

Melinda Madew, Claudia Schulz, Prakash Dhakal (Hg.)

Discourses in Social Cohesion

Difference, Diversity, Body, Mind and Soul

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Prakash Dhakal (Hg.)

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Introduction

It was the women's movement who began identifying the body as a locus of power. It was with the awareness that the body is the location of power, more so when desired and valued characteristics are embodied. What is desired and valued are defined largely by a culture that assigns power to those who control societal resources. The women's movement articulated the manner by which the female body has been objectified and defined according to existing standards of acceptability or unacceptability. There were normative standards around which the female body has been made to conform. The women's movement drew the connection between those who attempt to control the body and those who assert autonomy over their own bodies. The movement drew attention to the many subtle and pronounced attempts by which the body is defined according exclusive categories of valuation and desirability. This is because the body carries differentiated cultural markings and physical differences. The body is not only categorized but also interpreted. The body is owned and disowned. The body is power location at one time and power dislocation at another.

This has brought us to discourses in the acceptance of differences as a form of respecting diversity. However, diversity discourse is meaningless unless set against the issue of power. Acceptance of difference in all its biological and cultural characteristics has been relegated to tolerance. But even the act of toleration is not equal to respect. It is for this reason that we refer to the women's movement which has broadened our scope of practical understanding. Through their politics of sexuality and gender, the dynamics of power relationships can be sharply drawn and understood. Women are not tolerated, they are respected. From this position, the women's movement has taught us valuable strategies in claiming equality and inclusion in significant political processes that secure sustainable gains. This contribution has sharpened our understanding that differences brought about categories of race, sexual orientation, disability and class situates all of us in positions of power or disempowerment.

For the past several years we have been joined by colleagues from at least seven universities in Europe to interact with students who bring their diverse backgrounds and personal characteristics in thematic discussions over diversity, social cohesion and inclusion. These discus-

sions were set against their sense of identity and experiences. Many colleagues have helped us lead discussions on how embodied differences have profound impact in the manner relationships are transacted. We refer specifically to our students who will eventually assume the roles of social workers, deacons, health workers, family counselors as they attempt to measure up to policy expectations and remain aware at all times that there is a critical balance between principle and actual practice.

This is our attempt to capture some of those shared insights resulting from lecture sessions and interaction with groups of students from different universities in Europe: Newman University, Birmingham, Great Britain, Diaconia University of Applied Sciences (Diak), Finland, Diakonhjemmet University College, Norway, Jabok Institute of Theology and Social Work, Prague, Czech Republic, Jan Dlugosz University, Poland, Thomas More University, Belgium, University of Applied Sciences Nordwestschweiz, Switzerland, and the Protestant University of Applied Sciences, Ludwigsburg, Germany.

We thank the different universities who have collaborated with us for over five years in the implementation of intensive summer academies under the Erasmus Program. It was from these intensive academic exchanges that teachers and students from European universities debated differences and affirmed commonalities in an open non-judgmental atmosphere. We are grateful to our students and graduates, who to this day have built on their experiences and share these with us using virtual media. The summer academies could not have successfully taken place without the support of administrative staff in different universities. We thank most specifically the colleagues from International Offices. We appreciate the generosity of the Protestant University of Applied Sciences Ludwigsburg for supporting the printing of this book as part of its series of published academic works. The publication of this book is a bilingual experiment that tests our capacity to transcend the limitations imposed by language in the process of communicative learning. We thank the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) for investing in our commitment to optimize the Erasmus Intensive Program in promoting our social advocacy for inclusionary policies in Europe.

