IDENTITY AND PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT WITH A FOCUS ON EARLY ADULTHOOD

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Degree of Licentiate in Psychology
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August 30, 2019

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Printing: Repro Lorensberg
Gothenburg, Sweden, 2019
ISSN: 1101-718X Avhandling/Göteborgs universitet, psykologiska inst.

Abstract

The overall aim of this thesis was to investigate identity and personality development with a focus on early adulthood. The aim of **Study I** was to investigate identity development across early adulthood at three measurement points, ages 25, 29 and 33 (*N*=118). A sequential mixed-methods design was used, and the data analysis was thus performed in different steps. First, quantitative investigations of stability and change in identity status revealed some group-level changes over time, with fewer individuals in the moratorium status (i.e., current exploration of identity) and more individuals in the identity achievement status (i.e., identity exploration before establishing commitments). However, typical and atypical patterns of individual stability and change between adjacent waves showed that stability in identity status development with established commitments (i.e., identity achievement and foreclosure) across early adulthood were by far the most common patterns. In the second step, in order to understand the underlying processes of these stable patterns, the patterns were examined through qualitative analyses. In this part, the two dominant perspectives of identity development were combined: the identity status model and the narrative approach. Qualitative analysis of the narratives from the status interviews of each participant's development from age 29 to 33 revealed three processes of identity development: *Approach to Change*, *Narrative Coherence*, and *Participation in a Broader Life Context*. This study demonstrated that there are significant changes within stable identity status patterns, and that identity development in early adulthood requires individuals to reflect, adjust, and evolve their identity. The aim of **Study II** was to explore the developmental course and implications of ego resiliency and control from childhood (starting at age 2) to early adulthood (age 33). The sample consisted of 139 participants, who were assessed nine times between ages 2 and 33. The developmental course and implications of the personality meta-traits ego resiliency (i.e., the individuals' capacity to adjust to their environment) and ego control (i.e., level of impulse restraint) were examined. In general, the rank-order stability of proximal waves was consistently high for ego resiliency and ego control. Further, latent growth curve models were used to examine mean-level stability and change in ego resiliency and control. These analyses showed that ego resiliency displayed high stability over time. Ego control demonstrated stability over the full time span, but there was greater change in childhood relative to adolescence and adulthood. Analyses with intercepts and slopes of ego resiliency and ego control as predictors of adult well-being at age 33 showed associations with well-being, but these associations were generally accounted for by the Big Five traits. Finally, ego resiliency and control in childhood and adolescence were, albeit to a lesser extent, associated with adult identity development with regard to commitments and ego resiliency to previous exploration. This study shows that the meta-traits of ego resiliency and control are fairly stable personality constructs from childhood to adulthood and also highlights their association with adult adaptation, which also suggests that personality traits may give an early indication of identity processes. In conclusion, this thesis shows how identity and personality – two central aspects of development – evolve over time, as well as how these aspects of development are related. The two studies of this thesis focus especially on the period of early adulthood, and demonstrate processes of how people maintain their identity and how earlier development can influence adaptation in early adulthood.

Sammanfattning (Swedish Summary)

Identitet och personlighet handlar om vilka vi är som personer och påverkar därför även flera andra viktiga aspekter i livet, till exempel psykiskt välbefinnande. I takt med att nya utmaningar uppstår och livet förändras behöver vi upprätthålla en känsla av vilka vi är och därför är frågor som rör identiteten viktiga. Att utveckla en identitet och en sammanhängande känsla av att vara densamma över tid är en utvecklingsaspekt som blir central under adolescensen men fortsätter att vara viktig genom hela livet. Vad som är viktigt för identitetsutvecklingen kan dock handla om olika saker genom livet. I de tidiga vuxenåren kan frågor som rör identiteten handla om att faktiskt implementera och inrätta sig efter tidigare beslut och målsättningar som gjorts inför vuxenlivet. För identitetsutveckling i den här perioden av livet är det därför viktigt för människor att upprätthålla en känsla av vem de är och samtidigt justera tidigare beslut i enlighet med nya roller i vuxenlivet.

I konstrast till identiteten anses personlighet vara mer stabilt över tid och beskrivs ofta som generella tendenser gällande individers beteende, tankar och känslor. Men det finns lite forskning som undersökt hur personlighet förändras över tid från barndom till vuxen ålder och hur den utvecklingen kan påverka senare konsekvenser i livet och individens förmåga att anpassa sig genom livet. Den här licentiatuppsatsens övergripande syfte är att undersöka identitet och personlighetsutveckling över tid med fokus på de tidiga vuxenåren. De två studier som är del av den här licentiatuppsatsen bygger på intervjuer och enkätdata från deltagare i den longitudinella forskningsstudien GoLD (**Go**thenburg **L**ongitudinal study of **D**evelopment) som har följt samma individer från barndom (1-2 år) till tidig vuxenålder (33 år).

Studie I undersöker identitetsutveckling i de tidiga vuxenåren. Först undersöktes förändring i identitetsstatus över tid för deltagare som medverkat vid 25, 29 och 33 års ålder (N =118). Identitetstatusmodellen som utvecklades av Marcia (1966) undersöker personers grad av utforskande och ställningstagande gällande identitetsfrågor inom viktiga områden i livet så som yrke, kärleksrelationer och föräldraskap. En hög grad av utforskande med efterföljande ställningstagande representerar den identitetsstatus som anses vara mest adaptiv och förknippad med flera olika positiva faktorer (Kroger & Marcia, 2011), en uppnådd identitet. Moratorium kallas den status då personer aktivt utforskar alternativa vägar och val tillhörande identiteten. De personer som tagit ställning men inte utforskat innan sina ställningstaganden tillskrivs en förtidig identitetsstatus. Slutligen, personer som varken har utforskat, har ett aktivt pågående utforskande, och uppvisar låg grad av ställningstaganden anses ha en förvirrad identitetstatus. I studie I visade resultaten

tid att på gruppnivå så var det fler av deltagarna som tillskrevs ha en uppnådd identitet och färre som var i ett aktivt utforskande, moratorium, vid 33 års ålder jämfört med tidigare. Deltagarnas individuella mönster av identitetsstatusutveckling över tid undersöktes också. Dessa resultat visade att det vanligaste mönstret var att tillskrivas samma identitetstatus, uppnådd identitet (n = 25) eller för tidig identitet (n= 20), vid 25, 29 och 33 år. För att undersöka processer bakom dessa stabila utvecklingsmönster undersöktes därför dessa deltagares identitetsutveckling i de tidiga vuxenåren, från 29 till 33 år, med kvalitativa analyser. Deltagarnas narrativ från identitetstatusintervjun användes för dessa kvalitativa analyser och varje deltagares identitetsutveckling från 29 till 33 år behandlades som ett enskilt fall. Varje enskilt fall bestod av sammanfattningar av likheter och skillnader mellan narrativen från intervjuerna. Dessa fallsammanfattningar användes sedan som underlag för en tematisk analys av identitetsutveckling över tid och resulterade i en modell med tre processer. Modellen beskriver dessa tre processers utveckling för varje individ som en fördjupning eller försvagning av identitetsnarrativet. Processerna, del av identitetsutveckligen i de tidiga vuxenåren för personer med hög grad av ställningstaganden över tid handlade om: förhållningssätt till förändring, utvecklande av koherens i narrativet samt deltagande i en större kontext bortom personliga strävanden i livet. Analyser av hur varje deltagare sammantaget utvecklades inom varje process visade att individers identitetsutveckling tenderade att röra sig åt ett och samma håll, oftast mot en fördjupad eller försvagad identitet.

Sammanfattningsvis visar Studie I att det finns viktiga processer bakom en stabil identitetsstatusutveckling. Studien visar även att identitetsutveckling i de tidiga vuxenåren är en pågående process som innebär att personer behöver utveckla, förändra och justera sin identitet.

Studie II undersöker personlighetsutveckling över tid från barndom (2 år) till tidig vuxenålder (33 år) samt vilka implikationer den här utvecklingen har för andra utfall som är viktiga för psykologiskt välbefinnande i tidig vuxenålder. De delar av personligheten som undersöktes var ego resiliens och ego kontroll. Ego resiliens handlar om individers förmåga att på ett flexibelt och adaptivt sätt kunna hantera nya miljöer och situationer. Ego kontroll handlar i sin tur om förmåga att hantera impulser. Resultaten i Studie II visade att rangordningsstabiliteten mellan de närliggande åldrarna för studiens olika faser var hög för både ego resiliens och ego kontroll. Analyser av utvecklingskurver för dessa personlighetsegenskaper visade en linjär nedåtgående trend för ego resiliens men med små skillnader från barndom till vuxenålder. För ego kontroll visade resultaten att från barndom till och med adolescensen ökade impulskontroll markant för att sedan plana ut i utvecklingen vid 21 års ålder och fortsätta på liknande nivåer fram till och med de tidiga vuxenåren.

Resultat från analyser av personlighetsutveckling (för ego resiliens och kontroll) i relation till andra utfall vid 33 års ålder visade att dessa var signifikant associerat med välbefinnande. Men associationerna till psykiskt välbefinnande kunde generellt förklaras andra personlighetsegenskaper under ego resiliens och kontroll, från Big Five modellen. Vidare visade även korrelationsanalyser att ego resiliens och ego kontroll skattat av deltagarnas mammor då deltagarna var 8 respektive 15 år var associerade med identitetsutveckling (grad av ställningstagande och utforskande) vid 33 års ålder.

Sammantaget visade Studie II att de övergripande personlighetsegenskaperna ego resiliens och ego kontroll är delar av personligheten som är relativt stabila över tid och hur de kan påverka olika utfall i vuxenåldern. Dessa personlighetsegenskaper verkar också i sin tur vara relaterade till identitetsutveckling.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to thank my supervisor Professor Ann Frisén for the guidance and support along this work and for all inspiration. I have learned so much from you these past years, and continue to do so. I would also like to thank my associate supervisors Dr. Maria Wängqvist and Professor Kate McLean, for sharing your expertise, ideas and valuable input during the research process.

To Dr. Johanna Carlsson and Professor Moin Syed, thank you for the collaboration, support and for sharing your knowledge. Also, thank you Professor Philip Hwang, for helpful advice and information about where it all began (the GoLD-project) 35 years ago. I would also like to thank my examiner Jan Johansson Hanse and Anne Ingeborg Berg for helpful review of the thesis.

To my other colleagues in the GReY research group, Dr. Sofia Berne, Associate Professor Margareta Bohlin, Jonas Burén, Fanny Gyberg, Johan Hagborg, Bo Helsing, Associate Professor Kristina Holmqvist Gattario Malin Joleby, Caroline Järdmo, Johanna Kling, Hanna Larsson, Johan Lidberg, Associate Professor Carolina Lunde, Associate Professor Therése Skoog, and Dr. Ylva Svensson- I am so grateful to be a part of this group and thank you for interesting discussions, lunch-meetings, seminars and fika. Also, thank you to my other colleagues at the Department of Psychology, and especially Emma Ejelöv, my roommate, for daily chats about work, everything and nothing.

My deepest gratitude also goes to the participants in the GoLD study, and thank you to everyone who has been assisting with the data collections. This research was supported by grants from the Swedish Research Council for Health, Working Life and Welfare.

I would also like to thank my parents, family and friends who are always encouraging my work, and thank you for being there in my life. And to my partner, Anders Carlander, for support and patiently helping me repair my bikes over and over again so that I can continue on with my journey.

Py Liv Eriksson, Gothenburg 2019

LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

This thesis consists of a summary and the following two papers, which are referred to in the text by their Roman numerals:

I. Eriksson, P. L., Wängqvist, M., Carlsson, J., & Frisén, A. (2019). *Beyond Personal Aspirations – A Longitudinal Study of Identity Development in Early Adulthood.* Manuscript in preparation.

II. Syed, M., Eriksson, P. L., Frisén, A., Hwang, P. C., Lamb, M. (2019). *Personality Development from Age 2 to 33: Stability and Change in Ego Resiliency and Ego Control and Associations with Adult Adaptation*. Manuscript under review.

Contents

INTRODUCTION

Identity and personality pertain to who we are as individuals, and influence many other parts of our life such as various psychological outcomes. Over the life course, people will also change and develop in who they are while still maintaining a sense of continuity in their subjective experience of who they are. Questions that are important for one's identity and for maintaining a sense of continuity over time include: What is important in my life? How did I end up here? Where is my life heading? These questions become salient in adolescence and continue to be important throughout adulthood (Erikson, 1968). Although adolescence and emerging adulthood (i.e., one's 20s; Arnett, 2002) are considered the central periods for identity development, this development continues to be important beyond adolescence throughout one's adult life (Erikson, 1968). However, because one's identity is central already before adulthood, most individuals will enter early adulthood with an initially formed identity that may involve goals and decisions concerning who they will be as an adult. This means that in early adulthood, when people are in their 30s to early 40s, identity development for many individuals will concern actually living and implementing these previous decisions about their identity (Arnett, 2012; Pals, 1999). In the Swedish socio-cultural context, most people conceive of themselves as adults when they reach their 30s (Wängqvist & Frisén, 2016). By then, many have begun their career, gotten married, and had their first children (SCB, 2018). Thus, in Sweden, roughly around their early 30s people are beginning to actually live their previous goals and decisions concerning areas important for their identity in adulthood and such as work, romantic relationships, and parenthood. In this part of life, challenges for one's identity development may involve adjusting one's identity according to adult roles and finding a way to maintain a sense of self in adulthood.

