Sangeeta Bagga-Gupta
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Julie Feilberg *Editors*

Identity Revisited and Reimagined

Empirical and Theoretical Contributions on Embodied Communication Across Time and Space

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On being, becoming and belonging
and
other positionings in the 21st century

"The Sanskrit word dharma *is the nearest synonym [...] for the word civilisation... The specific meaning of* dharma *is that principle which holds us firm together and leads us to our best welfare. The radical meaning of this word is the essential quality of a thing"*

—Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore
1861–1941, Crisis in Civilisation & Other Essays, 18–19

Foreword

Identity is a heavily researched field, studied from multiple angles and through diverse lenses and in different settings, whether those of different institutions within, or sectors of, society. Some approaches look at the predictable configurations of identity, or the factors that contribute to formation, display and components of identity. Others try to work out the structure or shape to the diverse manifestations of identity, and still others study identity according to categories and traditions of different academic disciplines, or inform analysis of identity through examination of incidents taken to illustrate or instantiate the psychological, linguistic, philosophical, sociological or embodied character of identity. This volume breaks new ground in approach and content, summed up in its title of a*revisiting* of the approaches to identity scholarship to*reimagine* the object of analysis. The volume is extremely well edited by Sangeeta Bagga-Gupta, Aase Lyngvær Hansen and Julie Feilberg so that despite the wide range of studies, approaches, settings and problems discussed they are held together by a common emphasis of combining empirical documentation with refined thinking. The revisiting takes the reader across the global North and global South, to and in virtual worlds, as well as settings of immediate physical and spatial contact between actors and in an array of kinds of identity, including the various ways that ability, physical and otherwise, is marked and constructed in social life.

This book aims to transcend limitations of identity scholarship so much of which has been framed by static concepts and non-dynamic understandings of the individual self, relations between individual and group, and the dynamic interplay of the multiple groups and identities that individuals negotiate and affirm/deny in various interactions. For this reason, the chapters make complexity and diversity a central element of analysis. Many contributors stress intersectional stances and most report empirically driven studies of local work, often taking a micro-level analysis. Inevitably, perhaps, communication is always involved, internal communication of an identity forming or identity displaying group, and external communication between that group and various interlocutors beyond it. Communication involves a fusion of structure and purpose, the structure comes to us from the past, such as the words and forms of expression that our languages bequeath us, and our application

of those in original meaning making in the present for our specific purposes. The form that communication takes combines the inherited and validated patterns of the past with pragmatic needs in the here and now. Between these planes, but structuring them too, is a space where identities are played out as interlocutors seek not only to send messages but to be present and identified with these messages in the context of actually occurring interaction. In this way, communication patterns we inherit are also changed to make room for how new identity formations name the world and seek to change it in their image.

All chapters represent a challenge to analyses of identity that make use of demarcated fields of study, with their bounded high abstractions, whether of gender, race, or language grouping, and instead turn the spotlight to identity as a social practice, negotiated and enacted in encounters, always interactional though often framed by inherited (historical) formations.

In my own work on language policy in conflict zones in Southeast Asia, I read this volume with an eye to what it can teach us about struggle in the social and public life of communities. The struggle I have in mind is that in which national institutions are confronted with demands for recognition of difference, and how this difference or these multiple differences are represented, displayed, negotiated, accommodated or repudiated. The social identity formations, the "new" identities that demand inclusion, are themselves, sometimes if not often, struggling for internal self-definition even as they demand the institutions of their society acknowledge their presence. What we need to learn from researchers of identity is a response to the new kinds of conflict, struggle and demands in today's world, between citizens and states and their autonomous institutions, networks and discourses. These new kinds of conflict are widespread, after all, despite proclamations that the world is getting more peaceable (cf Steven Pinker 2011, *The Better Angels of Our Nature: Why Violence has Declined*) there is immense conflict at the sub-national level all across the world in which something like identity is present, prominent, and problematical. In a review of the Pinker book, philosopher John Gray described it as an "attempt to ground the hope of peace in science", and while science in the sense intended is unlikely to produce peace, research, knowledge accumulation and reflection and dialogue must play their proper roles.

