

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

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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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