Personality, in terms of "who we are", is often viewed as traits or dispositional tendencies to behave, feel and think in a certain way (John, Naumann, &, Soto, 2008). Thus, personality refers to characteristics that describe the individual, and also differences between individuals (Roberts, Wood, & Caspi, 2008). Personality is important to the individual, as it guides him/her through life and impacts various life outcomes (Specht, Egloff, & Schmukle, 2011). However, how an individual, for example, adapts to different situations in life that influence life outcomes may also be understood through self-regulatory processes within the individual (DeYoung, 2015). These processes

are also part of the personality and will influence the individual's behavior. Two self-regulatory processes that are prominent already in childhood, and that impact individuals' ability to adapt to new situations and control or restrain their impulses, are ego resiliency and ego control (Block & Block, 1980, 2006). The development in early adulthood, which may involve new situations that require the individual to adapt these personality constructs, may facilitate positive adult adaptation. In relation to the other central topic of this thesis, identity, personality traits are also considered to be more stable over time (McAdams & Pals, 2006). However, little attention has been paid to personality development from childhood to adulthood, or to the extent to which there is a continuity of traits from childhood into adulthood.

The overall aim of this thesis is to investigate identity and personality development over time with a focus on early adulthood. The first study examines identity development in early adulthood. The second study investigates personality development from childhood to early adulthood and its associations with adult adaptation, such as of identity and well-being.

The first part of this thesis presents theories concerning identity development and personality development, with each perspective followed by an overview of the research within the field. The link between personality and identity is also addressed in this first part. The second part presents summaries of the two studies of this thesis, followed by a general discussion, ethical considerations, and the conclusion.

DEVELOPMENT IN EARLY ADULTHOOD

The distinctive demands of the early adulthood period concern the individual confronting the social reality of adult life (Pals, 1999). In early adulthood, individuals tend to be transitioning into long-term romantic relationships and becoming parents, and engaging in work and elevated work roles (Arnett, 2012; Levinson, 1986). Although this period might involve satisfactory engagement in love, sexuality, family life, and fulfilling life goals, it might also entail a great deal of stress due to outer demands (Levinson, 1986). In this part of life, outer demands concern, for example, societal expectations to enter adult roles. Therefore, for the individual this period may involve finding one's place in life as well as adjusting to expectations. Early adults may thus engage in finding their own sense of self in their adult lives while simultaneously managing new demands within their adult roles and from society. Importantly, this identity development will be influenced by previous commitments and goals established earlier in life (Arnett, 2012). For instance, it can be challenging for people to make changes when they have settled into adult roles, which may induce feelings of being trapped that lead to crises (Robinson, 2015). Research has found that when people are moving into adulthood and trying to find their place in society, some actually go through major developmental crises (after the age of 25 but before 35; Robinson, 2015). For instance, Robinson and Wright (2013) found that crises in early adulthood may concern relationship break-up, feeling locked into a relationship, feeling trapped in a job, career change, family, or financial difficulty. Notably, most of these crises pertain to areas important for one's identity. Taken together, early adulthood is a time that involves many important identity issues and challenges. However, identity development in early adulthood is an understudied area, and little is known about how people maintain their sense of self during their new position in the adult world or how individual goals and plans are managed to meet their own as well as societal demands.

The Swedish Cultural Context

In development over different parts of the lifespan, there is interplay with the cultural context in which the individual is developing (Baltes, Lindenberger & Staudinger, 1988). Early adults in present-day Sweden have grown up in a context that emphasizes individual choice and where one's identity can be viewed as an individual project (Wängqvist & Frisén, 2015). It is also a cul-

tural context in which personal autonomy is valued; although so are conformity and being modest (Trost, 2002). Sweden also stands out compared to other countries in the sense that people have the highest self-expression values (WVS, 2015). These values concern equality regarding gender, for instance, and Sweden is also often referred to as one of the most gender-equal countries in the world (European Institute of Gender Equality, 2017). Compared with other countries, Swedes also conform less to traditional gender role norms, although it should be noted that gender role conformity is still a demanding issue (Kling, Holmqvist Gattario & Frisén, 2017).

The cultural context is also especially important in early adulthood since areas salient to this part of life (e.g., family life and work) are influenced by the particular social environment at that time (Baltes, Reese, & Lipsitt, 1980). People in their early adulthood in today's Sweden have grown up during the gender revolution (Gerson, 2010). They were children at a time when fathers had the opportunity to take paternity leave for the first time, public daycare became increasingly accessible, and political agendas aimed to facilitate fathers' and mothers' equal sharing of family responsibilities (Haas, 1992; Haas & Hwang, 2013). Therefore, this particular social environment may have an impact on their identity development in early adulthood. However, for issues within areas important to early adulthood, such as parenthood, research has also found gender differences indicating that Swedish women in their mid-20s talk more about parenthood being a social norm than men do (Frisén, Carlsson, & Wängqvist, 2014). This, and further research asserting that parenthood may be a more pronounced issue for women in Sweden (Gyberg & Frisén, 2017), suggests that although Sweden is a country with egalitarian norms, issues in early adulthood may have different meanings for men and women in their development.

IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT

Erikson's Psychosocial Theory of Development

Erikson developed a psychosocial theory of life span development, describing eight stages that individuals go through across life (1950, 1968). According to the theory, at each developmental stage there is a developmental crisis the individual must attend to. This developmental crisis is generated by changes both within the individual and in the social environment. Each developmental stage involves a developmental crisis, with two developmental poles representing a positive and a negative resolution. Erikson also pointed out that there is interdependence between the resolutions of earlier stages and later development (1968). Therefore, earlier stages and their resolutions set the foundation and influence later stages (Kroger, 2015). Importantly, this development is not only an internal, individual process but also one that is intertwined with the individual's culture and society (Erikson, 1950).

In childhood, the first developmental stage concerns *trust* versus *mistrust*, followed by *autonomy* versus *shame and doubt*, while the third stage concerns *initiative* versus *guilt. Industry* versus *inferiority* represents the fourth stage, as the child enters the elementary school years (Erikson, 1950). This brings us to the fifth stage, *identity* versus *identity diffusion*, which is described in Erikson's writings as the main issue that arises in adolescence. Below I present the stages that are central to the transition into and during adulthood, starting with *identity* versus *identity diffusion*, continuing with *intimacy* versus *isolation*, and finally discussing *generativity* versus *stagnation.*

Identity versus Identity Diffusion

Identity plays an important role across the developmental stages in Erikson's psychosocial theory of life span development (1968), providing the individual with a feeling of continuity between past, present and future. An individual's identity is important because it connects and integrates their earlier experiences with who they are in the present and who they believe they will become in the future. It provides the individual with a feeling of coherence, and with a sense of being the same over time (Erikson, 1968). According to Erik-

son's conceptualization, a stable identity is associated with healthy psychosocial functioning (Syed & McLean, 2016). However, individuals might experience difficulties in their identity development, not moving towards creating commitments and risking a less clearly integrated identity, i.e. *identity confusion.* This lack of a coherent self across time may lead to psychological problems (Erikson, 1968).

As individuals move on to establish themselves in the adult world, a well integrated and coherent identity is also important with regard to the issue of *intimacy* versus *isolation,* which comes to the forefront in early adulthood. Erikson (1968) believed that establishing a sense of identity before moving on to questions of intimacy was important in order for the individual to experience real intimacy with a partner. Otherwise, the relationship might become an instrument for the individual's own identity concerns (Kroger, 2017).

Intimacy versus Isolation, and Generativity versus Stagnation

According to Erikson's psychosocial theory of human development (1950, 1968), the main concern for the development in early adulthood is *intimacy* versus *isolation,* followed by *generativity* versus *stagnation* in midlife. The first developmental stage after the individual has resolved the crisis of identity-identity confusion is *intimacy* versus *isolation.* This involves the quality of relationships one is able to commit oneself to even though certain sacrifices and compromises may be necessary (Erikson & Erikson, 1997). The negative pole in this development stage is a sense of isolation. Isolation refers to an incapacity to share intimacy, thereby also not taking chances with one's identity, and may lead to more stereotyped interpersonal relations (Erikson, 1968). Then, guiding and caring for others and the next generation (e.g., one's children) is the next stage within Erikson's theory of development: *generativity* versus *self-absorption.*

Generativity versus self-absorption and stagnation is the developmental crisis that occurs during midlife (Erikson, 1950). Generativity refers to the concern for caring for and guiding the next generation, giving back to society. However, Erikson (1968) points out that bringing children into the world does not mean that the individual has attained generativity. The counterpole of generativity, stagnation, refers to becoming more self-absorbed, self-indulged in relation to others. Generativity in itself is an important driving power and motivation for each generation to care for the next.

With regard to development in early adulthood, as described earlier, each developmental stage in Erikson's theory also appears in some form throughout development. For example, research has shown that precursors to generativity in midlife may be found in agentic and communal motives already in adolescence (Peterson & Stewart, 1996). It may also be argued that all three

developmental stages involving identity, intimacy, and generativity are central to the development in early adulthood, and that they interact in significant ways (Kroger, 2015). For example, to illustrate this point, it has been described how identity development in adolescence focuses more on the "I", whereas during adult development when intimacy and generativity come more to the forefront, individuals' identity development moves towards focusing more on the aspect of "We" (Kroger, 2015).

Several models of identity development have evolved from Erikson's writings. Two perspectives that are commonly used in research on identity development are the identity status approach (Marcia, 1966) and the narrative approach to identity (McAdams, 1985).

Marcia and the Identity Status Approach

Building on Erikson's work, Marcia (1966) elaborated on the perspective of identity development and operationalized it into two observable processes of identity formation: exploration and commitment. The *exploration process* involves thinking of and trying out different choices or roles in important identity-defining areas of life. The *commitment process* refers to making identity-defining commitments, that is plans or goals that show the degree of personal investment (Kroger & Marcia, 2011). Using, for example, the semi-structured identity status interview (Marcia, Waterman, Matteson, Archer, & Orlofsky, 1993), the degree of exploration and commitment in important identity areas of life can be assessed and used to categorize the individual's identity formation or development into four different identity statuses (Marcia, 1966). *Identity achievement* refers to the identity status of individuals who have made commitments through the process of exploration. The identity status of people who show high degrees of commitments but without the exploration beforehand is called *foreclosure*. The identity development of those who are struggling to make commitments but are still in an exploratory part of their identity development is classified to the status of *moratorium.* In the last status, *identity diffusion*, people have not committed or engaged themselves in, or have had little, exploration (Kroger & Marcia, 2011). In terms of descriptions of what each status means for the individual, the group whose identity status is classified as identity achieved can be flexible but also persevere in following their path they have chosen. This identity status is considered to represent the most mature level of identity development, and has been linked to several positive outcomes (see, e.g., Lillevoll, Kroger, & Martinussen, 2010; Ryeng, Kroger, & Martinussen, 2010). As Waterman

(2015) describes the identity formation of individuals coded to identity achievement, "it appears that going through the valley of distress is the route to the peaks of self-understanding and well-being" (p. 312). Individuals who are considered to be in a state of moratorium are in a state of defining themselves, and can sometimes engage others in the internal conflict they are dealing with. There are also some people who tend to get stuck in the struggle, whereby an active phase of exploring might turn more into rumination (Kroger & Marcia, 2011; Luyckx et al., 2008). People in the group coded to foreclosure have not explored before deciding on their commitments. These individuals are usually perceived as well functioning, but can be more fragile if they find themselves in new situations different from their familiar contexts (Kroger & Marcia, 2011). Coded to the identity diffused group are people who seem to lack an internal sense of self. They are therefore more easily persuaded to change direction, which might give an impression that they are flexible and adaptive. Instead, it is actually the external world they turn to that defines who they are (Kroger & Marcia, 2011).

The different life areas in which the identity processes exploration and commitment are assessed are often called identity domains. These are areas that represent identity issues that are assumed to be salient for many individuals such as, in adulthood, the areas of work, romantic relationships and parenthood. Marcia originally defined important life areas from Erikson's writings, which concerned occupation and ideology (religious and political positions) (Kroger & Marcia, 2011), and researchers have since found additional areas important to address. In order to determine a person's global identity status, information gained from the domains regarding the processes of exploration and commitment is used to point towards a hypothesized underlying structure of their identity. However, domains are also sometimes employed as aspects of identity in themselves, such as work identity. It is therefore also important to note that Marcia pointed out that the domains should not be regarded as identities in separate domains but rather as part of a "map" of a person's identity indicating the development of a sense of self (Kroger & Marcia, 2011; Marcia, 2007).

Identity Status Development in Adulthood

In their meta-analysis of identity status change and stability in late adolescence to early adulthood, Kroger, Martinussen and Marcia (2010) found that patterns of progressive change are more common than regressive patterns (i.e., from a status with less exploration or commitments towards established commitments after exploration) and that, in general, there are more progressive movements towards the more mature statuses from adolescence to adulthood. Interestingly, they also found that a large number of people who have

made commitments (i.e., achieved identity or foreclosure) also stay stable in their original identity status from late adolescence to adulthood (Kroger et al., 2010). Another meta-analysis has also pointed towards the notion that there appears to be more identity status stability in adulthood than adolescence (Meeus, 2011). Waterman (1999) acknowledged this relative stability of identity statuses, and that the statuses of identity achievement and foreclosure can be expected to be more stable since people in these statuses might not feel pressure to change if they have succeeded in implementing their goals, values and beliefs (i.e., their commitments). However, most research on identity status and identity development has been conducted primarily in adolescence and emerging adulthood (Kroger, et al., 2010; Meeus, 2011). There are few studies on identity status in adulthood (see, e.g., Arneaud, Alea, & Espinet, 2016; Gyberg & Frisén, 2017; Kroger, 2002; Kroger & Haslett, 1991; Kroger & Green, 1996), and even fewer that assess identity status development longitudinally across adulthood (see, e.g., Cramer, 2004, 2017; Fadjukoff, Pulkkinen, & Kokko, 2005, 2016; Pulkkinen & Kokko, 2000). Presented below are the findings from the research that has been conducted within this understudied area of identity status development in adulthood.