The contemporary science of conflict analysis is in any case muddled, even at the most basic level of quantification. Some claim that overall levels of violence and conflict are at historically low levels and declining, contested by research that shows multiplying forms and intensifying levels of violence, tension, and dislocation globally.

Conflict today is most often intra- and sub-national, some of it intergenerational, rather than the more conventionally identified international and sharp-focused wars that flare and end and that make up the bulk of what is taught in history curriculums in schools. There are innumerable instances of conflict today that is chronic in nature, and within polities rather than between them, and within many polities that are secure and unlikely to dissipate. The boundaries of conflict are less and less about nation and territory, though there are too many conventional conflicts as well, and more and more conflicts within nations and networked across them. This new

geography of conflict is not itself completely new, but certainly more pronounced, more spread, and perhaps more intractable than before, and infused with disputes characterized by rival and seemingly irreconcilable differences of identity.

These problems give rise to the critical importance of research on identity and have given rise to new thinking about conflict and conflict types. One clear example is the work of "new war" scholars emerging in the last decades, who aim to open up understanding of the new shape and form of violent conflict. Silent or absent in much of this literature are questions of language and culture grievance even though language and culture grievance are often present, but also silenced or absent is any "re-visiting" or "re-imagining" of identity, such as is undertaken in this book.

Some conflicts are network based. Network conflicts involve a struggle for power beyond state actors alone, such as in Syria today, where global non-state armed groups, religiously defined, nationality defined and ideologically defined actors, some aspiring to statehood, others wanting to preserve current statehood or to dismantle existing states, are all involved. Ethno-linguistic grievance, and demands for restitution and recognition of past injustice also serve to surface new kinds of conflict or new dimensions to existing conflict. It would be incorrect to imagine that these are new in any totally original unprecedented sense. Their newness resides in the hybrid forms they take and the globalization of the identity formations that instantaneous communications and the multicultural realities of most nation states make possible. It is in much more complex polities that new conflicts occur and in which new kinds of identity offer us entrée to understanding and to the possibility of mitigation of tension and problems. In this context, new research evidence and considered reflections on the problematic of identity are welcome and those reported in this fine book are an important instalment in this wider task of helping us, as citizens and as scholars, to contribute to forging new kinds of social relations that are collaborative, inclusive and peaceable. Another practical need is to better inform dialogue and facilitation methods used in post-conflict negotiations so that these are more grounded in the reality of new formations of identity.

It has long been apparent that the gulf that predictably and profoundly stalks academic life, between reflection and action, and that gives rise to popular characterizing of ivory towers and unworldly academics, is not only regrettable but also dangerous. It is often deeply untrue. This is partly because the academy itself is a real part of the real world, whose inhabitants (scholars, researchers and teachers) engage continuously with the practical and the everyday, perhaps not always with their research, but at least in their "other life" as citizens. For this reason, the extreme version of the stereotype of unworldly ivory tower academics is often plain wrong. In any case, not all scholarship needs to engage with the everyday and the practical. Yet there remains much to lament about separation between "the academy" and "the world" in many areas where knowledge generated through research and reflection can improve social and community life.

When scholarship reflects on issues so critical to the conduct of social and political life divisions between "theory" and "practice" worlds must be overcome. The reflected, reflexive and nuanced considerations of phenomena in the academy,

on topics such as identity, and the daily practical tasks of tackling identity conflicts and problems in civil life, work, and education, need to be brought into interaction with each other. Identity is a topic of today, for the world of today, with consequences for aspirations of equality, participation and intercultural communication that motivate many of us in our work as both scholars and citizens. The innovative work of scholars who might offer hope for new ways to work with problematical concepts needs to be connected quickly and substantively to the work of practitioners in a range of fields where identity problems pose serious challenges to institutional or civic life.

Politicians frequently describe social cohesion as reliant on the vehicles of shared language, common citizenship, sense of belonging and democratic expression. All these remain important instruments and practices for coherence and resilience, but the proliferation of ways in which groups identify and their desires for identity recognition impose on us a need to expand, extend and deepen our understanding of how socially cohesive public life can be imagined.