Melinda Madew, Claudia Schulz and Prakash Dhakal

Einleitung

Es war die Frauenbewegung, die damit begonnen hat, den Körper als Ort der Macht zu identifizieren. Dies geschah im Bewusstsein, dass hier Merkmale des Menschen „verkörpert“ und zum Ausdruck gebracht sind, die erwünscht und Wert geschätzt werden. Was erwünscht und Wert geschätzt wird, ist größtenteils von einer Kultur bestimmt, die diejenigen bevollmächtigt, die die Ressourcen des sozialen Lebens kontrollieren. Die Frauenbewegung verdeutlichte, auf welche Weise der weibliche Körper entsprechend der bestehenden Standards als akzeptabel oder weniger akzeptabel bestimmt wurde. Es waren normative Standards, denen der weibliche Körper entsprechen sollte. Die Frauenbewegung machte den Zusammenhang sichtbar zwischen jenen, die eine Kontrolle über die soziale Konstruktion des Körpers anstreben, und denen, die die Autonomie über ihren eigenen Körper beanspruchen. Die Bewegung lenkte die Aufmerksamkeit auf viele ausgesprochene und unausgesprochene Ansprüche, aufgrund derer der Körper nach exklusiven Kategorien von Wertigkeit und Mangelhaftigkeit bestimmt wird. Dies geschieht, indem der Körper auf differenzierte Weise kulturelle Merkmale und physikalische Unterschiede transportiert. Er wird auf diesem Weg nicht nur kategorisiert, sondern ebenso interpretiert, anerkannt oder verleugnet. Der Körper ist damit der Ort der Macht – wie auch der Verwerfung, der Störung individueller Potenziale.

Dies hat uns zu Diskursen darüber geführt, wie die Akzeptanz von Unterschieden – gerade in Bezug auf den Körper – als eine Form des Respekts gegenüber der Diversität gesehen und entwickelt werden kann. Die Akzeptanz von Unterschieden in allen ihren biologischen und kulturellen Charakteristiken muss zur Toleranz führen. Aber Toleranz ist nicht identisch mit Respekt. Aus diesem Grund greifen wir auf die Erkenntnisse der Frauenbewegung zurück, die unsere Spielräume des praktischen Verständnisses geweitet hat und es ermöglicht hat, die Dynamik von Machtverhältnissen scharf zu zeichnen. Frauen wollen nicht toleriert, sondern respektiert werden. Aus dieser Position heraus hat die Frauenbewegung uns Strategien gelehrt, Gleichberechtigung und Inklusion in signifikanten politischen Prozessen einzufordern, die diese Ziele nachhaltig sichern sollen. Es geht um ein Verständnis dafür, wie Kategorien von Rasse, sexueller Orientierung, Behinderung und sozialer Klasse uns alle in eine Position von Macht oder Machtlosigkeit bringen.

Diese Kategorien entfalten durch ihre Vielfalt im sozialen Leben und entsprechend auch im Leben der Professionellen in sozialen Handlungsfeldern eine zunehmende Bedeutung. Noch kaum erforscht ist bislang, worin diese Bedeutung genau besteht und welche Effekte beispielsweise in Bezug auf die Diversität in Fragen der kulturellen oder sexuellen Identität, der Lebensstile und Werte zu berücksichtigen sind. Es war unser Anliegen, diese Fragen in Bezug auf soziale Handlungsfelder zu ergründen und darin besonders auch sozialpolitische, sozial- und erziehungswissenschaftliche Perspektiven zu berücksichtigen. Dies stärkt nach unserer Überzeugung all jene auf dem Weg zu einem vertieften Wissen, die sich um Handlungsstrategien in der sozialen Praxis bemühen, damit die Vielfalt nicht nur akzeptiert wird, sondern als wichtiger Faktor des Miteinanders gewürdigt und fachlich angemessen genutzt werden kann.

In den letzten Jahren haben sich Kolleginnen und Kollegen von vielen Hochschulen in Europa zusammengefunden, dieses Anliegen mit Studierenden zu teilen, die ihre verschiedenen Hintergründe und persönlichen Charakteristiken in die thematische Diskussion über Diversität, Zusammenhalt und Inklusion einbringen. Viele Kolleginnen und Kollegen haben mit uns die Diskussion darüber geführt, wie verkörperte Differenzen sich in gelebten Beziehungen auswirken, in der Politik ebenso wie im sozialen Nahraum. Wir wenden uns bewusst an unsere Studierenden, die sich in einigen Jahren in der Rolle von Sozialarbeiterinnen, Diakonen, Mitarbeiterinnen im Gesundheitswesen, als Familienberater und anderswo beruflich etablieren werden. Wir möchten in ihrem Bemühen darum, den beruflichen Anforderungen gerecht zu werden, das Bewusstsein dafür stärken, dass es eine kritische Balance gibt zwischen Prinzipien und aktueller Praxis.