The longitudinal studies that have investigated identity development over time in adulthood generally show slow progressive movements over time (Kroger, 2017). A study of identity development in young adulthood (ages 18-35) showed that over time there was a decrease in moratorium and foreclosure, and that levels of identity achievement moderately progressed but were also high at all ages (Cramer, 2017). However, the same study also found that levels of identity diffusion showed little change. Importantly, there was significant inter-individual variability regarding the degree to which the participants had changed in the statuses of foreclosure, moratorium and diffused identity (Cramer, 2017). Another longitudinal study from early to late mid-adulthood (ages 30-61) found that identity achievement and moratorium increased, and identity diffusion decreased, from early to mid-adulthood, indicating that substantial development takes place during this time in life (Cramer, 2004). However, this study also found a surprising increase in foreclosure from mid- to late mid-adulthood. Another study of identity status development, using four measurement points of identity status at ages 27, 36, 42 and 50, also showed great individual variability with regard to individual trajectories of status development over time (Fadjukoff et al., 2016). This study showed that, for overall identity, the progressive sequence of diffusion-foreclosure-moratorium-achievement was the most frequent for both men and women. Further, across these ages (27, 36, 42 and 50), stability was common over two measurement points but remaining stable in one status across the four measurement points was rare. Interestingly, with regard to the age span

similar to that in the studies in this thesis, in early adulthood (ages 27 to 36), this longitudinal study showed a peak in the foreclosed identity status, and at age 36 this was the most common status while identity achievement was the most frequent overall identity status at all other ages (Fadjukoff, et al., 2016; Pulkkinen & Kokko, 2000). Taken together, longitudinal studies of identity status development in adulthood indicate that there are progressive movements towards identity achievement over time but that there is also important individual variability in this development, with many different trajectories of identity development in adulthood (Fadjukoff et al., 2016).

With regard to identity development and gender results from one of the longitudinal studies across adulthood showed that at age 27 it was more typical for men to be assessed to moratorium compared to women, and that at age 36 more men than women were rated as foreclosed whereas more women were assigned to identity achievement (Fadjukoff et al., 2016). Some explanations to these gender differences may be discussed in relation socially enforced rules concerning what is considered appropriate masculine and feminine behavior that impact not only people's lives but also their identities (Bem, 1981; Kling, 2019). These gender role norms influence people's identities, for example, as they inform what is culturally accepted to do or not to do for men and women. When it comes to identity development in early adulthood, gender role norms may thus influence the exploration and commitment processes differently for men and women due to expectations and different opportunities to explore important identity areas in early adulthood.

Theoretically, it has been suggested that identity status development in adulthood may involve movements back and forth from identity achievement to moratorium – moratorium-achievement-moratorium-achievement – so-called MAMA cycles (Stephen, Fraser, & Marcia, 1992). These cycles involve identity reconstruction and a movement between exploration and commitment and consolidation (Marcia, 2002). The process of identity reconstruction would also be more likely when and if the individual is faced with disequilibrating events. Such events could also lead to a regression to earlier identity structures, for example brief identity diffusion, that might entail feelings of being scattered and confused (Marcia, 2002). Yet in turn, this could be necessary for a new structure to emerge, making identity regression a part of identity development (Marcia, 2002). With regard to identity development in early adulthood, Pulkkinen and Kokko (2000) discuss their findings of high rates of foreclosure at age 36 compared to age 27 (at which achievement was most common) in relation to these cycle movements proposed between different identity structures in adulthood (Marcia, 2002; Stephen et al., 1992). Pulkkinen and Kokko (2000) suggest that their findings indicate that foreclosure-achievement-foreclosure-achievement (FAFA) cycles might be promi-

nent in later early adulthood. Similar findings of foreclosure after earlier exploration were also detected between ages 25 and 35 by Valde (1996), who proposed identity reclosure (after earlier exploration) as a new identity status. However, there is overall little research on identity development in early adulthood and on what individual patterns of development are most common during this time in life. Importantly, Kroger (2015) also notes that some caution may be needed in employing the identity status model in adulthood, since it was developed to examine late adolescents' identity development. Another approach to identity development in which there has been more focus on development in adulthood is the narrative perspective (for an overview see, e.g., Adler, Lodi-Smith, Philippe, & Houle, 2016).

Narrative Identity Development

Approaching identity from another perspective than the identity status model, narrative identity researchers focus on the stories people create about themselves and their experiences in life (McAdams, 1985). The main focus for identity development within this perspective concerns how people, through their creation of a life story, integrate past, present, and future in a meaningful and purposeful way (McAdams & McLean, 2013). Throughout people's lives they continually develop this life story by integrating new experiences (McAdams, 2015). The evolving narrative identity, or life story, thus provides the individual with the unity and sense of sameness over time that Erikson (1968) described as a key aspect of identity.

There are several ways through which the narrative identity is created. A significant part involved in this identity development is *autobiographical reasoning*; that is, how the past has led to the person's present identity (Habermas & Bluck, 2000; McAdams & McLean, 2013). Autobiographical memories involve descriptions of personal experiences connected to the self, and are therefore conceptually linked to an individual's identity (Habermas & Reese, 2015). Narrative research uses different labels for the processes involved in the use of autobiographical reasoning. Overall, they can be viewed as displaying identity change or stability and valence in the narratives (Habermas & Reese, 2015). Importantly, autobiographical reasoning, characterized by either stability or change, helps the individual integrate experiences into the narrative identity that leads to a feeling of sameness and continuity over time. For example, autobiographical reasoning characterized by change helps the individual explain a change of some kind in their subjective perception of who they are, their identity. Therefore, this type of autobiographical

reasoning facilitates identity continuity (Köber, Schmiedek, & Habermas, 2015; Pasupathi, Mansour, & Brubaker, 2007). A change within oneself can be understood by providing either autobiographical reasoning involving external causes or internal causes for the change (Habermas & Köber, 2015). For example, the term *meaning making* represents different processes that concern how individuals may narrate experiences that changed their perception in some way; for instance, making sense of the past and how it has had an influence on one's present self (McLean & Thorne, 2003). Meaning making can also involve different levels of understanding of one's self and identity. It can be a change involving something the individual simply learned from an experience, a lesson. Or, the individual might, through a higher level of meaning making, gain an even greater understanding of and insight into change in themselves that they can also apply to other areas and generalize beyond their own behavior (McLean & Thorne, 2003).

For the narrative identity, it is also important to take into account how elaborate or coherent the autobiographical reasoning is in terms of the narrative's structure, often referred to as narrative coherence (McLean et al., 2019); that is, telling a story so that life events can be understood by a listener in relation to the context, to time, and to the theme. Researchers within the narrative field have examined narrative coherence with different approaches that address both similar and dissimilar components of coherence (Adler, Waters, Poh, & Seitz, 2018). In general, temporal coherence involves the relation to time and the ability to tell a story about events including when they took place and ordering the story with a beginning, middle, and end so that there is a clear temporal order of events (Köber, et al., 2015; Reese, Haden, Baker-Ward, Bauer, Fivush, & Ornstein, 2011). Thematic coherence generally refers to the process of telling one's story with a dominant theme. This can include, for example, how different parts of life reflect a similar theme, and information about the essence of an individual's story (Köber et al., 2015; Reese et al., 2011). Importantly, this thematic coherence stresses sameness over time.

Research investigating narrative coherence has shown that over time people become better at narrating their story with temporal coherence. However, the development of temporal coherence peaks in young adulthood, to later descend in midlife (Reese et al., 2011). In contrast, thematic coherence does not seem to diminish with age but rather increases across the life span (although the increase is slower in adulthood) (Reese et al., 2011). McLean (2008) found a similar pattern of more thematic coherence among adults over age 65 compared to younger individuals (ages from late adolescence to young adulthood). In parallel, a study by Köber and colleagues (2015) showed that thematic coherence increased up to 40 years of age. For causal motivational

coherence, the development was most prominent between ages 12 and 20 and then leveled off in early adulthood (Köber et al., 2015). Taken together, individuals' narrative identity evolves over time as new experiences are integrated into their life story, and how people narrate their story also seems to evolve over time (McAdams, 2013; Reese et al., 2011). However, longitudinal research on how people narrate their sense of self in important areas of early adulthood is scarce.

Combining the Identity Status Model with a Narrative Approach

The identity status model and the narrative approach are two different perspectives that both examine identity development but emphasize different processes in this development. The identity status model examines processes of identity commitment and exploration (Marcia, 1966), while the narrative identity perspective investigates people's narratives and how subjective stories about experiences in life are integrated into the individual's identity (McAdams, 1985). However, recent theoretical and empirical studies have suggested that that these two approaches to identity development can contribute to each other and, combined, can contribute to the understanding of identity development in meaningful ways (McLean & Pasuphati, 2012; Syed, 2012; Carlsson et al. 2015; Josselson, 1996). For example, in their theoretical paper McLean and Pasuphati (2012) highlight that in narrative identity research there has been a lack of attention to how the life story development interplays with people's engagement in other central identity-defining processes, such as identity exploration and commitment processes (defined in the identity status model). However, although it has been theoretically suggested, it has been under-utilized in practice.

The few studies that have employed an integrated approach of the identity status model and the narrative approach show, for example, relations between increase in identity exploration and change of narrative theme in emerging adults' narratives of ethnicity-related experiences (Syed & Azmitia, 2010). These changed narratives often involve experiences of prejudice and connections to culture. Research also indicates that there are individual differences in how individuals narrate their identity over time depending on their identity status. Josselson (1996), looking at women who entered adulthood from different pathways of identity, found that those with characteristics of an achieved identity status tended to show more integration of the old with the new in their stories. Furthermore, McLean and Pratt (2006) showed that indi-

viduals with more complex and sophisticated meaning making of past events scored higher on indicators of identity achievement. They also found an absence of narrative meaning from lower identity statuses (i.e., diffusion and foreclosure). It should be noted, though, that the degree to which these two approaches converged was relatively small, suggesting that they are in many ways distinctly different approaches to identity (McLean & Pratt, 2006). However, these studies integrating identity status with a narrative approach do show that an integration of theoretical perspectives on identity development may also reveal new knowledge about identity development.

Earlier research has also used the identity status interview for qualitative investigations of life stories. In the identity status interview, participants are asked in-depth about their history of how they have come to their present identity resolutions, how the past has influenced them, and how they have changed from who they were before. Thus, the embedded developmental focus on *how*, *when* and *why* a person's exploration and commitments came to be in the identity status interview (Kroger & Maria, 2011; Marcia, Waterman, Mattesson, Archer, & Orlofsky, 1993) provides in-depth qualitative material on individuals' identity development. Employing this approach using the identity status interview, Kroger (2002) found, for example, several identity processes for individuals who maintained identity achievement in late adulthood. These identity processes involved reintegration, rebalancing, readjustment, refinement, and maintenance of continuity in late adulthood (Kroger, 2002). Kroger (2002) also found that these processes differed across old age. For the younger old adults (ages 65-75) the identity processes were 'reintegrating important identity elements', 'tying up the package' and 'establishing visible forms of identity continuity'. Among the very old adults (ages 76 and above), the salient processes were instead 'living in the present' and 'retaining important identity elements through loss'. The findings from this study indicate that there are different processes that are important for maintaining a well functioning identity in adulthood, and that these might differ depending on the age period in adulthood. Further, this study shows that there is more to identity development in adulthood than can be captured by solely investigating categorizations of exploration and commitment processes, and that the identity status interview can be used for qualitative investigations of life stories.

Carlsson, Wängqvist, and Frisén (2015) have also shown a way to combine the identity status model with the narrative approach. In their study, they employed narratives from the identity status interview to explore identity development in the late 20s among individuals with established commitments (i.e., identity achievement or foreclosure) and stable identity status. They showed that, behind these stable patterns of development, ongoing identity

development was represented by three-dimensional processes of change on a continuum between a weakening and a deepening of the identity narrative. The weakening endpoint represents a firmer, more closed and rigid narrative that has not evolved, whereas the deepening endpoint represents a more integrated, evolved and flexible narrative. The first process, 'Approach to changing life conditions', concerns participants' approach to the fact that life changes as time goes by. The deepening endpoint represents narratives with a capacity to adjust and change, whereas the weakening endpoint represents narratives that are more rigid and resistant to change. The process of 'Meaning making' concerns adding elements of meaning to the identity narrative. The deepening endpoint represents narratives with a substantial increase in meaning making, whereas the weakening endpoint represents narratives with either similar identity narratives or few new reflections. The third process in the model, 'Development of personal life direction', concerns the development of a personal life direction whereby the deepening endpoint represents increased agency to make independent decisions. The weakening endpoint of this process represents narratives of becoming more constrained by social norms and expectations from others. Taken together, previous research combining life stories and narratives from the identity status interview shows that, in order for individuals to maintain their identity across time, there are important identity processes that must take place in their late 20s and late adulthood (Carlsson et al., 2015; Kroger, 2002). However, little is known about how individuals continue to maintain their identity and sense of self in early adulthood as they transition into adulthood.

PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT

Personality Traits

Within the personality field there are many different theories and views regarding what areas are important to focus on in order to understand human development (Larsen, Buss, Wismeijer, & Song, 2017). When looking at personality development over time and how personality may, for example, facilitate positive adult adaptation, focusing on individual and group level differences can shed light on what individual differences are meaningful (Larsen et al., 2017). Within this line of research focusing on important individual differences in relation to others, psychological traits are one of the dominating perspectives (John, Naumann, &, Soto, 2008).