Identity is a predictable and profound component of the roiling tensions of our contemporary world yet its treatment in journalistic coverage and political debate is superficial and outdated. We need the kind of steady, sobering, historically attuned and globally oriented scholarship the chapter authors in this book offer us, on identity and its complexities, to take into our classrooms, research projects and civic life. But we also need to adapt, communicate and exchange identity research work with policy makers, conflict analysts, social planners and a host of others, who also do "identity work" as they manage relations between people within nations or institutions, delivering services and distributing goods, making economies function, promoting welfare and equality and supporting civil peaceful civil co-existence.

The stable identity formations of ethnic culture, official language, national state and organized religion of the past are today multiplied and supplemented by new formations and new elements of identity. Lobby groups, promotional interests and other forms of political representation give voice to these mixed, diverse and mobile configurations of the ways in which the social spaces we inhabit are proliferating with social groupings to which we are attached and which interact with each other. At the beginning of 2017, there can hardly be a more urgent task than for researchers to revisit and reimagine identity, and to then engage with policy makers about the new formations that constitute our social selves, and participate in the design of the practices and understandings of an improved civil life for all.

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Preface

While there is no dearth of scientific literature in the area of identity, a common point of departure in dealing with it is from philosophical, policy studies and/or political science points of view. Another routine manner in which identity gets approached in research is through sector framed domains that build upon identity categories such as gender, ethnicity, class, functional dis/abilities, nation state. Disciplinary framed fields such as education, special education, health sciences, including the multidisciplinary fields of language and communication studies, disability studies, gender studies, have focused the concept of identity in a range of ways. Such an interest often tends to be discussed in terms of what can be called "identity sectors".

The majority of institutional settings such as K-12 education, higher education, care services, including special interest groups, provide enclaves that encompass people of *all* ages, gender, class, race, functional abilities, etc. While this is also the case in everyday life contexts inside and outside institutional settings, certain institutions (for instance, governments, company boardrooms) tend to be homogenous as far as identity markers such as gender, ethnicity and functional ability are concerned.

The empirically framed theoretical contributions in this book explore dimensions of life inside and outside institutional settings that allow for dynamic viewings of human identity processes. Going beyond traditional identity sectors explicitly, the contributions both revisit and reimagine identity positions in settings across the global North and the global South. They also traverse across face-to-face and digital sites, bringing with it dialoguing in the current age of ubiquitous virtual communication and globalization. Highlighting the need to recognize decolonial perspectives, the use of concepts such as the "global North" and "global South" attempts to frame all geopolitical spaces, including Nordic nation states like those of Norway and Sweden, in terms of contexts where marginalization and colonial power hierarchies have existed and continue to exist. This then goes beyond understandings of nation states in terms of historical coloniality and opens up for the recognition of current ways in which marginalization processes get played out across the globe.

In addition to going beyond bounded identity fields and challenging static and demarcated descriptions of identity, the chapters in this book present theoretical and/or empirical explorations of the ways in which human beings position themselves and get positioned across sites in different practices. Taking a social practice perspective, the chapters in this book build upon the premise that both institutions and individuals are shaped by the "living and daily doings" of members of institutions in different settings. Each contribution takes as its point of departure the complexities that characterize and shape both individuals and communities—past and present, engaging with the increasing pace of change and diversification that interfaces at global, geopolitical and local scales. In other words, the contributions take a social practice perspective as a point of departure for exploring the performance, living and doing of identity positions across time and space. Many of the contributions take an intersectional stance and the majority report upon empirically driven studies that explore the ways in which micro- as well as multi-scalar analyses of naturally occurring human communication and behaviours contribute to our understanding of identification processes; the ways in which more recent dialogical and social theoretical-analytical frameworks allow for attending to the complexity and dynamics of identity processes; the ways in which institutional settings, media settings, community of practices and affinity spaces provide affordances and obstacles for different types of identity positions; and the ways in which shifts in identity positions can be traced across time and space (in for instance, interactional and/or historical data).