Dieses Buch ist aus dem Prozess der gemeinsamen akademischen Auseinandersetzung zwischen Studierenden und Dozierenden von Hochschulen aus Großbritannien, Norwegen, Finnland, der Tschechischen Republik und Deutschland entstanden. Sie alle haben in diesen Prozess ihren kulturellen Hintergrund, ihr Verständnis von Professionalität im Feld der Sozialen Arbeit und ihre persönliche Haltung eingetragen. Und sie haben in der Begegnung, im Fachgespräch und gemeinsamen Erlebnissen dafür gesorgt, dass ein lebendiger Diskurs entsteht. Dieser Diskurs soll auf diesem Weg nun auch anderen zugänglich werden. Die einzelnen Texte dienen der gemeinsamen Arbeit

als wissenschaftliche Grundlage für multidisziplinäre Zugänge rund um das Themenfeld Diversität, Differenz und Inklusion und als Inspiration für die Auseinandersetzung – und sie sollen in Zukunft auch weiteren Interessierten dazu dienen. An sie schlossen sich Fragen an – theoretische und praktische – und sie führten in neue Lernfelder der gemeinsamen Arbeit.

Ziel dieses Buches ist es, diese Texte nun für einen größeren Kreis von Studierenden und Lehrenden zugänglich zu machen. Die Texte sollen als Grundlage für die Lehre und weiterführende Diskurse genutzt werden können – im Stil unserer internationalen „Intensive Programmes“ mit dem Schwerpunkt auf Partizipation und Interdisziplinarität. Zu diesem Zweck haben die Autorinnen und Autoren zu Anfang jedes Beitrags die zentralen Themen gebündelt (als „Chapter Aims“) und zum Ende ihrer Ausführungen nochmals weiterführende Fragen formuliert. So sollen die einzelnen Beiträge für die individuelle Arbeit, aber ebenso für Seminare und Fachdiskussionen nützlich sein.

Die Beiträge sind thematisch geordnet und in drei große Abschnitte gegliedert: Die Beiträge in **Abschnitt A.** bieten eine Einführung in zentrale Fragen und von Diversität und Zusammenhalt anhand allgemeiner Überlegungen sowie anhand von konkreten Anliegen aus Forschung und Praxis. **Melinda Madew** bietet in ihrem programmatischen Text „Contestations in the Politics of Identity“ einen Einblick in die Diskurse rund um Identität, Gleichheit und Differenz sowie die Chancen, inmitten des Spannungsfelds von Fluidität und Verfestigung individueller Identitätskonstruktionen den sozialen Zusammenhalt zu festigen. Das Ziel ist in Madews Konzept eine Gesellschaft, die Zusammenhalt ermöglicht, nicht indem Gleichheit als übergeordnete Kategorie gilt, sondern indem multiple Identitäten begünstigt werden. **Claudia Schulz** berichtet in ihrem Beitrag „Poverty and Exclusionary Processes in Ludwigsburg. Challenges Confronting Professional Social Work with the Elderly and Young People“ von Ergebnissen einer Forschung unter älteren Menschen in sozialen Schwierigkeiten. Diese Menschen wurden von Studierenden der Sozialen Arbeit in Ludwigsburg begleitet und befragt, wo im Jahr 2013 auch das „Intensive Programme“ an der Evangelischen Hochschule stattfand. Im Fokus stehen Lernprozesse und die Entwicklung von Handlungsmöglichkeiten durch Fachkräfte der Sozialen Arbeit im Themenfeld „Armut im Alter“. **Eva Hernova** eröffnet mit ihrem programmatischen Artikel „Reading Literature as

a Tool in Social Work” die Perspektive auf den Begriff der „Empathie“ und fragt nach Chancen, Menschen in der Ausbildung von Empathie als zentralem Handwerkzeug in der Sozialen Arbeit zu unterstützen. Sie zeigt, wie der Umgang mit Literatur hierfür als geeignetes Trainingsfeld betrachtet werden kann.