Psychological traits or dispositional tendencies concern individual differences in the way people think, feel and behave (John, Naumann, &, Soto, 2008). Traits or dispositions are also considered to be reasonably stable over time and generally consistent across situations (Roberts et al., 2008). Trait models, such as the five-factor model or the Big Five, have been extensively used and examined in personality research (see, e.g., Roberts, Walton, & Viechtbauer, 2006). In addition, the Big Five structures seem to generalize across different samples, as methods and factors similar to the Big Five have been found across cultures (John et al., 2008). The Big Five refers to five broad dimensional traits that are assumed to represent the highest level of traits in a hierarchal model: extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness to experience (John & Srivastava, 1999; McCrae & Costa, 1999). Extraverted individuals are described as energetic, dominant and outgoing, while individuals who are introverted tend to be quieter, follow others, and feel more inhibited (Caspi, Roberts & Shiner, 2005). Agreeableness is characterized by aspects that are helpful in relations with others, such as being cooperative, considerate, polite, kind and empathic. Low levels of this trait dimension involve being more aggressive, cynical, manipulative and rude (Caspi et al., 2005). Conscientiousness refers to impulse control, which facilitates more goal-directed behavior such as planning and organizing. People high in this trait tend to study hard, be on time, and not procrastinate (John et al., 2008). The degree of neuroticism reflects upon an individual's emotional stability – being more unstable, insecure and anxious or more re-

laxed, calm and emotionally stable. Openness to experience refers to an individual's degree of complexity in their mental and experiential life. People high in this trait enjoy learning new things and look for new stimuli in activities, for example, while those on the low pole of this dimension are more conservative in their attitudes (John et al., 2008). Below each of these traits are facets, or narrower traits, such as modesty (example of agreeableness facet), anxiety, hostility/irritability (example of neuroticisms facet) and self-discipline (example of conscientiousness facet) (John et al., 2008).

Meta-traits: Stability/Plasticity and Ego Resiliency/Ego Control

More recent work has examined how the Big Five traits may be understood within a hierarchal model as part of an adaptive system that also involves higher-order traits above the five traits (DeYoung, 2006, 2010, 2015). Indeed, building on Digman's (1997) work, DeYoung (2006) and DeYoung and colleagues (2002) have found two overarching higher-order traits above the Big Five, labeled stability and plasticity. Plasticity represents the shared variance between extraversion and openness, and stability represents the shared variance among agreeableness, conscientiousness, and emotional stability (reverse of neuroticism). DeYoung and colleagues (2002) postulated that these meta-traits may be viewed as parameters of an adaptive system. Thus, higher-order traits can facilitate the understanding and function of personality traits as part of an adaptive system (Block, 2010; DeYoung, 2010). Furthermore, DeYoung has also argued that Block's (1980) personality constructs ego resiliency and ego control represent meta-traits (DeYoung, 2010). Importantly, DeYoung (2010) differentiated between Block's (2002) view of personality as an affect-processing system and his and colleagues' view of personality as a more goal-directed system. However, both systems of higher-order traits can be seen in the light of restraint and adaptability (see Block 2010 and DeYoung, 2010).

Ego Resiliency and Ego Control

Jeanne and Jack Block (1980), influenced by earlier psychoanalytic theories, elaborated the concept of ego development into *ego resiliency* and *ego control*. These personality constructs reflect upon self-regulatory processes within the individual that influence how they behave in their social and physical

environments (Block & Block, 2006; Robins, John, Caspi, Moffitt, & Stouthamer-Loeber, 1996). Ego resiliency refers to the individual's capacity to adjust to their environment and to the different situational demands that are part of life (Block & Block, 2006). Highly resilient individuals have good cognitive functioning and social skills, which they need in order to quickly adapt to new situations. People who are less resilient, also referred to as ego brittle, are less adaptive and flexible, and have more difficulty recovering after a stressful experience. These individuals with low ego resiliency are therefore also more at risk of experiencing anxiety and negative affects (Block & Kremen, 1996). Ego control is related to the process of expressing or acting on internal impulses, whereby low control involves more immediate behavior based on impulses without holding back, for example more volatile emotional expressions. Individuals who exhibit low control are more spontaneous in their behavior, are unable to delay gratification, and display their emotional responses more directly even if it is not appropriate in the particular situation (Eisenberg, Fabes, Guthrie, Murphy, Maszk, Holmgren, & Suh, 1996). However, the low ego control in these individuals might also, through their lack of self-regulation to inhibit impulses, facilitate expressions of friendliness and spontaneity which can be positive for relationships and enjoyment in life (Letzring, Block, & Funder, 2005). In parallel, individuals who display high control are more constrained, emotionally unexpressive and more conforming, and have difficulty with uncertainty (Block & Block, 2006). Thus, an optimal or moderate level of control is theoretically considered to be ideal. Indeed, ego resiliency and ego control refer to a dynamic system of adaptive regulation in accordance with what the environment necessitates, which of course varies depending on the situation at hand (Block & Block, 2006). In this dynamic system, the role of ego resiliency is to regulate the levels of ego control depending on what the environment requires. High ego resiliency thus involves flexibility and the ability to shift one's behavior in an adaptive way depending on the situation, by either reducing or increasing behavioral control. However, higher-order traits, and particularly their development from childhood to adulthood, comprise an understudied area (Soto & Tackett, 2015).

Personality Development over Time

When personality development is investigated over time and continuity and change are explored, it is important to examine rank-order stability/consistency and mean-level change. Rank-order stability refers to how people develop over time in relation to other individuals within the same population. This means how the relative ranking for individuals on a specific personality trait/dimension changes within the population (Roberts, Wood &

Caspi, 2008). Mean-level change refers to the average personality change within a population; whether the sample as a whole increases or decreases over time (Caspi, Roberts, & Shiner, 2005). With regard to personality development over time, a number of principles of development have been established. Two of these principles are highlighted in the investigations of Study II of this thesis: the maturity principle and the cumulative continuity principle. The maturity principle states that with age people become more mature, and in terms of the Big Five personality traits they become more socially dominant (facet of extraversion), agreeable, conscientious, and emotionally stable (Roberts, Wood, & Caspi, 2008). Thus, in line with this principle, ego resiliency and control should increase over time (although ego control levels should not be excessively high, as a moderate level is considered optimal). The cumulative continuity principle states that over one's lifespan rank-order consistency increases, meaning that the relative rank of individuals in the same population will show more stability over time as people grow older (Roberts, Wood, & Caspi, 2008). Therefore, the rank-order stability for ego development is expected to increase over time.

Few studies have investigated ego resiliency and ego control longitudinally over time from childhood to late adolescence. One study that does investigate this shows that, for rank-order stability from age 3 to 18 (assessed 7 times), stability was found for both boys and girls concerning ego control (Block, 1987). Further, the same study showed that for ego resiliency boys' rank-order showed signs of stability, though the same was not found for girls, who displayed more variability over time. With regard to mean-level changes in ego resiliency, research has shown a small decline and a small increase in ego control across ages 2, 3, 7 and 8 (Wessels, Lamb, Hwang, & Broberg, 1997). Following up on these results with one more assessment at age 15, Chuang, Lamb, and Hwang (2006) showed that the increase in ego control continued, as did the decline in ego resiliency; however, this was the case only for boys. For girls there was a reversed trend, and they became more resilient in adolescence. In sum, these studies suggest that from childhood to adolescence ego control follows the maturity and cumulative principle. In contrast, ego resiliency appears to show some deviation from these principles and more variability in development over time.

Ego Development and Associations with Adult Functioning

Ego development and ego control are likely associated with positive functioning. High ego resiliency involves an adaptive flexibility of levels of control depending on the environment. Thus, individuals with high levels of ego resiliency are more likely than individuals with low levels of resiliency to be self-confident and show high psychological adjustment (Block & Kremen,

1996). Many studies on ego resiliency and ego control have focused on associations between these constructs and outcomes, such as health and behavioral problems in childhood and adolescence (Chuang, Lamb, & Hwang, 2006; Eisenberg et al., 1996; Klimstra, Hale, Raaijmakers, Branje, & Meeus, 2010). Furthermore, most of the research examining ego resiliency and control over time, and how these constructs may predict future associations with different types of outcomes, has focused on personality types (Dennissen, Asendorpf, & van Aken, 2008; Robins et al., 1996). For example, Robins and colleagues (1996) found three personality types: resilients, overcontrollers, and undercontrollers. Resilients had a high level of ego resiliency and an intermediate level of ego control. They were successful in school, intelligent, and less likely to suffer from psychopathology. Overcontrollers were more brittle (i.e., less ego resilient), had high levels of control, and were more prone to internalizing problems. In contrast, undercontrollers were brittle and had low ego control, displaying tendencies for academic, behavioral and emotional problems. Later studies have replicated these findings (Asendorpf & van Aken, 1999; Asendorpf, Borkenau, Osendorf, & van Aken, 2001). In their longitudinal study of further examinations of resilients, overcontrollers and undercontrollers, Dennissen and colleagues (2008) also found that these childhood personality types were related how adult roles were attained by age 23. The resilient participants tended to leave their parental home, establish a first romantic relationship, and get a part-time job earlier than the overcontrollers and undercontrollers. Thus, taken together, studies examining ego resiliency and control from childhood to adolescence and through personality types show that there are associations between these two constructs and important outcomes in life.

There are few studies on ego resiliency and ego control that cover longitudinal examinations from childhood to adolescence and into adulthood, and associations with adult functioning. One longitudinal study of a high-risk sample from preschool to age 32 showed that low control in preschool was related to externalizing problems at ages 26 and 32, and that low control in elementary school was related to externalizing problems at ages 23 and 26 (Causadias, Salvatore, & Sroufe, 2012). In parallel, preschool ego resiliency was negatively related to internalizing problems at ages 23, 26 and 32, while ego resiliency in elementary school was negatively related to internalizing problems at ages 16 and 26. In this study they also found that ego resiliency in elementary school predicted global adjustment in late adolescence (age 19) and young adulthood (age 26); that is, how well participants functioned in areas of work and social and romantic relationships. However, contrary to their predictions, they found no associations between ego control in childhood and global adjustment in adolescence and young adulthood (Causadias,

et al., 2012). Causadias and colleagues (2012) also investigated mean-level trajectories of internalizing and externalizing behavior problems measured at ages 16, 23, 26 and 32 as a function of ego resiliency and ego control in pre- and elementary school. Their results showed that, for behavior problems, higher preschool ego resiliency predicted fewer internalizing symptoms and higher elementary ego resiliency predicted fewer externalizing symptoms. Interestingly, again they found no effects for ego control. Their longitudinal study thus indicates that for high-risk samples, the personality construct ego resiliency might be more important than ego control.

Personality and Identity

Personality and identity have been theoretically linked in several ways and have, for example, been conceptualized as different levels of the personality (McAdams & Pals, 2006). It has also been suggested that personality might influence how people develop their identities (Kroger, 2007). However, there has been little research on the relations between personality and identity. With regard to the identity status perspective and relations to personality, the few studies that have been conducted mainly focus on the development in adolescence (Klimstra, 2013; Klimstra, Luyckx, Germeijs, Meeus, & Goossens, 2012; Luyckx, Soenens, & Goossens, 2006). In a study by Klimstra and colleagues (2013) on college students and a community sample they examined associations between personality traits, interpersonal identity processes and intimate relationships. They found that neuroticism was negatively associated, and agreeableness and conscientiousness positively associated, with a stronger sense of interpersonal identity. Fadjukoff and colleagues (2019) have also examined the long-term role of personal styles in early adulthood and identity stability and change during midlife. The personality styles were extracted at age 27 and comprised three components: personal characteristics, life attitudes, and everyday activities. Combined, these components resulted in three groups of men and three groups of women. The resilient male and individuated female styles represented personality style groups with more adaptive adjustment. The results of this study showed that, in relation to identity status across ages 27, 36, 42 and 50, these two more adaptive groups were characterized by consistently high identity achievement status; i.e., the more sophisticated identity status. Findings regarding relations between the other identity statuses indicated that for females the initial differences in identity maturation (i.e., differences between statuses) had diminished by midlife. For men there was a re-decline for the conflicted group in midlife

(Fadjukoff, Feldt, Kokko, & Pulkkinen, 2019). This study shows some indications of the relation between identity development and personality, but more research is needed to understand how personality might influence identity development in early adulthood.

Identity and Personality Development: What Do We Know So Far?

Previous research within the fields of identity and personality development highlights that there are important areas that need to be addressed in order to better understand how these central aspects of who we are as individuals change over time, and how they influence outcomes later in life. With regard to identity development, little attention has been paid to development in adulthood. Research suggests that many individuals enter early adulthood with established commitments, with or without exploration, before committing to a goal or decision regarding important areas in life. However, little is known about how people maintain their sense of self in early adulthood and simultaneously manage new demands within their adult roles and from society. In addition, research on ego resiliency and ego control indicates that these two personality constructs could be important for outcomes later in life – however, research is scarce. Also, despite its relevance for understanding development, research investigating how ego resiliency and control develop over time from childhood to adulthood is almost nonexistent. Little is also known about what implications personality development may have for adult adaptation, such as identity and well-being.

SUMMARY OF THE STUDIES

The overall aim of the two studies of this thesis was to investigate identity and personality development over time with a focus on early adulthood. The first study examines identity development in early adulthood. A mixed-methods study, it first examines the identity status development across ages 25, 29 and 33. In this part, identity status change and stability are examined at group level as well as individual level. Building on findings in these first examinations and the results concerning stability and change at the individual level, the second part of the study focuses on identity development in one's early 30s, between ages 29 and 33, among individuals with established identity commitments and stable identity status across early adulthood. This part involves longitudinal qualitative case-based analyses of processes as part of identity development, combining the identity status model with a narrative approach. The second study of this thesis investigates personality development from childhood to early adulthood, and associations between personality development and adult adaptation. The development of ego resiliency and ego control between ages 2 and 33 was examined with regard to both rank-order stability and mean-level change. The growth models found in these examinations for both ego resiliency and ego control were then examined in relation to outcomes in adulthood at age 33, and involved measures of identity development, well-being and Big Five traits. Further, associations between ego resiliency and ego control at each measurement point between ages 2 and 33 were examined through correlational analyses to investigate proximal and distal associations between these two meta-traits and outcomes in adulthood (age 33).

The Gothenburg Longitudinal Study of Development (GoLD)

The two studies of this thesis are part of a longitudinal study started by Lamb and Hwang (Lamb, Hwang, Bookstein, Broberg, Hult, & Frodi, 1988) in 1982. At the onset of the study, 144 families were recruited from waiting lists for public child-care facilities in Gothenburg. The study included families from all social strata living in the Gothenburg region. The participants were 1-2 years old when the study began, and since then there have been ten waves

of data collection, the earlier ones including more than one visit each wave. The retention rate in this longitudinal study has been remarkably high (82-95%).