In other words, this book explicitly focuses ongoing or recently completed research that discusses results specifically from a social practice perspective, representing different domains and disciplines that build upon interactional and/or historical studies where identity positions and processes are centre-staged. Secondly, the book's contribution lies in the fact that it explicitly discusses methodological and conceptual issues of relevance in the light of present-day diversification, including virtual and physical mobility across time and space. The chapters challenge demarcated fields of study and conceptions of identity *as* gender, identity*as* functional disability, identity*as* race, identity*as* or based upon language groupings, etc. Furthermore, the book offers theoretical and methodological discussions by contributors whose empirical work illustrates global North–South perspectives. Finally, an important and unique contribution of the book is mainstreaming not only marginalized areas of study (for instance, the area of disability and differently abled studies, gender studies) but also bringing into the mainstream voices of marginalized authors and reviewers (including authors and reviewers with diverse experiences within scholarship).

The vast majority of the individual contributions in the book "Identity Revisited and Reimagined" have developed from further reviewed and revised versions of selected peer-reviewed drafts presented and discussed at the international conference–workshop "Revisiting Identities, REID" organized by the CCD, Communication, Culture and Diversity research environment in Sweden (www.ju.se/ccd). The conference was awarded a grant by the Swedish Research Council. In addition to this grant, we would like to acknowledge support grants awarded to the

REID project by (i) the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at Örebro University, Sweden, (ii) NTNU, Trondheim, Norway, and (iii) the Center for Rehabilitation Research, Örebro County Council, Sweden. Resources from the CCD research environment and the hospitality offered by the Statped Midt at Trondheim, Norway, have made possible editorial meetings during 2015 and 2016. We also gratefully acknowledge the unflinching administrative support of Ms. Kicki Ekberg for the CCD activities that lead up to REID and this volume. Finally, the support of the Springer publication team headed by Hendrikje Tuerlings and including Esther Otten and Cynthia Kroonen is gratefully acknowledged.

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The book "Identity Revisited and Reimagined. Empirical and Theoretical Contributions Across Time and Space" is divided into four parts. Part I consists of four chapters that contribute to the theme "Conceptual Framings of Identity in a Multifaceted World". Part II, "Making, Undoing and Remaking: Performing Identities", presents work in three chapters. The next three chapters in the book come together in Part III: "Politically Framed Identities in Embodied Interaction". The final part in this book, "Identity Work in Institutional and Technology Mediated Environments", presents studies in four chapters. A short editorial introduction opens each of the four sections that make up this book. A Foreword by Prof. Joseph Lo Bianco, chair of Language and Literacy Education, Melbourne Graduate School of Education, University of Melbourne, Australia, presents an introductory commentary related to identity, peace and conflict mediation and situates the book against current geopolitical issues across planet earth. An Afterword presents reflections on the volume by senior professor Roger Säljö from Gothenburg University, Sweden.

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The original version of the book frontmatter was revised: Editor affiliation in copyright page has been updated and abstracts for all chapters in online version have been included. The erratum to the chapter is available at 10.1007/978-3-319-58056-2_15

Contents

Editors and Contributors

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Abbreviations

CCM	Chama cha Mapinduzi (The party of the Revolution) (political party)
CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
cf.	*confer*, see also
CIC	Categorization of Identities and Communication
CIRCA	Clandestine Insurgent Radical Clown Army
COP 15	Fifteenth session of the Conference of the Parties
CORE	Congress of Racial Equality
CUF	Civic United Front (political party)
DAS	Deaf Acculturation Scale
DIMuL	"Doing Identity in and through Multilingual Literacy Practices", project name
e.g.	*example given*, for example
ECTS-credit	European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System credit
EMCA	Ethnomethodological Conversation Analysis
f.	following (page, line)
ff.	following (pages, lines)
FinSL	Finnish Sign Language
GNU	Government of National Unity
i.e.	*id est*, that means
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
ibid.	*ibidem*, in the same place
IOC	International Olympic committee
LGBT	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender/Transsexual
LGBTQ	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered and queer
LIMCUL	The Swedish National Research School "Young People's Literacies, Multilingualism and Cultural Practice in Everyday Society". The research school is supported by the Swedish Research Council
MCA	Membership Categorization Analysis

MDA	Mediated Discourse Analysis
NSL	Norwegian sign language
SFI	Swedish for Immigrants
SLA	Second-Language Acquisition
SLL	Second-Language Learning
UN	United Nations
UNMOVIC	United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission
USA	United States of America
VME	Video Mediated Environment, or video-*only* mediated environment
WMD	Weapons of Mass Destruction