Der **Abschnitt B.** fokussiert die politische, ökonomische und sozialstrukturelle Dimension von Diversität und Ausgrenzung: In seiner Reflexion „Citizenship – Uniting or Dividing People?“ zeigt **Tony Addy**, dass das Konzept „Citizenship“ keinesfalls ausschließlich als Einheit stiftend und vertiefend verstanden werden kann, sondern in seinen Chancen und Begrenzungen hinterfragt werden muss. Mit einer historischen Annäherung entwickelt er eine Sichtung aktueller Herausforderungen und zeigt Wege auf, diesen zukünftig zu begegnen. **Håvard Aaslund** führt in seinem Beitrag „Inclusion and Universality. A Social Constructionist View of Marginalization in Norway“ in das wohlfahrtsstaatliche System der nordischen Länder ein und bietet ein sozial-konstruktivistisches Modell zur Analyse sozialpolitischer Strukturen. Von hier aus diskutiert er die Marginalisierung und Exklusion diverser gesellschaftlicher Gruppen und Potenziale eines anwaltschaftlichen Handelns. Mit seinem kritischen Blick auf die Integrationsfähigkeit des gegenwärtigen Finnischen Arbeitsmarktes für Migrantinnen und Migranten nimmt **Dennis Londo** beides in den Blick, ausländische Studierende einerseits und die finnische Gesellschaft andererseits, die von Zuwanderung deutlich profitieren kann. Mit seinem Beitrag „Integrating Migrant Students in the Finnish Labour Market. More than Just a Number Game“ zeichnet Londo den Diskurs um die Einwanderung nach und beleuchtet Problemfelder und Bedarfe für beide Seiten.

Der **Abschnitt C.** stellt die Thematik der Behinderung in den Vordergrund und bietet von hier aus Perspektiven auf Sozialpolitik sowie auf die Philosophie, Grundannahmen und Methoden inklusiver Arbeit. **Dag Helge Moldenhagen** fokussiert in seinem Beitrag „Disability, Appearance and Democracy“ eine gegenwärtig verstärkte „Politik des Erscheinungsbildes“, in der das Aussehen eines Menschen wesentlich darüber entscheidet, welche Wertigkeit diesem zugeschrieben wird. Moldenhagen entfaltet auf der Basis von Theologie, Politik- und Sozialwissenschaft ein kritisches Verständnis aktueller Entwicklungen und analysiert die Erfahrungen von Menschen mit Behinderung. **Kristina Kraft** geht in ihrem Artikel „Vulnerability as a Human Condition. Self-

injury and the Need of Resonance” der Frage nach, wie Selbstverletzung nicht als eine dem Individuum zuzuschreibende Eigenschaft, sondern als eine Reaktion auf Isolation und auf einen Mangel an sozialer Zugehörigkeit und Resonanz begriffen werden kann. Demnach würde für Professionelle gelten, zunächst die unterschiedlichen – vor allem auch verdeckte – Isolationsverhältnisse als solche zu erkennen. In der unmittelbaren Begegnung mit einem Menschen, der chronische Isolation durch Selbstverletzung oder Apathie signalisiert, kann ein Verständnis von Vulnerabilität als uns alle verbindende menschliche Grundbedingung (nach einem aktuellen Konzept von Julia Kristeva) dazu verhelfen, durch dialogische Kopplung eine Situation der sozialen Anerkennung und Resonanz herzustellen, um damit notwendige umgestaltete Räume zu schaffen, in denen uns gemeinsam eine emotionale Stabilisierung und persönliche Entwicklung (wieder) möglich werden. **Prakash Dhakal** bietet mit seinem Beitrag „Anti Oppressive Practice in Disability Work” eine Einführung in die Konzeption und die Grundprinzipien von AOP, wie es speziell in der Arbeit mit Menschen mit Behinderung angewandt wird. Dhakal diskutiert die Einbettung in dieses Arbeitsfeld auf theoretischer Ebene und erschließt die Reichweite für soziale Praxis, Politik und Gesellschaft. Im Interview mit dem finnischen Politiker und Behindertenrechtler Kalle Könkkölä erschließt **Prakash Dhakal** schließlich die Perspektive auf das schlichte Programm „The Only Way to Live Together is to Live Together“. In diesem Programm, das auf den zweiten Blick durchaus komplex erscheint und zahlreiche theoretische Überlegungen verdichtet, lassen sich eine medizinische und vor allem eine soziale Problematisierung der Ausgrenzung von Menschen mit Behinderung im Spannungsfeld von Wohlfahrt und Menschenrecht hinterfragen und zugleich Wege verdeutlichen, wie Behinderung als umfassende soziale Herausforderung verstanden und im Miteinander vieler Menschen mit unterschiedlichem Vermögen überwunden werden kann.