The studies that make up this thesis include data collected from Wave 2 (age 2) up to Wave 10 (age 33), the first study employing data from Waves 8, 9 and 10 (ages 25, 29 and 33). The second study employs data from nine measurement points in the GoLD study: Wave 2 (age 2), Wave 3 (age 3), Wave 4 (age 7), Wave 5 (age 8),Wave 6 (age 15), Wave 7 (age 21), Wave 8 (age 25), Wave 9 (age 29) and Wave 10 (age 33).

Study I

The first study of this thesis is a longitudinal study of identity development across three time points in early adulthood, using both the identity status model and an integration of this approach with a narrative identity perspective.

Aim

The aim of this study was to investigate identity development across early adulthood. Four main questions guided the analyses: (1) What patterns of identity status change and stability can be seen across early adulthood? (2) Which processes of identity development can be identified in the identity narratives of individuals with established identity commitments and stable identity status across early adulthood? (3) How are the processes of development identified in Research Question 2 configured, and how are these identity configurations related to identity status?

Method

Participants

Participants were part of the longitudinal GoLD study. This study includes those participants who took part in Waves 8 (age 25), 9 (age 29) and 10 (age 33) (N=118), and for the second step of analysis (see data analyses below), 45 of these participants were included in the qualitative analyses.

Measures

A structured background interview was performed at all time points, and included questions about the participants' romantic relationships, living situa-

tion, education and current occupational status, as well as whether they had or were expecting children.

Marcia's Ego Identity Status Interview (Marcia et al., 1993) was also performed with the participants at all three time points by trained interviewers. The identity domains explored in the interviews were occupation, romantic relationships, parenthood, and work/family priorities. Based on their exploration of alternatives and their commitment to chosen directions, participants were assigned a global identity status (identity achievement, foreclosure, moratorium, or identity diffusion). This status was based on the four domains in which participants were asked about their explorations and commitments. Five guidelines were used in line with what Marcia and colleagues (1993) proposed, and the final determination of the overall identity status was based on a combination of these five guidelines. They proposed that weight be given to: (1) identity status in the area that is considered most personally important to the respondent; (2) the most easily recognized status in any domain; (3) whether moratorium or identity achievement is present in any domain, since this is evidence of the individual's ability to explore alternatives; (4) which identity status is present in the largest number of domains; and (5) the impression of the person interviewing the participant, since identity status assessment is a clinical judgement task.

Data Analysis

An explanatory mixed-methods design (Nastasi, Hitchcock, & Brown, 2010) was applied, in which the design is sequential. The data analysis was therefore performed in three different steps, as illustrated in Figure 1 and described below:

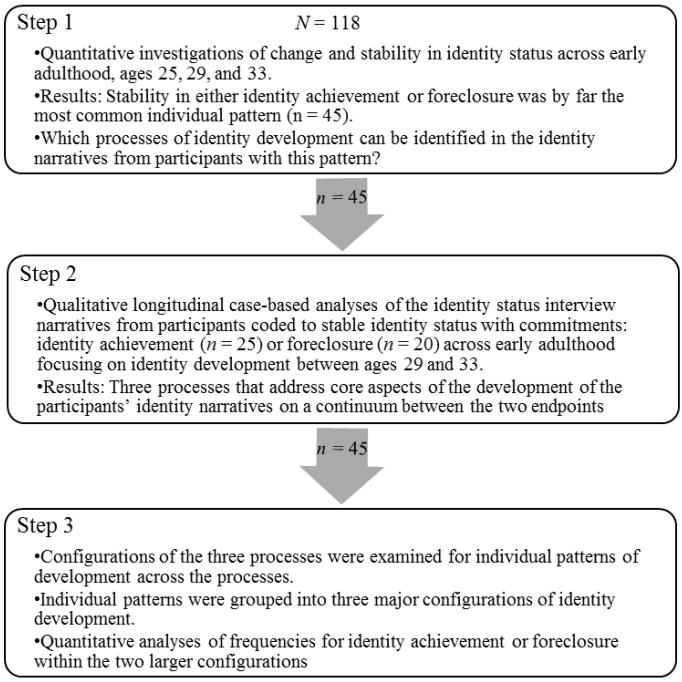

Figure 1. Illustration of the sequential steps of the explanatory mixed-methods design employed in Study I.

Step 1: Quantitative investigations of change and stability in identity status across early adulthood (ages 25, 29, and 33) were conducted, starting with group-level stability and change using Cochran's Q test (Siegel & Castellan, 1988), followed by a post-hoc McNemar test for significance of change. Second, individual stability and change in identity status between adjacent time points (ages 25 and 29, and ages 29 and 33) were analyzed as typical and atypical patterns through the cross-tabulation procedure EXACON (Bergman, Magnusson, & El-Khouri, 2003). This person-oriented approach was used in order to capture individual trajectories of identity status change and stability. Chi square analyses were also applied to analyze gender differences within the identity statuses.

Step 2: Based on the findings in the first step concerning development at the individual level, the choice was made to examine patterns of stability that involved established commitments (i.e., identity achievement and foreclosure) in Step 2 of this study. The ambition of this explanatory qualitative part of the study was to examine what was going on beneath this stable surface and how people maintained their identity over time. Therefore, the 45 participants with the most common individual pattern of identity status develop-

ment, stability in committed statuses (i.e., identity achievement or foreclosure) across ages 25, 29 and 33 were subjected to the qualitative part of this mixed-methods study. The qualitative investigations involved a longitudinal qualitative case-based methodology (Yin, 2014). Importantly, for these qualitative analyses only material from the identity status interviews at ages 29 and 33 were used since a previous study by Carlsson and colleagues (2015) examined identity development among individuals with committed statuses between ages 25 and 29. Interviews were first read closely, and then differences and similarities between each participant's interview narrative capturing important nuances of their development from ages 29 and 33 were summarized. These case summaries were then used for the thematic analyses to create categories representing processes of identity development in early adulthood. For these qualitative analyses, four participants were first randomly chosen, but with an equal number represented from each subgroup; that is, individuals who were coded to identity achievement and foreclosure across all three measurement points. Then, a subset of four more interview narratives were analyzed and then, lastly, seven more case summaries were added, resulting in 15 participants and their case summaries ultimately being used in creating the coding scheme and developing a codebook. Borrowing a term from grounded theory (Oktay, 2012), saturation was reached at this point. The processes of identity development found with the thematic analyses were each divided into three broad categories: one at the deepening end, one at the weakening end, and one in the middle (see Figure 2). At this point, the first and second authors used the 15 participants' case summaries to test the reliability of the codebook and made necessary changes to it. For reliability, the third author recoded a random sample of case summaries (n=20) following the codebook. Reliability was tested through percentage of exact agreement and weighted kappa (Cohen, 1968). The overall exact agreement between the first and third authors was 77%, with an average linear weighted kappa of .65.

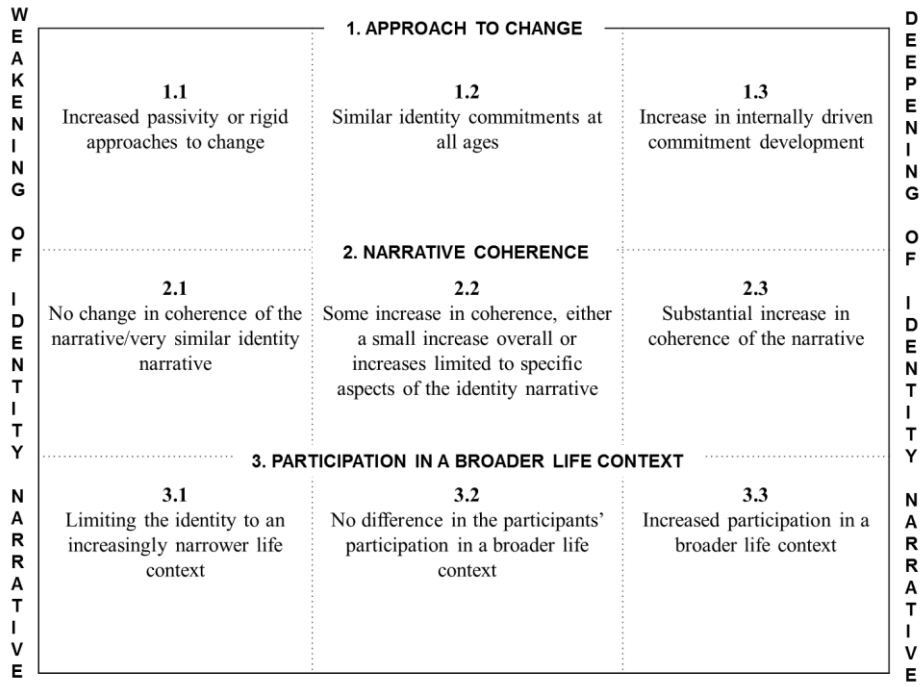

Figure 2. The coding scheme summarizes the coding categories of identity development among individuals with established identity commitments and stable identity status across early adulthood.

Step 3: To explore how the identity narrative as a whole works with regard to identity development, we turned to the configurations. Configurations of the three processes were therefore examined for individual development across the processes and grouped into three major configurations of identity development.

Main findings

Group-level changes through early adulthood were found in identity achievement and moratorium, with more individuals in identity achievement and fewer in moratorium. Regarding individual patterns of identity status change and stability across early adulthood, the most common pattern was stability in either identity achievement (n=25) or foreclosure (n=20).

Findings from the qualitative analyses of the 45 participants coded to the same committed status across early adulthood (at ages 25, 29 and 33) resulted in a model with three processes: *Approach to Change*, *Narrative Coherence*, and *Participation in a Broader Life Context*. In this model, each process represents core aspects of the development of the participants' identity narratives

on a continuum between two endpoints. The weakening endpoint reflects a shallower, firmer, more closed identity narrative that has not evolved across the interview occasions, while the deepening endpoint reflects a richer, more integrated, yet flexible narrative that has evolved. Below are descriptions of the main theme of each of the three identity processes; see Figure 2 for an illustration of the model and its coding categories part. *Approach to Change* concerns the participants' approach to change in relation to their previously established identity commitments, reflecting their willingness or resistance to continuously evaluate their commitments. *Narrative Coherence* concerns the development of narrative coherence in the participants' identity narratives regarding temporal integration (i.e., integration of the past, present, and future) and thematic integration (i.e., the ways content is integrated to emphasize the overall theme). *Participation in a Broader Life Context* concerns the participants' development of their ways of relating to society, generations, historical time, and other aspects that expand beyond the individual. It concerns taking part, or limiting oneself, in terms of participation beyond the personal context.

Three major types of development across the three processes were found: deepening configurations, weakening configurations, and configurations with no change in any of the three processes. This showed that, when all three processes were examined together, individuals were developing either more towards a deepening or a weakening of their identity. With regard to identity status, individuals with achieved identity status mainly showed deepening configurations, whereas those in the foreclosed group showed a more diverse pattern and developed either in a deepening or weakening direction.

Study II

Aim

The aim of this study was to explore the developmental course and implications of ego resiliency and control from age 2 to 33 by: 1) examining the rank-order stability and 2) the mean-level change in ego resiliency and control from age 2 to 33; and 3) exploring correlations between levels and change in ego resiliency and control and age 33 outcomes: well-being (satisfaction with life, self-esteem, and symptoms of psychological distress), Big Five personality traits, and identity development (exploration and commitment in multiple domains).

Method

Participants

This study concerned nine waves of the longitudinal GoLD study, from the second to the tenth wave. For simplicity, in the present study the waves have been renamed such that the second wave (when the personality measures were first employed in the longitudinal study) is referred to as the first and so forth, up to the last wave, which was renamed the ninth.

Measures

Personality traits: In order to create scales for the personality constructs of ego resiliency and ego control (Block & Block, 2006), we used Block and Block's (1980) California Child Q-set (CCQ). The CCQ is a Q-sort instrument used to study personality with descriptive personality statements printed on individual cards, which the participants arrange from 1 (least characteristic) to 9 (most characteristic). Three scales each were created for ego resiliency (ER) and ego control (EC) (six scales in total). These scales were created because it was deemed potentially problematic to measure these constructs solely based on what are considered to be markers for ego resiliency and control during childhood, adolescence, or adulthood. All scales were created based on previously published and validated Q-sort item lists. The scales for the main analyses in the study, Child-Adolescent measures and Adult measures, were then subsequently used in all analyses of the study to assess the robustness of the findings. The scales for ER and EC that were created for the main analyses in this study were based on the prototypes described by Block (2008) and defined by CCQ items. Cronbach's alpha for these scales was consistently over .70 at all ages, ranging from .71 (age 29) to .86 (age 15).

A Swedish version (Zakrisson, 2010) of the Big Five Inventory (John, Naumann, & Soto, 2008) was also used to measure the Big Five personality traits at age 33. This instrument assesses trait dimensions of extraversion, agreeableness, openness, neuroticisms, and conscientiousness.

Well-being at age 33 was measured using three different scales: the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWL; Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985), the Single-Item Self-Esteem Scale (SISE; Robins, Hendin, & Trzesniewski, 2001), and the Brief Symptom Inventory 18 (BSI-18; Derogatis, 2001). The first measures global satisfaction with life, and consists of five statements rated by the participants on a seven-point scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). The second measures self-esteem with only one item, "I have high self-esteem", which is rated on a five-point scale ranging from 1

(not very true of me) to 5 (very true of me). The third measures psychological distress with three subscales: somatization, anxiety, and depression.

To measure global identity development, and identity development in the domains of occupation, romantic relationships, parenthood, and work/family priorities, the Ego Identity Status Interview (Marcia, 1966; Marcia, et al., 1993) described in Study I was used. In this study, identity processes were assessed on a continuous scale of exploration (past and ongoing) and commitment, ranging from 1 (no match at all) to 5 (complete match).