List of Figures

List of Tables

List of Transcripts

Part I
Conceptual Framings of Identity in a Multifaceted World

Theorizing issues related to identity from a range of ways, the four chapters that constitute the first part of the volume "*Identity Revisited and Reimagined. Empirical and Theoretical Contributions Across Time and Space*" present conceptual framings related to identity in and across spaces, interactions, methodologies, and mobilities. Going beyond essentialistic bounded understandings of identity, or the novelty ascribed to human diversity across spaces in the twenty-first century, the individual chapters in this part highlight the many-ways-of-being (particularly Chaps. 1 and 4), the embodiment and resistance or counter-positionings (particularly Chaps. 2 and 3), and the contextualization of performances of identity (all four chapters) in and across time and space. They contribute to furthering our understandings of "normal diversity" (compare with super/hyper-diversity) and theorize identity in a multifaceted world.

In Chap. 1, "Many Ways-of-Being Across Sites. Identity as (Inter)action," Sangeeta Bagga-Gupta, Julie Feilberg, and Aase Lyngvær Hansen call attention to how identity gets framed in both everyday media contexts and research contexts across time and space. Their chapter challenges specific ways-of-being that get fossilized in traditional identification categories across contexts. Bagga-Gupta, Feilberg, and Hansen focus identity positions and research on aspects of identity, by taking a point of departure in the geopolitical spaces of Norway and Sweden, including virtual spaces and academic global spaces. Focusing identity discussions by representatives of "Generation Z" (among other sources), the chapter aims to illustrate key conceptual dimensions prevalent in contemporary human and social science theories of identity. The work presented in this chapter builds upon an understanding of identity as interaction and multiple ways-of-being, where diversity is a cornerstone concept. The chapter aims to tweeze out commonsensical understandings as they are represented in mass-media texts; trace a brief historical development and focus of research on identity in some Scandinavian contexts; and finally, highlight the ways decolonial perspectives can (potentially) shape academic work on identity.

David Block in Chap. 2 "Positioning Theory and Life-Story Interviews: Discursive Fields, Gaze and Resistance" offers a working model for making sense of life-story interviews, including embodied interactions that transpire during them. This model extends positioning theory and makes use of the concept of discursive fields as a backdrop. Block argues that we need to take an approach to life-story interviews which moves beyond an exclusively microlevel analysis (examining, e.g., the minutest of features of spoken language, such as pronoun use or accent) or an exclusively content-based analysis (which, in essence, plays the story told in the interview back to the reader). Instead, he proposes that we take seriously that interviews are social events, sociohistorically embedded in multiple phenomenological layers. His point of departure is that while this view of interviews is by now fairly well accepted in principle, many narrative researchers continue to fail to take it fully into account. The chapter does not aim to make available concrete recommendations about how to incorporate this more socially sensitive view of interviews into narrative research; rather, it aims to further discussion in a debate opened long ago by scholars such as Jerome Bruner, who wrote about interviews as social events, sociohistorically embedded in multiple phenomenological layers.

The chapter builds upon a life-story interview excerpt, which Block argues is interpretable only if we take an expansive approach in the analysis. Block discusses positioning theory as a means through which we can make sense of interactions that get played out during interviews. He develops an extension of positioning theory with the aim of understanding interviews as social phenomena, drawing on authors such as Judith Butler, Mikhail Bakhtin, James Paul Gee, Karl Marx, and Michel Foucault. The interview excerpt data used functions as a tool to which the author adds layers in order to substantiate his emergent model of analysis. The chapter presents salient issues that arise in all research where life-story interviews are used.