Schließlich nimmt der **Abschnitt D.** die Dimensionen von Religion, Geschlecht und Alter in den Blick: Ausgehend vom Konzept der Sozialen Inklusion und Diversität bietet **Ondrej Fischer** in seinem Text „Subjectivity, Identity, Religion and Private Space“ eine Analyse der Bedeutung von Religion im privaten Raum im Gegensatz zum öffentlichen Raum. Nietzsche und Kierkegaard bieten die Grundlagen für eine Argumentation, die die Rolle der Religion in der Ausbildung von

Subjektivität und Identität herausstellt und eine ausgewogene Sicht auf formative Prozesse fordert. In seiner Analyse „Male and Female He Created Them. Relationships between Man and Woman in the Old Testament, a Cultural Heritage and Treasure for the Present and Future“ untersucht **Bernhard Mutschler** die Beziehungen zwischen Mann und Frau aus biblischer Perspektive, speziell mit Blick auf Texte des Alten Testaments bzw. der Hebräischen Bibel als der gemeinsamen Grundlage von Judentum und Christentum. Er zeigt, wie die Verhältnisse zwischen Mann und Frau, die sowohl ungleich als auch überaus verschieden ausgestaltet waren, in der heutigen Welt zu einer sozialwissenschaftlichen Tiefenschärfung des Blicks beitragen können und eine inspirierende Grundlage für aktuelle theologische Reflexionen der Geschlechterdifferenz sein können. **Eckart Hammer** lenkt mit „Men and Age(ing)“ den Blick auf die Lebensphase jenseits der Erwerbstätigkeit. Er beschreibt die Herausforderungen, denen sich speziell Männer mit dem Abschied aus dem Berufsleben stellen müssen, und zeigt, wie der Körper und Fragen der Partnerschaft in dieser häufig als krisenhaft erlebten Zeit eine besondere Bedeutung erhalten.

Wir danken allen, die sich für dieses Buch eingesetzt haben, den Autorinnen und Autoren, aber ebenso all denen, die die gemeinsame Arbeit ermöglicht haben, in den Verwaltungen und in den Kollegien unserer Hochschulen. Vor allem danken wir der Evangelischen Hochschule Ludwigsburg, die den Druck dieses Buches in ihrer Hochschulreihe ermöglicht und uns den Freiraum für mehrsprachige Experimente gibt.

Melinda Madew, Claudia Schulz und Prakash Dhakal

A.

**Basic Insights, Questions and
Methods**

Contestations in the Politics of Identity

Melinda Madew

Chapter aim

This chapter will present discussions on the politics of identity as a multifaceted and fluid concept. It will proceed in several subtopics that describe the various ways where identity questions are expressed under different challenging situations.

It will describe some factors that contribute to attaining a sense of belonging to a community which has both implicit and explicit standards in determining whether individuals belong or not belong to it. The article will proceed to argue that while it is often an easier path to conform, there is however a continuing struggle to assert an authentic identity along paths that are radically untested. The desire to achieve an authentic sense of identity is a continuing important project of contemporary individuals who are always experiencing different ways of expressing their social situatedness.

Even when groups assert their real or imagined collective identity, individuals within communities have a claim to their own definition of personal identity. There is a dynamic interaction between collective consciousness and personal identity. They have to coexist in interdependence. An individual can claim a sense of belonging to a community, and a community in turn claims to hold individuals within its influence, if not control.

Difference and its dilemmas

Difference is so often understood in the context of non-conformity to standards and expectations set by communities of belonging. It could refer to an attempt to step away from the confines of community expectations by non-conformity and thereby establish new challenges to an existing sense of normality.