Data Analysis

Four steps of analysis were conducted, starting with rank-order stability using Pearson's correlations to investigate the associations between proximal and distal waves for ego resiliency and control, separately. Second, latent growth curve models were used to examine mean-level stability and change in ego resiliency and control from age 2 (Wave 1) to 33 (Wave 9). Third, with growth models from Step 2, variability in the intercepts and slopes for ego resiliency and control were examined with regard to their association with age 33 outcomes of well-being (SWL, SISE, BSI), personality traits (BFI), and identity development. These analyses addressed whether change in ego resiliency and control across the first three decades of life were associated with adult adaptation. Fourth, correlational analyses were performed to investigate possible prospective predictive value for ego resiliency and control, examining associations between each age and age 33 regarding well-being, personality traits, and identity development.

Main Findings

For ego resiliency and ego control, rank-order stability of proximal waves was consistently high with the exception of the association of ratings on ego resiliency between ages 15 and 21, when there was a change of rater from parent to participant.

The linear model of development from childhood to early adulthood was the best fit to the data for ego resiliency, indicating a high level of resiliency at age 2 with a small gradual decrease through to age 33. For ego control a quadratic growth model was the best fit to the data, indicating a starting point at age 2 that was below the mid-point of the scale, followed by a relatively rapid increase into adolescence and a subsequent leveling off in emerging adulthood and into adulthood.

Building on these growth models found for ego resiliency and ego control, examinations were carried out on how the growth parameters (intercept and slopes) were associated with age 33 psychological outcomes (well-being, Big Five personality traits, and identity development). In these models we speci-

fied the intercept of the growth model portion at the end of the developmental process, age 33. The intercept is where the line crosses the vertical axis, so in this case examining how the variability of the intercept at age 33 was related to age 33 outcomes. The slope refers to the rate of change or amount of change; thus, how the variability in the slope was related to developmental outcomes. Results showed that none of the models examining associations between ego resiliency and control with identity development were statistically significant. Associations were found for ego resiliency, with the intercept at age 33 being associated with well-being (positively for SISE and SWL, and negatively for BSI), whereas the linear slope was only positively related to SWL. However, adding the Big Five traits to this model attenuated all these associations to non-significance. The only growth parameter associated with psychological functioning for ego control was the small negative association between the intercept and self-esteem. This association attenuated, but held when the Big Five traits were added to the model.

Moreover, investigations of correlations between ego resiliency at each wave and age 33 outcomes showed that the correlations with well-being (positively for SWL and SISE, and negatively for BSI) were small at first, in childhood, and then became more prominent from age 21 and remained so through adulthood. For ego control, correlations with well-being had very small positive associations in childhood. However, from age 15 through 33 there were negative associations for self-esteem, with additional negative associations for SWL at age 33. Correlations with ego resiliency and age 33 Big Five traits showed a steady increase in the strength of the positive correlations for extraversion and conscientiousness, and to a lesser extent agreeableness, whereas the associations with openness were consistently weak. Neuroticism showed an increase in negative correlations from age 15 to 21, when the rater changed. For ego control and correlation with age 33 Big Five traits were mostly small, with the major exception of extraversion, which increased in strength from age 8 to 15 and then continued increasing to a very strong negative correlation by age 33. Correlations between ego resiliency and identity development showed that, for both previous exploration and commitment, the correlations were most prominent in adolescence and positive for global identity, occupation and priorities. In contrast, for ego control, correlations for both previous and ongoing exploration were consistently low; however, for commitment in global identity, romance, and the priorities domain there were negative correlations in childhood and adolescence.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

The overall aim of this thesis was to investigate identity and personality development over time with a focus on early adulthood. The first study examines identity development in early adulthood with three measurement points, ages 25, 29 and 33, and more centrally the development from age 29 to 33, in individuals' early 30s. The second study investigates personality development from childhood (starting from age 2) to early adulthood, and associations between personality development and adult adaptation (age 33). Findings from these two studies will be discussed below, starting with identity development in early adulthood, followed by personality development from childhood to early adulthood, and ending with a discussion concerning the methods used in the studies as well as their limitations.

Identity Status Development across Early Adulthood

Findings in Study I regarding global identity status development show an increase in identity achievement, and a decrease in moratorium, across early adulthood. This is in line with the progressive movements that have been suggested for identity status development over time (Waterman, 1982;1999) and what has generally been found in longitudinal studies across adulthood (Cramer, 2004, 2017; Fadjukoff et al., 2016). In parallel to previous results on identity status development in adulthood (Fadjukoff et al., 2016), gender differences were also found in Study I. At ages 25 and 29, more women were coded to more mature statuses than men regarding identity achievement and identity diffusion. However, these gender differences were not present at age 33, which may be understood in light of gender role norms (Bem, 1981). These kind of norms influence how men and women perceive that they should act and might, for example in the context of Sweden, stress exploration, or provide earlier opportunities to explore for women than men in relation to identity areas important to adult roles (such as parenthood). Earlier research from Sweden have shown for example that many women view parenthood as a social norm in their 20s (Frisén et al., 2014), which may bring about more reflection and exploration earlier for women than men.

Another focus in Study I was the individual patterns of development that can be found across adulthood. Earlier research has suggested that cycle movements would signify identity development in adulthood, such as moratorium-achievement-moratorium-achievement (MAMA cycles; Stephen, Fraser, & Marcia, 1992). These cycle movements are assumed to be particularly likely if there is a disrupting event of some kind whereby the individual regresses to an earlier identity structure before a new and evolved structure can develop (Marcia, 2002). Indeed, Pulkkinen and Kokko (2000) proposed that FAFA cycles might be more prominent in early adulthood. In their study across early adulthood, they found that most participants were rated as identity achieved at age 27 but that later, at age 36, foreclosure was the most common global identity status. This type of closure after identity achievement has also been discussed as a new status (Valde, 1996). Contrary to the descriptions of MAMA or FAFA cycles, the findings in Study I showed that across early adulthood the most common individual pattern was to be coded to identity achievement or foreclosure at all measurement points. This is also contradictory to further findings across adulthood in the Finnish longitudinal study that has found stability to be present but rare in development at ages 27, 36, 42 and 50 (Fadjukoff et al., 2016). However, an important factor to consider with regard to identity status stability is the differentiation between global identity status and identity domains. Commitment and exploration processes in different domains of life are likely to fluctuate more than global identity status.

With regard to employing the identity status model in studies of adult development, Kroger (2015) notes that, since this paradigm was developed to examine late adolescents' identity development, some caution may be needed. She problematizes what the identity status actually would reflect in adulthood, and notes that there might be a need to find new ways of developing the identity status to capture changes in parts of adulthood. In line with this, and with a procedure similar to that used in the study by Carlsson and colleagues (2015), identity narratives from the identity status interviews were employed to examine how people maintain a sense of self across early adulthood and what processes may be involved behind what appears to be a stable identity status development across early adulthood.

Processes of Identity Development across Early Adulthood

In the explanatory analyses of Study I, part of the mixed-methods design, three processes were found among individuals with established identity commitments and stable identity status across early adulthood: *Approach to Change*, *Narrative Coherence* and *Participation in a Broader Life Context.* With a similar sample from the same longitudinal study as used in Study I, Carlsson et al. (2015) also examined identity development after established commitment in people's late 20s (there were ten fewer participants in Study I of this thesis). What became evident in Study I when examining identity development in people's early 30s, compared to this previous study using the same sample, was (1) that the new approach to change of commitments that the participants showed was driven by more internal than external factors; (2) that the way the story changed involved more integration in terms of narrative coherence, rather than simply making more meaning of specific experiences; and (3) how relations with society changed from involving a more personal direction to taking part in a broader life context beyond oneself. These three processes behind a stable identity development will be discussed separately below, but first, it should be noted that the processes found were slightly different from the model by Carlsson and colleagues (2015). This shows how processes that are part of maintaining one's identity evolve and change, even in such a short difference of life span as one's late 20s and early 30s. Kroger (2002) also found that processes differed across old age for individuals who maintained identity achievement. For example, younger old adults were more engaged in tying the past to the present and 'establishing visible forms of identity continuity', while among the very old adults salient processes instead focused more on 'living in the present'. This indicates that individuals in later parts of adulthood were working to continue a sense of identity but that the identity processes aspect of how they were maintaining their identity was different depending on the age of the group. Thus, although there is little research on different processes of identity development across adulthood, it appears to be that processes of maintaining an identity vary across adulthood. However, development is influenced in many ways by the cultural context in which it is formed (Baltes et al., 1988). Sweden for example is a context in which identity can be viewed as an important individual project (Wängqvist & Frisén, 2015). Thus, it may therefore also be more central in this context to evolve and change one's identity in order for it to maintain a functional role for the individual. For future avenues for research, it is important to examine how the processes aspect of identity development changes across adulthood – also within different cultures – and what is prominent in maintaining or developing one's identity.

Process 1: Approach to Change

In the first process of identity development found in Study I, *Approach to Change*, it was surprising that commitment development in one's early 30s did not seem to be driven from any direct external influences, although there were changes in the participants' contexts. Instead, commitment development appeared to be mostly driven from more internal motivations to change and evolve previously established commitments. This was surprising as there has been a great deal of theoretical work and studies that have suggested that external causes are often part of development. For example, Bosma and Kunnen (2001) proposed that change that occurs after a conflict that cannot be assimilated into a person's present identity will induce an accommodative change. In her "calamity theory of growth" model, Anthis (2002) also showed that stressful life events, such as divorce or job loss, are associated with increased levels of identity exploration and decreases in identity commitments. It could be that external events such as those mentioned by Anthis (2002) in turn induce internal reflections. However, this connection was not very noticeable in this first process of approach to change in Study I. In the study by Carlsson and colleagues (2015), they did show that in people's late 20s the approach to changing life conditions had in fact, for some, been influenced by external aspects. These included, for example, change in occupational commitment after difficulty finding work, and changed views on the parental role or work/family priorities after becoming a parent (Carlsson et al., 2015). For development in one's early 30s, examined in Study I, although external change may have induced internal reflections for some individuals, change in commitment development was more evident in deliberations indicating an inner drive to change. Thus, findings in Study I show some similarity to the Kroger and Green study (1996), in which participants talked in retrospect about their identity development. In their study, they found that in many of the identity domains often around half of the changes related to identity status change were due to "internal changes" such as altered perspective or new awareness through introspection.

Process 2: Narrative Coherence

The second process found in Study I, *Narrative Coherence*, showed that integration of the story in terms of more narrative coherence with temporal and thematic integration was important for identity development in one's early 30s. This part of the model of identity development involved processes that are key for the narrative identity (Habermas & Bluck, 2000). Temporal integration (or chronological coherence) of the narrative and thematic integration are both components of narrative coherence (Adler et al., 2018). These two components have also been found to develop over time (Reese et al., 2011).

Results concerning the development of narrative coherence in Study I thus show that a more integrated story is an important part of the overall identity development in early adulthood. However, it could also be that individuals become better at narrating their experiences as time goes by. Although, not all individuals automatically narrated their story with more integration; thus, this skill seems to develop for some but not others. For those who did develop their story, this evolved the whole identity in a positive way, both evolving and deepening it. Earlier research within the narrative approach has also found that coherence is important for well-being. For example, Baerger and McAdams (1999) found that a coherent life story was related to well-being in terms of lower levels of depressive symptoms. This could therefore suggest that temporal and thematic integration, components of narrative coherence, may play a part in adult adaptation. However, it is important to note that narrative coherence is a complex construct, and that researchers have not always examined the same aspects of this phenomenon (Adler et al., 2018). Similarities between studies of narrative coherence coded in different ways should therefore be discussed with some caution. It should also be recognized that narrative coherence in Study I was found as a developmental theme and mechanism aspect of early adults' development, and not by applying already existing coding manuals such as those presented by Reese et al. (2011). It should thus be seen as an identity process that is salient in the identity development among early adults. For future investigations using the identity status interview narratives, it could be fruitful to examine whether already existing codebooks for narrative coherence can be used with these types of narratives (see also the methodological discussion).

Process 3: Participation in a Broader Life Context

Further, in the third process of identity development, *Participation in a Broader Life Context*, the theme of generativity and stagnation from Erikson's (1968) psychosocial theory of development central to midlife became evident. Research has shown that goals characterizing engagement in more generative tasks, for example civic involvement or improving one's community, become more noticeable as people move into midlife (McAdams, de St. Aubin, & Logan, 1993). However, in his theory, Erikson posits that even though a developmental task is more central in one part of life, it also appears in some form throughout development. Findings of this process in Study I could thus suggest that identity issues in early adulthood interact, or show signs of being intertwined, with the psychosocial task of generativity. Previous research has shown that agency and communal motivations, such as establishing or maintaining positive affective relationships with others, and feeling a sense of influence or control over another, were precursors to gener-

ative motivation in midlife adults (Peterson & Stewart, 1996). These motivational themes show some similarities to what was found in the more evolving and deepening form of *Participation in a Broader Life Context*, when it comes to how individuals made connections not only to their role in society but also to their relationships with others. With regard to the two identity statuses, identity achievement and foreclosure, that the sample in this explanatory and qualitative part of Study I consisted of, some recent research has also shown a relationship among identity and generativity linked to identity styles (Berzonsky, 2011). For example, Beaumont and Pratt (2011) found that the identity styles associated with achievement and foreclosure were related to a capacity for generativity among both young and midlife adults. Further, in their longitudinal study (ages 27, 36, 42, and 50), Pulkkinen, Lyyra, Fadjukoff, and Kokko (2016) also found that if parental identity (part of the overall identity) was achieved by age 42 then generativity scores were the highest. Thus, it could be that themes of generativity arise in early adulthood for people characterized by an identity achieved or foreclosed status (both representing committed statuses), and become more important to them when they have become parents. However, more research is needed to understand associations between identity development and issues of generativity in early adulthood. Questions that remain include how becoming a parent may influence motivations for generativity and, more specifically, how this may influence one's identity.