In Chap. 3, "Refusing What We Are: Communicating Counter-Identities and Prefiguring Social Change in New Social Movements," Paul McIlvenny points to the need (i) for revisiting and challenging how we conceptualize identity and (ii) for rethinking studies of discourse and identity. In this chapter, he uses Ethnomethodological Conversation Analysis (EMCA) to examine how "counter-identities" are achieved and made accountable in interactional practices of a mock protest event. McIlvenny highlights that protests by a range of new social movements have been studied extensively, but that few studies have focused on the communicative practices and mediated actions in which new identities and forms of subjectivity are discursively produced. In this chapter, he deploys and investigates what Michel Foucault called "counter-conducts," practices in which alternative modes of being governed are performed. By questioning the conduct of their conduct, participants simultaneously question the relationship of the self to itself, playing with and risking identity in the process. The case study presented in the chapter analyzes video recordings of a "United Nathans weapons inspectors" protest theater event that took place in 2003. Using EMCA, McIlvenny examines how counter-identities get played out in the interactional practices of the prefigurative protest event. McIlvenny argues that such an approach helps document the

ways in which fields of visibility and modes of rationality are sequentially and categorically organized in the contingent accomplishment of counter-identities.

In Chap. 4, "Center-Staging Language and Identity Research from Earthrise Perspectives. Contextualizing Performances in Open Spaces," Sangeeta Bagga-Gupta uses the phenomenon of moonrise–sunrise metaphorically to explicate two perspectives that highlight the ways in which communication and identity are commonly approached and/or understood. Represented by moonrises, the first position highlights a relatively less "visible" norm that nevertheless potently shapes these understandings. Bagga-Gupta highlights that this dominant default norm is marked by a monolingual–monocultural or monoethnic perspective. It is "naturalized" in Eurocentric global North discourses and is often not made visible in either mundane discourses or the academic literature. In contrast, the more visible second position, represented by sunrises, highlights the common human condition vis-à-vis communication and identity. Bagga-Gupta argues that the latter position paradoxically gets marked as the deviant, marginalized, not-normal in global North discourses. Position 2 gets framed in academic discourses and commonsensical thinking through concepts such as bi-/multi-/pluri-/translingualism, bi-/multiculturalism, and multiethnicities. Recent terminology that has emerged within European literature on globalization, framed by migration flows into European geopolitical spaces (and digitalization), includes concepts such as super/hyperdiversity. Bagga-Gupta argues that the more common human condition of diversity gets deviantly framed, marking and making visible (albeit as the not-normal) multiple language varieties and membership in multiple cultures and ethnicities. The chapter illustrates how these two positions represent normative global North discourses where communication and identity, including culture, are approached through, as well as reduced to, technicalities and essentialistically framed epistemologies. Such understandings are critically relevant for the organizing of institutionalized learning for children and adults across geopolitical spaces, in general, and in global North contexts like those of Sweden more especially.

Going beyond these two hegemonic positions and informed by decolonial alternative epistemologies, Bagga-Gupta center-stages a third perspective wherein language-use or languaging and identiting or identity-positionings, including culturing, represent dynamically different ways of approaching and/or understanding human behavior and the human condition. Drawing upon the iconic images taken by the crew of Apollo 8 in December 1968, the phenomenon of "Earthrise" is deployed to substantiate such an alternative position. Bagga-Gupta illustrates how the phenomena of earthrise contrasts in significant ways with moonrise and sunrise conceptualizations of language and identity.

Chapter 1
Many Ways-of-Being Across Sites. Identity *as* (Inter)action

Sangeeta Bagga-Gupta, Julie Feilberg and Aase Lyngvær Hansen

1.1 Introduction

With its origin in the latin *idem*, meaning "the same", identity refers to aspects that pertain to a person, group or a phenomenon that is stable in some sense over time (Gleason 1983; Wetherell 2010; Wetherell and Mohanty 2010). Taylor (1989) suggests that a concept such as identity was unthinkable before the 16th century. Its usage, nevertheless, has a long history. It was identified in the 16th century in the English language, where it resembles the concept of identic similarity (likeness) used in mathematics. One currently finds the word identity in the natural sciences, for instance in the disciplines of medicine, biology, chemistry, physics etc. (see below). Identity was used by philosophers like Leibniz and Locke in discussions on the relationship between mind and matter, from the 18th century onwards. This usage was further developed by philosophers like Friedrich von Schelling in what he termed identity philosophy (Craig 1998). At the beginning of the 20th century, the work of the psychoanalyst Erik H. Erikson incorporated the concept of identity into social psychology (Erikson 1968). Since the 1950s it has become a core concept both in the social sciences and in the humanities (Gleason 1983). More recently, Wetherell calls for the need to see "identity as an open problematic—a site gathering together a wide range of concerns, tropes, curiosities, patterns of thoughts, debates around certain binaries and particular kinds of conversations" (2010:1). The concept, one can say, is heavily theorized in contemporary academic