That challenge can be in the appropriation of qualities that could set one person apart from others. This distinctive quality, marks an individual as separate from all others. If being different is a desired quality, then it has to be something to strive for because that mark of

distinction is worth possessing by an aspiring owner. The recognition of that distinctive quality has to be acknowledged within an existing group or community. A mark of distinction is not made to rest quietly in the sole possession of an individual because it would otherwise lose its capacity to inspire admiration if not envy.

Yet, the context of difference is manifold. This is because the notion of difference cannot be discussed apart from the notion of similarity. To say who I am is to say who I am not, and therefore I consequently acknowledge with whom I have things in common. Therefore difference alone is enough to establish who I am. It is because of this that the notion of difference has to move to a definition of identity. That is, difference and identity have to be thought of together, because one implies the other (Jenkins: 22).

Jenkins further argues that difference as well as similarity belong in equal weight to each other. Difference has to be set and understood within a paradigm defined by commonalities. That which stands out against what is common, is therefore different. It is a complexity of characteristics that set an individual apart from a collective, or that which sets a group apart from a majority population.

When someone has to live in a society that is often described for its mass consumption and global uniformity, difference becomes a mark of identity. Identity matters because it is an embodied self-definition. It matters because it affects the way we understand our relationship to the world and how the world relates with us.

Acquiring a mark of identity means being different in an attempt to build a sense of personhood that is so unique that it sets one apart from the rest. This is a response to the threat of ordinariness in a culture that prizes uniformity. The different individual rises out of insecurity by defying society's compelling power to demand conformity to accepted standards of thought and behaviour. Because conformity can defeat distinction, the desire for uniqueness is achieved by stepping out of uniformity.

There are many ways of achieving symbols of distinctiveness. It can range from the superficiality of subscribing to outlandish fashion to achieving feats impossible to ordinary people. The ability to stand out of line is what sets the special apart from the common. It is the boldness not to conform with the accepted standards that define the mundane and ordinary. Difference is then el-

evated to a desired value. It has its own seduction in defining identity.

But is this all there is to the politics of identity formation?

Fluid identities

Identity is more than just a striving for uniqueness. It is more complex in its ambivalence. It is a striving for a sense of personhood that is rooted in belonging to a community. Identity by itself is not a self-declaration to independence without regard for others. The striving for uniqueness as I have described above is superficial in its shallowness if it rests alone on external show of difference. A more complex examination of identity can be rooted out in community identification. It is a symbiosis between a claimed community of belonging and the responsive ownership by a community of its members. A community of belonging is a safe haven where a sense of acceptance and security is achieved by members. Such security develops confidence to navigate the at times intricate spoken or unspoken rules a community imposes. For anyone navigating these rules, the tension between individual self-expression and community conformity is a dilemma.

In describing this tension, I would use the case of a former colleague who regularly visits the mosque where other women gather for regular community related meetings. She works for a counseling centre for women. She embraces feminism and is outspoken about her resistance to the patriarchal leadership in her community and her assertion that women need not submit to subservient roles within the family or societal structure. Given her educated background and leadership qualities, she can assert opinion, influence decisions and is respected by other women for this. At work at the centre, she discards her veil, but wears this when visiting the mosque. She is well aware that the veil has contested meanings among her colleagues. When asked whether there is a seeming inconsistency over this, her answer is a clear, No. She values and respects her community of women with whom she identifies for their kindness towards each other and their fidelity to their families. Wearing a veil while in their midst is act of respect and an indication of belonging. Having her hair uncovered at work at the centre is for her a manifestation of an ability to be equally considerate to whatever opinion other people may have about the message a veil could convey.

Her ability to put it on or take it off is symbolic of her ability to navigate and bridge a seeming political divide. Because it does not compromise the integrity of her identity, she is able to transcend a situation, which is otherwise conflictive within herself as well as her chosen communities of belonging.