Identity Configurations of the Three Identity Processes

To understand more of how the identity development of individuals in their early 30s was constructed on an intra-individual level with regard to the three processes found in Study I, the concept of identity configurations was used. Erikson (1968) viewed identity formation as an evolving configuration, entailing many gradually integrating aspects of oneself in relation to society and others, evolving into what Schachter (2004, p. 170) refers to as "a single set of relations among many components" resulting in a coherent whole. It should be noted here that, in Study I, Schachter's definition of configurations concerning more how conflicting identities are managed was not employed. Instead, the mere concept of a configuration was used, characterized by the processes through which individuals develop their identity. Identity configurations can also be used to reflect on broad patterns of identity development (Syed, 2010). However, in Study I there were only 45 participants in the third and final step of this mixed-methods study investigating how the three identity processes found in early adulthood were configured. More sophisticated statistical analyses could therefore not be performed. Nonetheless, descriptively, the different configurations showed interesting patterns. Patterns

found in the two larger configurations of deepening and weakening indicated that, in terms of intra-individual identity development, this development moved in one major direction. Thus, it was very rare to develop in an evolving and deepening way while at the same time becoming more rigid and closed in another. This suggests that the three processes found in the identity development across early adulthood are associated with one another with regard to the directionality of identity development. And, most importantly, even though it could be assumed that, in theory, individuals who were identity achieved would develop in an evolving way, as they often did, these patterns were also found for half of the individuals coded to foreclosure. This could indicate that, although previous identity exploration can be facilitating, it might not always be crucial to further identity development after initial identity commitments have been made. Since identity exploration is a psychologically challenging process, it is unlikely that individuals will explore if it is not necessary (Kroger, 1996). As Waterman (1999) posited, if individuals characterized by a foreclosed status have succeeded in implementing their commitments, they might not feel pressure to change them. Or they may at least not make more extensive changes that would require them to explore new options in life. Our results, however, also indicate that some individuals in the foreclosed status, those in the weakening configuration, might have difficulty adapting their commitments when these no longer fit their circumstances. Individuals with a lack of exploration might therefore have a less stable foundation for handling identity issues during the changes and adjustments that are necessary in early adulthood. One possible explanation for why some individuals in foreclosure had deepening configurations and some weakening can be found in Kroger's (1995) differentiation between developmental and firm foreclosure. Individuals in the developmental foreclosure group are more open to future changes in their commitments than are those in the firm foreclosure group. It might be that those in developmental foreclosure more often have deepening configurations and those in firm more often have weakening configurations, but this needs to be studied further.

In sum, what has been recognized in the discussion so far is that identity development continues in early adulthood through several important processes. This identity development involves adjustment of the identity over time, with regard to not only commitments but also the story of oneself, and becoming involved in broader life contexts beyond the self. However, how an individual approaches different situations in life, for example change and the development of commitments, and reacts to situations may also be influenced by personal tendencies (Kroger, 2007). For example, if an individual is flexible and can more easily adjust in the face of a new experience or challenge in life, they may change their identity and further develop. Or, if the scenario is

the opposite, with an individual being less able to adapt to the new situation, they may need to distort the information and this might lead to their becoming more rigid and closed. In Study II of this thesis, personality constructs that may be associated with personal tendencies significant to identity development were explored, along with their relation to adult adaptation. In the following section, the development of these personality constructs over the first three decades in life and their associations with adult adaptation, including identity development, will be discussed.

Personality Development from Age 2 to 33

The results in Study II regarding ego resiliency and ego control from childhood to early adulthood show that these two personality constructs representing higher-order traits are fairly stable over the first three decades in life. Regarding rank-order stability, more stability between adjacent waves and increased levels of rank-order stability in adulthood were found. These results are in line with the cumulative principle (Roberts et al., 2008) and meta-analyses indicating that individual trait consistency is lower in earlier parts of life and becomes more consistent in adulthood (Roberts & DelVecchio, 2000). In a meta-analysis examining mean-level changes over time, it was found that social dominance, a facet of extraversion, conscientiousness and emotional stability increased over time (Roberts, Walton, & Viechtbauer, 2006). The increase was especially evident from age 20 to 40. Thus, over time people become more mature as they become more emotionally stable (low levels of neuroticisms), agreeable, contentious and dominant (Caspi et al., 2005), and this maturity is typically found in early adulthood. In Study II, results showed that development trajectories for ego control followed this maturity principle (Roberts et al., 2008), as ego control and the ability to inhibit impulses and spontaneous behavior increased over time. However, this increase leveled off in early adulthood and the growth trajectory was best represented by a quadratic trend, indicating that ego control may decline in later parts of adulthood. There is little research on how ego control develops from childhood through adulthood; thus, how ego control develops through later parts of adulthood needs to be investigated further. Ego resiliency was found to decrease from childhood to adulthood, in contrast to the maturity principle which suggests that this meta-trait should increase over time. Nonetheless, the decrease in ego resiliency over time was very small, and in early adulthood the levels of resiliency were still fairly high. Taken together, the results in Study II regarding ego development showed that ego control and

even more so ego resiliency display stability over time, indicating that they generally represent the fairly stable tendencies/characteristics part of the personality.

Associations with Well-being in Early Adulthood

Personality traits influence people's lives and are in different ways associated with, and can predict, important life outcomes such as health (John, Naumann, & Soto, 2008). Indeed, results for ego resiliency showed that level of ego resiliency from the growth model at age 33 was positively associated with self-esteem and satisfaction with life, and negatively associated with psychological distress. Results from the growth parameters also showed that the rate of change in ego resiliency from childhood to adulthood was positively associated with satisfaction with life. These findings also show some similarity to the study by Causadias and colleagues (2012). In their study of a high-risk sample, they found that higher ego resiliency in childhood was related to fewer behavioral problems in adulthood, which indicates that ego resiliency is important for positive outcomes in adulthood. Importantly, though, in Study II all associations with well-being were attenuated by Big Five personality traits. This suggests that relations between ego resiliency and well-being could be accounted for by the shared variance within lower-order traits of extraversion, openness and neuroticism. It should also be noted that there are facets below each of the Big Five traits that have shown to be important in predicting outcomes (Paunonen, & Ashton, 2001a, 2001b).

For ego control, the level of ego resiliency from the growth model at age 33 showed a small negative association with self-esteem, which attenuated but held when the Big Five traits were added to the model. Thus, in contrast to findings for ego resiliency, ego control seems to have a direct relation to well-being outcome in early adulthood. However, due to the conceptualization of this construct it is more difficult to understand what the results imply, because high levels of control are not in theory considered to be optimal for an individual; and neither are too-low levels. Theoretically, a moderate level of ego control and high levels of ego resiliency should promote positive adaptation (Block & Block 2006). However, Causadias and colleagues (2012) allocated ego control into three different groups to aid the interpretability of the results: ego-undercontrol, ideal ego control and ego-undercontrolled. Despite this, they found no effects for ego control on behavioral problems in adulthood. Much of the research conducted with ego resiliency and control has examined personality types and their relation to adaptation. For example, finding markers of attending to adult roles earlier for ego resilient individuals with moderate levels of control compared to over- and undercontrolled individuals (Dennissen et al., 2008). Future research might advance the field by

examining interactions between ego resiliency and control for outcomes of adult adaptation, in order to understand more about how this dynamic system functions in promoting positive adaptation. Taken together, results showed that growth parameters of ego resiliency and control impact outcomes on well-being in early adulthood, although these may be indirect associations through Big Five traits, conceptualized here as lower-order traits. This also shows that it may be valuable to address ego resiliency and control as part of meta-traits in the trait hierarchy, but associations with different outcomes should be considered at multiple levels of the trait hierarchy.

Ego Resiliency and Ego Control, and Big Five Traits

De Young (2006, 2015) has suggested that ego resiliency and control represent higher-order traits situated above the Big Five. In their foundation, ego resiliency and control are different from the Big Five personality traits in several ways. For example, the first is derived from a more person-centered approach describing characteristics of regulatory processes within the individual (Block & Block, 1980), whereas the Big Five personality traits, or Five-factor model, come from a variable-centered approach (Roberts, Wood, & Caspi, 2008). Robins and colleagues (1996) also refer to ego resiliency and control as conceptually different from the Big Five dimensions as they address different aspects of individual differences. The former investigate the nature of the regulatory mechanism that influences individual behavior, and the latter personality as individual differences in behavior (Robins et al., 1996). Robins and colleagues (1996) have also found that different personality types in adolescence showed coherent relations with the Big Five personality traits as well as ego resiliency and ego control. Findings from a meta-analysis examining different measures of ego resilience also showed that for ego resiliency there were positive relations between extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness and openness (Oshio, Taku, Hirano, & Saeed, 2018). There were also overall negative associations between ego resiliency and neuroticisms. The authors of this study therefore concluded that ego resiliency is positively associated with more mature Big Five traits. Indeed, findings in Study II showed similar positive associations between ego resiliency and the more mature Big Five traits extraversion, conscientiousness, and to a lesser extent agreeableness, and negative associations for neuroticisms. Earlier displays of these relations between ego resiliency and Big Five traits were found (from around age 7), and correlations became stronger more proximal to early adulthood. However, future studies need to further examine these relations as well as how both ego resiliency and ego control can be understood as higher-order traits in the trait taxonomy (DeYoung, 2015).

Associations between ego control and Big Five traits are more problematic to discuss (as noted above), as high levels of control and low levels of control are not considered to be adaptive; rather, moderate levels of ego control are optimal (Block & Block, 2006). However, similar to previous studies (Letzring et al., 2005), findings in Study II suggest that from age 15 onward low control is associated with being more extraverted at age 33; or, the other way around – high control is associated with introversion. Characteristics of an extraverted person fit into this concept of how the regulating process of ego control may be viewed in behavior as people with low control, for example, are described as socially skilled and charming (Letzring et al., 2005). In contrast to previous findings that show negative associations between low control and being emotionally bland (Letzring et al., 2005), ego control was positively related to neuroticism. This indicates that people who are more emotionally stable (the opposite of high neuroticisms, and should be less emotionally bland) have lower ego control. In theory, ego control should be associated with a mix of both positive and negative characteristics (Block, 2002), which the study by Letzring et al. (2005) also suggests. Although results in Study II seem to indicate that lower ego control is mostly associated with favorable characteristics, and vice versa for high control, these results should be interpreted with caution. For instance, there may be missing information about variability regarding narrower representations (i.e., facets) of the Big Five traits that could shed more light on positive and negative characteristics related to ego control.

Associations between Ego Resiliency and Ego Control and Identity Development in Early Adulthood

Theoretically, there should be associations between personality and identity (McAdams & Pals, 2006; Syed, 2017). Connections between the personality constructs of ego resiliency and control could, in theory, be related to positive identity development in adulthood. In this case (Study II), markers of an achieved identity status indicated high exploration processes and high degree of commitment, since this represents the most mature identity development. For example, Fadjukoff and colleagues (2019) found that female and male personality style groups with more adaptive adjustment were characterized throughout adulthood (from age 27 up to 50) by high identity achievement. Thus, in theory, an optimal combination of ego resiliency and ego control (i.e., high resiliency and moderate levels of control) would represent individuals with more adaptive regulatory processes. Thus, change in these personality constructs over time could also be hypothesized to predict outcomes of identity development in adulthood. However, in Study II, growth parameters of ego resiliency and ego control showed no significant associations with

identity development (i.e., identity exploration and commitment); neither did proximal correlations for ego resiliency and identity development at age 33 (with the exception of small correlations to exploration and commitment).

However, we did find that, for late childhood and more so in adolescence (age 15), there were positive correlations between ego resiliency and identity development regarding commitments within global identity, occupation, romance and the work/family priorities domain. At age 15 there were also positive associations with previous exploration for global identity, occupation and the priorities domain. Findings in this study also showed that for ego control there were negative correlations to commitment in global identity, romance and the priorities domain in childhood and adolescence. Research suggests that youth personalities are associated with important life outcomes (Soto & Tackett, 2015), so it may be that the results could be understood as early predictors influencing more mature identity development in early adulthood (i.e., previous exploration and commitments represent the identity achieved status). However, it should be noted that for participants at age 15 it was their mother who rated their ego resiliency and control. This would indicate that mothers perceive something in their youth's ability to be flexible and resilient while restraining impulses at a moderate level that seem to be associated to a more sophisticated identity development in early adulthood. These findings are surprising but could be understood in line with what Soto and Tackett (2015) suggests that higher order traits such as those of self regulation may be more prominent in parents' perception of youths' behavior. Could it be that mothers can perceive their youth's ability to be resilient and control and that this is adaptive for the youth's future and positive identity development?

Methodological Considerations

Conducting Mixed-Methods Research

The first study of this thesis employed a mixed-methods approach. Some of the core characteristics presented in Creswell and Clark (2011) on mixed-methods research are that the data should be collected and analyzed through both quantitative and qualitative measures/methods, and that these different forms of data should be combined or integrated. The research design in mixed-methods research should also be guided by the combination of the two procedures, and one or both types of data should be prioritized in this design. Further, there are different types of research problems that are suited for mixed methods, and in Study I this method was employed to explain initial results. This particular way of approaching a research problem can start off

with a quantitative part investigating and predicting a phenomenon, which is then further explored through qualitative analyses to better understand the processes aspect of the phenomenon being explored (Creswell & Clark, 2011). An advantage of employing mixed methods in research is that it can provide a way to answer questions that qualitative or quantitative methods on their own cannot answer, but this also means that the researchers need to be familiar with these types of methods (Creswell & Clark, 2011). In Study I it was an advantage that there were several authors involved in the analyses (although the main part of the analyses was conducted by the first author), and that enough time was set aside for this study to allow the process to take time rather than rushing the steps.