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discussions (at least in the global North; for some discussions on the situation in the global South see Hasnain et al. 2013; Bagga-Gupta et al. 2013). It is a concept that is a paradigmatic product of its historical conditions, formulated and reformulated in strategic ways by the period or movement under which it emerged and the preoccupations of its theorists (Benwell and Stokoe 2006).

The idea of a stable, bounded identity, "the real self", more or less seen as a psychological phenomenon or "a stable structure located primarily in the individual psyche or in fixed social categories" (Bucholtz and Hall 2005: 586), represents the core in many theories of identity that have emerged from global North settings. Such an "essentialist view" continues to dominate scholarship despite having been challenged in numerous ways over time. This hegemonic view differs substantially from conceptions of identity as a fluid, malleable product that is discursively produced as people position themselves and get positioned in social interaction across a range of contexts, including textual settings. This latter view of identity is often referred to as a "social constructionist" perspective (Benwell and Stokoe 2006).

The work presented in this chapter takes a social constructionist point of departure on identity. It furthermore presents some empirically framed analysis of different data-sets from some global North contexts, and brings to bear the relevance of decolonial perspectives in these contexts. We here call for a return to an understanding of identity in terms of performance, *as* action. This means that we call for center-staging the sites of identity formation both analytically *and* methodologically. This perspective is not being offered as something novel per se since such a position has existed in one way or another for a long time within academic disciplines such as (certain branches of) anthropology, sociology, psychology, as well as multidisciplinary areas of scholarship. However, in addition to re-emphasizing the need to attend to identity as performance, as action in scholarship, what this chapter attempts to do is to highlight the myriad ways in which such a position gets articulated within and across contemporary sites such as mass-media settings and in academic genres, *and* furthermore calls for augmenting these from decolonial perspectives.

More specifically, the work presented in this chapter focuses upon identity positions and research on aspects of identity, by taking a point of departure in the geopolitical spaces of Norway and Sweden, including virtual spaces and academic global spaces. Scandinavian geopolitical spaces are traditionally not associated with 19th and 20th century European colonization. Our focus upon these geopolitical spaces builds upon a conviction that there exists a need to address issues of decolonialism across sites in contemporary discussions of globalization. Recent decolonially framed scholarship gives recognition to issues of power hegemony, marginalization, including colonialism in both global North *spaces* and global South *spaces*, including the global South in global North *places* (and vice versa; see Sect. 1.4 below and Bagga-Gupta, Chap. 4 this volume). In addition to highlighting the hegemonies of the global North and the marginalization of global South thinking and knowledge regimes, such work is re-emerging and is becoming

re-configured in "Southern" epistemologies, ontologies and cosmologies. This work no longer emerges only from southern places. More significantly, it is scholarship from across south-north geographical places and from global South spaces that contributes to such theorizing. Our previous and ongoing work, including our argumentation in this chapter, highlights the significance of, as well as contributes to, such thinking. Thus, it is the very decolonialization of knowledge structures that are at stake here and our work attempts to contribute to a small, growing body of literature that calls for the *reconfigurations of centers and margins* (Appadurai 1996; Bagga-Gupta 2013; Hasnain et al. 2013; Omoniyi 2015; Maldonado-Torres 2011).

Section 1.2 presents an analytical teaser of some slices of data from the domain of contemporary mass-media sites. More specifically, we present some reflections first on a data-set from a recent portrayal of a teenager across physical and virtual in-flight magazine texts as well as the teenagers' own blog texts (Sect. 1.2.1). Thereafter, Sect. 1.2.2 presents analysis of another mass-media data-set that is more traditional and currently has a material and digital presence, i.e. newspapers. These sets of analysis illuminate aspects of identity work and some of the current social mass-media landscapes and conditions under which identity processes circulate and are negotiated.