This led me to the realization that identity is never expressed in fixed categories that prescribe static patterns of behaviour because the challenge of navigating different social expectations requires the resiliency of an open mind set. The ability of my colleague to confidently determine the propriety of her behaviour under different community settings is an act of assertion. An assertion that identity is as multifaceted as the communities of belonging a person has a claim of ownership. Identity is not a static self-perception which remains transfixed on particular notions of what one is or wants to be. It is an evolving expression of values which are negotiated under different sets of priorities while living in our communities of choice.

Identity and social affirmation

Understanding identity involves criteria from which comparison can be made between sameness and difference. This allows us to claim distinction from, as well as commonality with others. It is a process that can be understood as a state of being and becoming (Brewer, 1990). This means that our multidimensional identity is in a state of flux and transition. Groups and individuals negotiate their sameness and differences.

While there is a very human desire for uniqueness and individuality, there is also a countervailing need for social affirmation that, indeed one belongs to a group because of shared similarities. This seemingly conflicting tendencies are not irreconcilable. Social identity is a balance between individuality and differentiation on one hand, and conformity to group expectations on the other to achieve social affirmation. The need for individuation and the need for conformity to gain group affirmation can be equally strong. Only because the manner by which we develop a sense of worth can depend on how we think we are regarded by others. Our notion of identity depends on our interaction and relationship with significant groups and communities. Who I am depends on my repeated experience of either rejection or affirmation by

those whose opinions count to me in the community where I find my individual location. The manner by which I locate myself in a community allows me a claim to where I belong.

The project of defining an authentic identity becomes even more urgent and significant in a situation of perceived community disintegration. The threat of community disintegration emanates from various directions. When a community is threatened by loss of functional significance, members are bound to rise to protect whatever semblance of relevance they can keep, thereby vigilantly clinging to conservatism. Then, there is also the threat of disintegration because of perceived external threats from other dominant groups who want to suppress the existence of communities it perceives as rival if not enemy.

The claim to authentic identity is a moral claim (Kenny, 2004). Identity is both a private and public preserve because on one hand, an individual has a claim to self- definition, and on the other, it is a public identification with others who share similar values and behaviour. Because of this moral claim individuals and communities are bound by a sense of duty to protect identity and identification from perceived internal corrosion as well as from external attack.

Individuals and communities take it as an affront when such claims to identity are reviled and humiliated (Taylor,1989). Identity is a human capacity to know who one is and who others are. It is a multi-dimensional mapping of the human world and our place in it. To limit, revile or deny this capacity is tantamount to negating a person's existence. This explains why it is a moral harm for individuals and more so for groups whose claim to identity is despised or rejected (Kenny 2004).

There is a conscious assertion by individuals to seek identity and identification through membership to communities may these be on the basis of ethnicity, clans, lineage or specific cultures. There is pride in identity and identification emanating from distinct characteristics that individuals have by virtue to their being born to particular ethnicity and raised in specific culture. The humiliation that may result from rejection and non-affirmation of this process by other communities or groups could bring about animosities from mutual distrust. Groups and individuals are accorded respect and acceptance on the basis of hierarchies attributed to their distinct qualities. The capacity for human beings to judge according to a range of values resulted in social categorizations that structure our relationship with each other.

Social mapping as identity categorization

Humans are constantly engaged in the task of understand their social world. Knowing who is who, is not a matter of neutral social mapping. This involves classification of people according to sets of values that grade them according to a structure of hierarchies. To have an impression about a person's identity gives clues on how to regard other persons according to a set of values and preferences. The manner we treat individuals based on identification is so complex and multidimensional that there is not one formula that can capture this. The process of identifying others is not something one can have or not have, but something that one does (Jenkins, 2008).

Social mapping is the manner we consciously or unconsciously locate ourselves as well as others, in categories of preferred values and standards. We are helped in the act of categorization when individuals carry distinctive markings. These markings signal to both bearer and receiver the dimension of hierarchy and interests implied in identity and identification. These helpful signals can be self-elected markings that communicate religious affiliation, ethnic grouping, party affiliation and other categories. A woman who covers her hair helps us speculate on categories of gender, religion, class, ethnicity, education, language and so on. The person thereby enters into our social mapping. This mapping is a speculative categorization with the concomitant notion that certain categories are preferred over others. The preferred categories are often associated with the dominant wielders of social power.

