything else!*
> *(Male, mixed focus group)*

Again, this quote illustrates an example of opposing a 'Norwegian' identity. While this strategy did little to challenge the boundaries of 'Norwegianness', it can also be interpreted as an opposition against calls for assimilation (see Nadim and Howarth, submitted).

In sum, throughout the discussions, feelings of belongingness appeared to be ambiguous, contextual, and at times contradictory for the immigrant youth in the study. Ethnic identities were always articulated in relation to different aspects of Norwegianness, as participants drew on three types of criteria, namely civic, cultural and racial, in their effort to position themselves in relation to a Norwegian or an 'immigrant' identity (see Jacobson, 1997). Discussions moved beyond the civic criteria, as citizenship in itself was not experienced as sufficient to determine identifications. Rather than formal membership in the nation, negotiation of 'origins' and feelings of belonging were central for participants' articulations of ethnic identity. Additionally, racial boundaries of exclusion based on visibility and perceived 'ousider origins' posed limitations for identifications. Thus, at the meso-level, ethnic identities were mostly, but not exclusively, articulated within existing meaning structures without challenging the ideological constructions of 'Norwegianness'.

DISCUSSION: FROM IMPERATIVE/CONTRACTUAL OBLIGATIONS TO AGENCY WITHIN IDEOLOGICAL CONSTRAINTS AS RESISTANCE

Our discussion focuses on how convergence from both studies may provide a 'new' understanding of immigrant youth ethnic identity negotiation between the macro- and meso-levels, which consequently challenges the imperative/contractual distinction in Duveen's (2001) social identities-social representations framework. Combined, findings indicate that the type of pressure that immigrant youth face when constructing ethnic identities was seldom straightforward at either level. In public discourse, we found strong evidence of changing boundaries between the 'Norwegian' majority and immigrant minorities throughout a 22 year period. Moreover, the ideological salience of different immigrant and outsider origins, visibility, Norwegianness, and multicultural social representations may all be construed as framing ethnic identity. In the focus group discussions, immigrant youth negotiated identity mainly in relation to the 'Norwegianness' boundary and drew upon three criteria (civic, cultural, and racial) for establishing their positions within the social landscape. However, participants themselves seldom made explicit what criteria precisely determined group belongingness and their ethnic identities, in the same manner as it was impossible to construct precisely one dominant social representation in public discourse framing descent. Thus, the unifying thread central to both empirical investigations is the parallel pattern of ambiguity found on both levels.

When seeking to understand this ambiguity by applying Duveen and Lloyd's distinction between social representations that impose *either* imperative or contractual obligations on social identities, the dichotomy's limitations become apparent. Certain aspects of ethnic identity negotiation observed in both studies can without question be meaningfully understood as imposed by imperative obligations, especially along a 'racial' boundary. For example, the increasing salience of boundary expressions observed in the public discourse such as "non-Western immigrant", "ethnic Norwegian", or "skin colour" (pp. 13.10-13.11) indicate the enhancement or reification of differences between majority and minority groups based upon outsider origins and visibility (Gullestad, 2002; 2006). Moreover, participants in the focus groups mentioned skin colour as a barrier for 'unproblematic' Norwegianness (p. 13.17-13.18). Thus, the observed 'racial' boundary to a certain extent placed an imperative obligation on immigrant youth participants as they continuously experienced being ascribed ethnic identities outside (ethnic) Norwegianness. In this sense, ethnic identity may be construed as framed by an imperative obligation based upon a social representation of race or

the binary white/non-white in striking parallel to Duveen and Lloyd's analysis of gender identities.

However, even this seemingly imperative social representation of race was not the only aspect of origins and belongingness found to be relevant to negotiate ethnic identity in either investigation. For example, a racially based definition of Norwegianness was not readily accepted by all participants (p. 13.18). In addition, the two racial constructions (*skin colour* and *dark skin*) were the expressions which were among the least explicitly used in public discourse and most salient in 2001, as opposed to 2005 (Table 1). Thus, an overemphasis on race in our two studies runs the danger of further reifying racial boundaries (see Howarth, 2009), at the expense of other equally plausible and interrelated criteria for ethnic identity. Moreover only focusing upon race would obscure other or new potentially more inclusive ethnic group constructions such as the multicultural boundaries found in public discourse or inclusion potentialities of 'Norwegianness' boundaries (p. 13.11).