Taking these analyses as a point of departure for understanding identity empirically, Sect. 1.3 moves on to focus upon research on identity in some Scandinavian contexts. More specifically, we turn our gaze at the body of Ph.D. theses presented in Norway and Sweden during the last 25 years. Doctoral theses in these settings (where we are ourselves situated), constitute a specific academic genre that are publically defended and digitally catalogued. Access to them across time and space is thus possible. Furthermore, this genre constitutes a substantial piece of work that a junior scholar produces during the course of his/her socialization trajectory into mainstream academics (in these and many other geopolitical spaces). The final section of this chapter—Sect. 1.4—brings together the issues that emerge in the analysis of the different data-sets (the mass-media materials and the academic texts) and current attempts to re-emphasize the need to see the layers of identity issues embedded in "diversity", a cornerstone concept in current scholarship, political discourses, policies, etc. Going beyond current popular nomenclature of "hyper-diversity", "super-diversity" (Vertovec 2006; see also Blommaert 2010) and "complex diversity" (Kraus 2012), we highlight the need for engaging with decolonial perspectives and critiques that are re-emerging in Southern scholarship, with the intent of shaping research work on identity in the Scandinavian contexts. Furthermore, we argue for the need to re-vitalize understandings of diversity from an action and a multiple viewing of identity positions. The issues that we raise in this chapter, thus contribute towards nuancing contemporary (largely Eurocentric) discourses of diversity and call for identity to be understood in discussions of diversity as an emergent dimension of interaction across time and space and in terms of multiple ways-of-being.

1.2 Identity and Identity-Positions in Global North Mass-Media Sites

1.2.1 A Contemporary Mass-Media Example Across Physical-Digital Sites: Elise By Olsen

The youth culture and style magazine Recence Paper, started by Elise By Olsen, a 14-year old from the geopolitical spaces of Norway, is showcased in a recent article in a British daily newspaper, the Guardian, as follows: the Recence Paper is a,

> youth culture magazine exposing the lifestyle of youth and its subculture. A youth generation that is tired of a society that ruins collective self-confidence with an expectation of perfection that is forced upon them. These youth are part of a generation that will not be limited to gender binaries. They will not accept the obligations of commercialism (Ferrier 2015, http://recenspaper.com/about/).

Prior to starting the Recence Paper, Elise By Olsen had begun blogging (when she was eight years old) and had established a global blog network by the time she turned 13. Featured in the in-flight magazine of the airline Norwegian, Elise By Olsen is quoted as saying: "We are generation Z. We are fed up with all the commercials that are dumped on us, the impossible beauty standards which ruin our self-confidence, and the gender stereotypes that put us in a box" (Olsson 2015: 25).

> For By Olsen, it's a cri du coeur against Scandinavian norms. 'A lot of the time here', she says, 'people look the same, dress the same, and all the magazines have this clean aesthetic. At school there's a uniform: preppy shirt, Canada Goose jacket, Uggs, make-up. We want to say that you don't have to be girly, you don't have to be understated—you can be loud and colourful, and be yourself' (Olsson 2015: 25).

Commenting on By Olsen's Instagram account, the journalist Olsson writes that it, "reveals a lot of selfies, and lot of attitude" (Olsson 2015: 25; see Fig. 1.1).

> 'I wear short crop tops and have pink hair—I'm used to being stared at, online and offline'. If it all seems slightly solipsistic to anyone who grew up pre-internet (when teenagers didn't generally have public profiles), to her 'it's just the way it is, it's natural to us. Most of us grow up with a public persona, and we create this curated little world' (By Olsen cited in Olsson 2015: 25).

The articles and interviews with a representative of "Generation Z", directly and indirectly serve to illustrate several dimensions of identity that are salient in contemporary theories of identity and identity research (as we will also see in Sect. 1.3 below). First of all, By Olsen implicitly draws a distinction between an inner or hidden "self" that we as readers can understand is different from the same person's "public personae" and "public profile" ("you don't have to be understated, can be loud and colourful, and be yourself"). She furthermore highlights that the public persona is part of a "curated little world". In other words, the young blogger sees at least this latter type of identity, the public personae, as a social phenomenon that is staged and cultivated in socio-cultural discursive contexts, here specific digital media sites.