Further, the particular mixed-methods design used in Study I was an explanatory mixed-methods design (Nastasi, Hitchcock, & Brown, 2010). In this type of design, the quantitative data often takes priority in addressing the research question. The second phase follows this quantitative step with qualitative data that helps explain the results in the first, quantitative, step of the study. Thus, the research question addressed in the second step of analysis is guided by the quantitative findings in the first step. One of the challenges with this study design is that the researchers need to decide what findings need to be explained (Creswell & Clark, 2011). In Study I, after interpreting the analyses in the first part, the determination was made that the most common pattern of identity status development across both ages 25 and 29, as well as between ages 29 and 33, was the most valuable to investigate. This determination was based not only on an interpretation of the results as being the most common, but also after conferring with the literature within the field and a previous study within the same longitudinal project (Carlsson et al., 2015). In addition, there was also a question raised in the field as to whether the identity status approach could capture the identity development in adulthood (Kroger, 2015). We therefore found that, since there should be more to a stable identity development in early adulthood than can be captured with the identity status, we needed to investigate this pattern further to explain the quantitative results. However, there were of course other patterns that could have been equally important to shed light on to better understand the development in early adulthood. One of these interesting patterns involved individuals who moved from identity achievement back to foreclosure, and were then rated as identity achieved again in their early 30s – i.e. an A-F-A pattern (9 individuals in Study I). This movement could indicate a change in the lives of these individuals that might have been equally valuable to investigate in order to explain what this cycle movement entails. Nevertheless, we made the decision that investigating the "superstable" pattern of identity status development as part of the explanatory sequence part of Study I could contribute to

the research field and to our understanding of what identity development in early adulthood (the main research question proposed in this study) entails.

Measuring Identity Development

There are many different ways to measure identity development, even within the different approaches to identity. Some of these ways will be discussed, since they may in various ways influence the results and the comparability to findings in other research. In Study I, identity status was assessed using the identity status interview (Marcia et al., 1993). The interview is designed to capture individuals' identity formation in terms of how, when and why a person's identity came to be (Kroger & Marcia, 2011). To ensure that this method of capturing exploration and commitment processes is not dependent on the participant's verbal ability, both the form of questioning and having trained interviewers reduce this risk. For example, the semi-structured interview guides the interviewer to probe enough so that the interviewee is able to recall, for example, relevant identity explorations occurring in the past (Marcia, 2007). This type of interview also calls for interviewers who are familiar with the concept of the identity processes, and who have been trained in interviewing to follow up with questions when needed. However, this procedure involving extensive interviewing is rather lengthy and may, especially within longitudinal research, limit the number of participants. Another way to measure identity is through the use of questionnaires, for example employed within the dual-cycle perspective of the identity status, that have further elaborated on Marcia's work and derived different types of exploration and commitment development (Crocetti, Rubini, & Meeus, 2008; Luyckx, Goossens, Soenens, & Beyers, 2006). With the use of these types of approaches to measuring and examining identity status, information from more participants can be collected and the coding procedure is more straightforward as it does not require trained interviewers that participants are able to verbalize their experiences (see also limitations below). They can also be used to distinguish between the different types of exploration and commitment that are part of forming and reforming the identity (Crocetti et al., 2008; Luyckx, et al., 2006). However, there has been little research with this perspective in adulthood. Interestingly though, and surprisingly, one of the studies that have measured identity development in adulthood with dual-cycle constructs found no evidence of foreclosure (Arneaud, Alea, & Espinet, 2016). Given that the committed statuses are present in adulthood (see, e.g., Cramer, 2004; Fadjukoff et al., 2005, 2016), this would suggest that there are differences in how this perspective captures foreclosure in adulthood. Although there are many advantages to using questionnaires for assessing identity status, the identity status interviews are more consistent with Marcia's (2007) theory of identity

formation and also allow qualitative investigations beyond what questionnaires can capture. Additionally, we know very little of adults' identity development (Fadjukoff & Kroger, 2016); and in a field where little research has been conducted, interviews also provide data for more in-depth qualitative investigations. Qualitative data can capture individual experiences while recognizing general patterns, and can thus provide possibilities to generate new knowledge on identity development in adulthood.

With regard to employing the identity status model to examine the narrative identity or identity narratives, which is employed in the qualitative investigations of Study I, there are some issues concerning the conceptualization of what a narrative identity is, or consists of. In narrative identity research, people's stories about their experiences in life are subject to the research and analyses (McAdams, 1985, 2013; Adler et al., 2017). However, in this study, the narratives from the identity status interview were conceptualized as narratives. These interview narratives concern stories of how people arrived at their present identity but, strictly speaking, participants are not asked to share a story of some kind and they are also not asked how the experience or an event has influenced their identity (see, e.g., McAdams, 2008, life story interview). Thus, some elements that are involved in the autobiographical process of the narratives, important to the narrative identity, are not specifically asked for; neither are stories of particular important events, such as high points, low points, turning points and so forth, that represent significant experiences of the narrative identity (McAdams, 1985). However, part of the foundations for narrative identity is that people do tell stories about themselves, and not only when they are asked about specific experiences. This is also evident in the identity status interview narratives, in which the participants provide stories and rich qualitative material that can be used in qualitative analyses for examining how people narrate their identity development in important areas of life. For future investigations, it would be of importance to further examine how narratives gained from, for example, the status interview are different from more specific event-centered approaches, and whether there are any differences in the autobiographical processes and how people construct their identities through narratives.

Measuring Personality Development

Measuring personality across time, especially such a long time span as was examined in Study II, from childhood to adulthood, can be difficult. What are considered to be markers for and representative of personality in childhood may not be the same as in adolescence or, for that matter, adulthood. In order to try to overcome this in Study II, scales for ego resiliency and ego control were constructed through three different approaches: one representing

Blocks' prototype items (2008) for ego resiliency and ego control, with the measure used through all waves of this longitudinal project (the CCQ set); one drawing on scale items used in research conducted with children and adolescent (Eisenberg et al., 1996); and one comparing these items to work and scales involving the age appropriation q-sort items in adulthood, the California Adult Q-set (CAQ) (Letzring et al., 2005). These scales (six in total) were then subsequently used in the study to test the robustness of the findings. However, and even if the items used were slightly altered throughout the longitudinal study to fit the aging participants, it might be that results would have been different if items had been worded differently. For example, the items used in the CCQ measure, or the q card sort, refer to more general tendencies of how an individual acts (Block & Block, 1980). Later elaborations of the ego resiliency construct, for example, have created scales with items that might have a better face validity, as they more directly describe behavior related to what an ego resilient or ego controlled behavior entails for adult individuals (Letzring et al., 2005).

Furthermore, the CCQ as a measure (Block & Block, 1980) was not initially intended to be used to create scales of ego resiliency and ego control. This is a q-sort instrument, in which all 100 cards are placed in a certain order depending on their represent ability of a person's characteristics (Block, 1961). Then, with several experts' ratings of, for example, how a resilient person should be and act (sorted with all 100 cards), these ratings are considered composites of a resilient prototype, to which all participants are compared. This means that each participant's q-sort with the 100 cards is then compared to the prototype in order to gain a score that indicates whether they are either more or less related to the construct, for example ego resiliency. As mentioned earlier, the q-sort and the CCQ set used in Study II are therefore an ipsative measure, which also means that the scores on each scale for ego resiliency and control used in Study II are not fully independent from each other. However, many researchers have used the same approach and further validated scales drawn from both prototype items used in the CCQ measure for ego resiliency and control (Eisenberg et al., 1986; Eisenberg et al., 2003, 2004; Letzring et al., 2005) and also when these are drawn from card sorts (see, e.g., Martel et al., 2007).

Limitations

One of the limitations in both Studies I and II is the small sample, which restricts the generalizations that can be made. However, although the sample

size and representability were not optimal, it must also be considered that this is a longitudinal study spanning many years with several measurement points, and that it thus provides some important indications as to how people develop over time.

Another important limitation in Study I is that the overall weighted kappa of the three processes in the model of identity development was below .70 (.65). Particularly Process 3, *Participation in a Broader Life Context*, had values that were not particularly high. However, kappa is not always an objective measure of reliability (Brennan & Prediger, 1981; Syed & Nelson, 2015). It should be noted that in cases in which the two raters disagreed, the disagreement was never between the two endpoints. Further, the categorizations to the deepening and weakening parts of establishing the participant's identity development in early adulthood may reduce some of the complexity by again categorizing identity development. However, it should be noted that this could also be seen, rather than as reducing the complexity, as one way to bring the field forward. Kroger (2015) has suggested that similar categorizations may help distinguish different forms of new identity-defining directions in people's development beyond adolescence. Another limitation in relation to this coding of the 45 participants' development is that the authors who were part of this coding also performed some of the identity status interviews. They may therefore have had knowledge about who was assigned to foreclosure or identity achievement. This might have had an impact on how these participants were coded (i.e., to deepening or weakening categories). However, it should be noted that, although the coders may have had this preexisting knowledge, the identity status of the individual was not labeled in the text material that was used. This material was also based on two different interviews, which in most cases were not performed by the same interviewer. Thus, the coders' awareness of identity status, in relation to the text material employed for thematic analyses and later the coding to deepening and weakening categories, was limited.

There are also some limitations with regard to using the identity status interview (employed in both Studies I and II) to assess status, instead of questionnaires, for example. It has been suggested that assessment based on interviews is influenced by the participants' ability to verbally express themselves (van Hoof, 1999). Or it could also be that participants do not share previous parts of themselves, or do not remember that they have explored alternatives before establishing commitments. However, to avoid such limitations, trained interviewers performed the interviews and the identity status interview is also designed to limit the assessment of verbal ability rather than actual identity status (Marcia et al., 1993).

With regard to specific limitations in Study II, one was that different raters were used: first the participants' mothers, and then from age 21 the participants themselves. This can also be seen in the results, where from age 15 to 21 there are sometimes larger leaps or stronger associations with the outcome measures at age 33, either after or before the rater change. However, when assessing small children (this study started when the participants were 2 years old), mothers' or fathers' ratings of their children are commonly used (Soto & Tackett, 2015). It would of course then be even better to also have the participant's ratings of their personality along with their rating at, for example, age 15 when the rater changed in this study, for comparison across raters. However, when the findings are discussed in Study II, the influence of different raters and what the results actually reflect are taken into consideration. In relation to this, a limitation is also that we did not have the variables used in earlier waves as outcomes of adaptation in adulthood. This might have facilitated the understanding of the results, for example, to shed more light on relations between ego resiliency and identity development during adolescence. Another important limitation in Study II is the conclusions that can be drawn from ego resiliency and control in relation to adult adaptation when the interaction between the two constructs is not considered. In theory, levels of these two personality constructs should interact, and in relation to different situations. However, the restriction of the sample size made this problematic to investigate in this longitudinal study. Avenues for future research include investigating ego resiliency and control, the interaction between these two constructs, and their associations with adaptation in different situations.

Ethical Considerations

In accordance with the Swedish Ethical Review Act (SFS 2003:460), the ethical review committee in Gothenburg has reviewed and approved this study (Wave 8, dnr: 311-06; Wave 9, dnr: 206-11; Wave 10, dnr: 263-15). Overall, the risks for discomfort and integrity intrusion are low. In the studies, the information the participants chose to share (and have chosen to share in previous waves of the project) is used with their consent (Swedish Research Council, 2017). One ethical concern regarding this type of study might be that some participants may feel obligated to continue their participation since they have been part of the study before. Therefore, during data collection it has been stressed that participants can terminate their participation in the study at any time, without having to give any reason for this. Also, some

of the questions in both the interviews and the questionnaires have a personal quality. Here too, participants have been informed that they can always, without having to give a reason, choose not to answer a question. In the interviews used to assess identity status and the background interview, it has been acknowledged that participants who for whatever reason do not wish to become parents, now or ever, might be uncomfortable with questions concerning future parenthood. Therefore, in the interview situation it has been emphasized that these questions concern feelings and thoughts about not wanting to become a parent, as well as about wanting to become one. The interviews are semi-structured and therefore also adjusted to every participant's personal situation. Furthermore, all interviewers who performed the interviews were well trained in psychological interviewing and prepared to handle possible discomfort caused by the questions asked in the study. Taken together, the ethical considerations were present and guided the data collection and handling of the material used in the studies of this thesis.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the two studies of this thesis demonstrate how people develop over time in terms of personality and identity. In Study I, findings showed that across early adulthood more individuals are characterized by processes representing more mature identity status development (i.e., identity achievement with exploration and commitment). Findings also showed that stability in committed statuses was by far the most common pattern across early adulthood. Analyses of narratives from people with these stable patterns showed that, despite the stability that identity status investigations might imply, there are important processes that are part of this identity development. Overall, the results of this study indicate that to maintain a sense of self over time there is a need for the individual to adjust and evolve their identity through early adulthood.

Study II examined personality development of the meta-traits ego resiliency and ego control from childhood to early adulthood. The findings indicated strong stability of ego resiliency, in terms of both rank-order and mean-level change. Ego control also demonstrated stability over the full time span, but there was greater change in childhood. Ego resiliency and control were associated with adult well-being, but these associations were generally accounted for by the Big Five traits. Finally, ego resiliency and control in childhood were associated with adult identity development, suggesting that personality traits could give an early indication of identity processes.

Taken together, the studies of this thesis show how identity and personality, two central aspects of development, evolve over time and are related. The two studies of this thesis focus especially on the period of early adulthood, and demonstrate how people maintain their identity and how earlier personality development can influence adaptation in early adulthood.

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APPENDIX

I. Eriksson, P. L., Wängqvist, M., Carlsson, J., & Frisén, A. (2019). *Beyond Personal Aspirations – A Longitudinal Study of Identity Development in Early Adulthood.* Manuscript in preparation.

II. Syed, M., Eriksson, P. L., Frisén, A., Hwang, P. C., Lamb, M. (2019). *Personality Development from Age 2 to 33: Stability and Change in Ego Resiliency and Ego Control and Associations with Adult Adaptation*. Manuscript under review.