What's more, for immigrant youth, ethnic identities may also have contractual obligations in certain contexts because of agency, and their ambiguous position in Norwegian society. For instance, some participants made careful claims to be "Norwegian" in certain situations (supporting sports teams and when on holiday, p. 13.15) and in relation to civic and cultural criteria. Others maintained a strong identification with another country of origin and rejected a Norwegian identity (p. 13.19). Thus, membership in ethnic groups might not always be imperative or salient in a given context and can carry voluntary elements, or a certain degree of choice. Therefore, we suggest that the imperative/contractual dichotomy is problematic because our findings indicate that social representations can potentially impose *both* imperative and contractual obligations for immigrant youths' ethnic identities.

We propose that a more meaningful understanding of the macro- and meso-level ambiguity found in both studies involves distinguishing between degrees of agency within ideological constraints and agency as resistance.[15]   Mirroring macro-level salience of the outsider origin and visibility boundaries which exclude immigrant youth from being 'ethnic Norwegian', we find examples of participants placing *themselves* outside of the category Norwegian (p.13.19) in focus group discussions. This active opposition of a Norwegian identity may be interpreted as an acceptance of ideological exclusion on the basis of outsider otherness or as an opposition against negative representations of immigrants through an identification with an 'otherised' category (Nadim & Howarth, submitted). The focus group

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[15]We would like to thank Erik Carlquist for this reformulation

discussions support the latter understanding because participants made reflective and active identifications, thus insisting on having agency to negotiate ethnic identities. Nonetheless, in both interpretations, a social representation of 'otherness' origins which enhanced differences between groups was left unchallenged and used to unequivocally internalize an 'outsider' ethnic identity. Thus, agency, even to oppose a 'Norwegian' identity occurred within ideological constraints.

Other macro-level ideological constraints based upon nationalism and cultural assimilation were also found in both studies. For example, in public discourse the emergence of 'hybrid' constructions representing potentially new forms of Norwegianness (e.g. *Norwegian-pakistani*) takes for granted the boundary of two nation-states as the main location of group belongingness and descent (Billig, 1995). Furthermore, immigrant youth in some contexts experienced external pressure to identify as Norwegian, for instance when being ascribed Norwegian identities in school (p. 13.18). Thus, in certain contexts immigrant youth were also ideologically constrained through a particular assimilation experience of being 'allowed' or encouraged to make some (but not all) "ethnic Norwegian" identifications (see also Vassenden, in press).

Another aspect or degree of ethnic identity negotiation may be meaningfully understood as agency through resistance. Although observed less frequently this form of agency reflects challenges to dominant representations, which may be observed in both studies. For example, some participants such as those in the all-male focus group explicitly challenged a racial understanding of Norwegians as white (p. 13.18), thus re-presenting and challenging a dominant social representation. Moreover, the changing nature of boundaries at the macro-level might also indicate resistance through the multicultural and hybrid boundaries. These developments thus provide indications of the emergence of social representations which acknowledge more inclusive and varied forms of group belongingness inside of Norway, thus enabling challenges toward outsider origins and visibility boundaries made by some focus group participants.

CONCLUSION

As social psychologists concerned with how globalization and migration have created new identity challenges in Western Europe/Norway, we conclude by re-stating the obvious-- that Gerard Duveen's intellectual contributions are of great value to understand and study the cultural and historical complexity involving ethnic identities in multicultural contexts. In this paper, we have used his account of relationships between social identities and social representations to help examine the social dialectic of ethnic identity at different levels. However, our studies indicate that ethnic identities of immigrant youth may be framed by both imperative and contractual obligations. Thus, the limitations of the dichotomy might have consequences for Duveen's (2001) general theoretical claims on varieties of social identities and obligations imposed by social representations. Our reformulation of different degrees of agency visible through a combination of macro- and meso-levels of analysis is of course grounded in our investigations of immigrant youth in Oslo. We therefore invite future studies on social representations to reconsider both the imperative/contractual dichotomy and ideology-agency dialectic for the particular phenomenon of ethnic identities involving different groups in different contexts, and perhaps universally to other social identities, even gender.

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