The desirability of these categories give a connotation of power and privilege to those who have the goodness of fit. They are included in categories that are deemed valuable and desired. Let us take the female body, often objectified by competing standards of desirability. There are rewards derived from sculpting the body to fashionable dictates, so that many aspire to meet imagined standards. However, women as embodied subjects do relay information on who they are. How they behave is a reflection of their situatedness. To a broad extent our social mapping is a constant negotiation between the individual and the pressures of the environmental dictates may these be in the realm of culture and politics (Braidotti, 1994).

Social mapping is so complex because of its multiple trajectories. The desire to work one's way in possessing embodied markings that

signify inclusion in desired categories is a project in progress. For instance, when living in a dominant secular society that promotes freedom of movement and autonomy for all, a woman could agree to abandon the head cover as a conscious symbolic step in her effort to find inclusion in a majority culture. This choice is facilitated and accepted by a more dominant culture and its system of valuing secular autonomy. This decision has its complications and rewards. This could result in distancing oneself to a community of belonging, while at the same time entering to another community with its perceived attraction and reward. Such could be the nature of identity in all its fluid ambivalence. Such ambivalence require from anyone a resiliency in adapting to the pressure of an ever changing social environment.

In this sense, social mapping is a lifelong process of negotiation because there is no guarantee that everyone has the privilege of freely embodying categories that are included in the social map because of a “goodness of fit”. There are times when the price paid for social inclusion is more than just the donning or the shedding of distinctive markings. Beyond perceivable symbolic markings are those body signals that we do not elect for ourselves. Markings such as skin colour and physique communicate a myriad of categories to the perceiver, and these cannot be disowned easily in order to win a goodness of fit.

Identity and social situatedness

The American psychological dictionary describes the theory of situated identity as the possibility of taking on different roles in different settings and how behaviour can radically shift according to the situational context and the people present. Identity is then subject to a fluctuation of perceptions because situatedness is not a fixed stability it is an imprecise field of experience (Simpson, 2002).

Simpson further raises the question on why do we keep saying where we are coming from. It is because notions of situatedness is riddled with dilemmas. When one takes a standpoint over a political decision, there are many possible arguments to legitimize it on the basis of many possible identities. Where one is coming from is not a matter of geographic origin, it can also be a standpoint that is explained by multiple identities.

When I tell you where I am coming from, I am situating myself; and that situatedness defines my responses to a world I claim. In so doing I am asserting an ability to occupy a situation with my history, my perceived priorities and a capacity to act at a given place and time.

An experience I share with many migrant colleagues is answering to the often repeated question of strangers whenever an occasion presents itself for casual conversation. Their question regarding where I come from, is not just about an interest on my geographic place of birth. It could not be as casual as it sounds. It is a multi-layered attempt at social mapping by the one who asks. When I give an answer, I am already revealing my reference point which could be so encompassing as to include my supposed economic background, ethnic origin, religious membership and political affiliation. Wherever I am asked to give a lecture or talk in any public forum in Europe, I am asked this question without fail. Not during plenaries, but in smaller conversations following the lecture session or presentation. For the past ten years, I have gathered a spectrum of reaction depending on the answer I give. When I situate myself in my Philippine background, I get nods of assent and further questions would follow as to how my migratory history could have influenced the trajectory of whatever position I stand for with respect to the topic under discussion. When I say I am from Germany, I often get a visible facial reaction from the one who asks, that I have somehow expressed an illogical construct. Or I am confronted by a moment of uncomfortable silence. I interpret both reactions as dissonance resulting from an unfulfilled expectation. I do not embody the visible markings of a typical person from Germany. Here is a dissonance between my claimed situatedness, and the expected embodied identity markings I carry or should not carry. It perplexes my social interrogator because there is no goodness of fit between my claim and the social mapping that my interrogator has undertaken along the process of our exchange.

Why do we keep on saying where we are coming from? The answers to this question facilitates social mapping because a reference point has to be identified. A claim to situatedness reveals a structure of thinking and behaving. It is an intentional self-definition expressed in terms that are already predetermined. This predetermination is substantiated by a personal agency and responsibility with which identity is claimed by the interrogated. When I tell you where I am coming from,