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## Abstract

This thesis is an explorative study of some women's understandings and conceptions of nationality. The point of departure is the contention that the women's narratives of national belonging and the 'immigrant' are part of a 'discourse of nationality'.

For this study, twenty-two women were interviewed in 1999 and 2000. While all of the participants were born, raised and still lived in Sweden, their parents were either born in Sweden or had another country of origin. 'Discourse' as a theoretical and analytical tool proved to be crucial for the understanding of how individuals construct and make sense of their national identifications.

The analysis of the narratives shows that nationality is referred to as being a more or less essential and permanent feature of one's self. It is thought of as something one is socialised into, and respondents refer to kinship, family and society as playing important, although different, roles in this process. Furthermore, these factors are referred to when respondents explain why they identify primarily as Swedish or not.

The respondents' conceptions of nationality are also reflected in accounts of whether they identify with or distinguish from the 'immigrant'. In the narratives, 'immigrant' implicitly refers to people with specific characteristics. Furthermore, just as nationality, the construction of the 'immigrant' is partly racialised.

While the respondents refer to nationality as an abiding feature of self in the narratives, it is also found that the women's understanding and conceptions of nationality are neither fixed nor homogeneous. They challenge certain conceptions of nationality as well as its relevance to their everyday lives. In addition, the study shows that the respondents' different experiences of, for example, travels abroad and parents' expressions of nationality significantly affect the way they conceive of nationality and its relevance.

Empirically, the study contributes to the knowledge of how people understand, and conceive of, nationality. Theoretically, the concept of nationality is problematised and deconstructed.

Keywords: Nationality, National Belonging, Immigrant, Discourse, Narrative, Racialisation