EMPIRICAL AND THEORETICAL CONTRIBUTIONS ON THE NATURE OF DIVERSITY ACROSS ANALOGUE-DIGITAL TIMESPACES

Sangeeta Bagga-Gupta, School of Education and Communication, Jönköping University, Sweden, Aase Lyngvær Hansen, Feilberg, NTNU, Trondheim, Norway

Introduction

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 like gender, ethnicity, class, functional dis/abilities, nation-state, etc. Disciplinary framed fields such as education, special education, health sciences, including the multidisciplinary fields of language and communication studies, disability studies, gender studies etc., 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".

Many institutional settings such as K-12 education, higher education, care services, including special interest groups, in geopolitical settings across the global North and South provide enclaves that encompass people of *all* ages, gender, class, race, functional abilities, etc. Furthermore, digitalized platforms create new opportunities where anyone with an internet connection and a devise to access the net, including an interest in some domain, can become a member of specialized groups. While this is also the case in everyday life contexts inside and outside institutional settings, certain institutions across the global North-South (for instance, governments, company boardrooms) tend to be homogenous as far as identity markers like gender, ethnicity, functional ability etc are concerned.

Project REID – revisiting and reimagining identity across sites

This paper takes a point of departure in the Swedish Research Council supported project REID, "Rethinking Identity", developed by the research group CCD, Communication, Culture and Diversity in Sweden in collaboration with NTNU, Trondheim, Norway. This paper aims to highlight the salient results of the project presented in the new Springer volume (2017) "Identity Revisited and Reimagined. Empirical and Theoretical Contributions across Time and Space". The empirically framed theoretical results presented in the volume explore dimensions of life inside and outside institutional settings, including digital spaces, that allow for dynamic viewings of human identity processes and the nature of diversity across timespaces. Going beyond traditional identity sectors explicitly, the volume as a whole both

revisits and reimagines identity positions in settings across the global North-South on the one hand, and across analogue-digital settings on the other hand. They thus 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 like the "global North" and "global South" attempt 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 a recognition of current ways in which identity positioning's and marginalization processes get played out across the globe.

The majority of the research reported in the volume "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 research group and in collaboration with NTNU, Trondheim.

This paper presentation at the EDEN 2017 conference in Jönköping, Sweden will be structured into three parts. Part one will introduce the theoretical framings and will include a historical backdrop against which identity research has developed. Issues related to the nature of diversity across analogue-digital timespaces will be highlighted here. Part two will discuss the four central themes in the volume: (a) "Conceptual Framings of Identity in a Multifaceted World"; (b) "Making, Undoing and Remaking: Performing Identities"; (c) "Politically Framed Identities in Embodied Interaction"; and, (d) "Identity Work in Institutional and Technology Mediated Environments". The final Part three of the paper presents two critical readings of the entire volume: (a) the first of which is related to identity, peace and conflict mediation and is offered by professor Joseph Lo Bianco, chair of Language and Literacy Education, Melbourne Graduate School of Education, University of Melbourne, Australia, and (b) the second offers sociohistorically framed reflections on the scholarship presented in the volume by senior professor Roger Säljö from Gothenburg University, Sweden.

Theoretical empirical explorations of identity and diversity across digital-analogue timespaces

In addition to going beyond bounded identity fields and challenging static and demarcated descriptions of identity, this paper builds upon the contributions in the volume, taking a point of departure in 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, this body of scholarship builds upon the premise that both institutions and individuals are shaped by the "living and daily doings" of members of institutions in different settings. Taking the points of departure in 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, this paper thus explores and explicates the performance, living and doing of identity positions

across digital-analogue timespaces. It takes an intersectional stance with the aim of exploring 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 digital-analogue timespaces (in for instance, interactional and/or historical data). In other words, this paper explicitly focuses sets of individual ongoing or recently completed studies that discuss results specifically from a social practice perspective, representing different domains and disciplines that build upon interactional and/or historical analyses where identity positions and processes are centre-staged.

Secondly, it explicitly discusses methodological and conceptual issues of relevance in the light of present day diversification, including virtual and physical mobility across timespaces. Together, the contributions 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. and discuss the need to centre-stage diversity *as* normalcy, (instead of in terms of neologisms and superlatives like "super-diversity", "hyper-diversity", "newcomers", "newspeakers" etc.). Furthermore, the empirically pushed scholarship we upfront in this paper offers theoretical and methodological discussions illustrating global North-South perspectives. Finally, an important and unique contribution of the work we discuss 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 scholars (including scholars with diverse experiences within scholarship).

Theme 1: Conceptual framings of identity in a multifaceted world

Theorizing issues related to identity from a range of ways, four studies presented in four chapters contribute to the first theme and 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 analogue-digital spaces in the 21st century, the individual studies highlight the many-ways-of-being (particularly Chapter 1 and 4), the embodiment and resistance or counter positionings (particularly Chapters 2 and 3) and the contextualization of performances of identity (all four chapters) in and across timespaces. They contribute to furthering our understandings of "normal diversity" (compare with "super/hyper-diversity", "newcomers", "newspeakers") and theorize identity in a multifaceted world.

In Chapter 1, "Many-Ways-of-Being. 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 corner stone concept. The chapter aims to (a) tweeze out commonsensical understandings as they are represented in mass-media texts; (b) trace a brief historical development and focus of research on identity in some Scandinavian contexts; and finally, (c) highlight the ways decolonial perspectives can (potentially) shape academic work on identity.

David Block in Chapter 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 micro level analysis (examining, for example, 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, sociohistorical embedded in multiple phenomenological layers.

The chapter builds upon a life-story interview except, 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 Chapter 3, "Refusing What We Are: Communicating Counter-Identities and Prefiguring Social Change in New Social Movements", Paul McIlvenny points to the need (a) for revisiting and challenging how we conceptualize identity and (b) 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 analyses video recordings of a "United Nathans weapons inspectors" protest theatre 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 Chapter 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 like 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) include concepts like 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, 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 centre-stages a third perspective wherein language-use or languag*ing* and identit*ing* or identity-position*ings*, including cultur*ing* 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.

Theme 2: Making, undoing and remaking – Performing identities

The second theme builds upon the research presented in three chapters that *empirically* focus upon the vulnerable, open and fluid nature of identity (discussed under theme one) in different contexts. Here the (re)making and (un)doing of identity performances are centre-staged. These studies illustrate the ways in which human identity gets fossilized, constructed but also challenged by offering data-pushed examples.

In the first contribution to this theme, Chapter 5, "Co-Constructing the Adolescent's Identity: Agency and Autonomy as Interactional Accomplishments", Marina Everri and Laura Sterponi draw attention to the complexity and situatedness of processes where identity development gets played out. By focusing on the communicative exchanges between parents and adolescent children they demonstrate how multiple identities are contingently performed, invoked, contested and negotiated. Drawing on recent linguistic anthropological reflections on identity and discursive psychologists' theorizing on social positioning, Everri and Sterponi examine the dynamic and multifaceted enactment and transformation of identity in social interaction. They suggest that agency and autonomy, key dimensions of adolescent identity development, do not emerge solely from the individual but are co-constructed and transformed in interpersonal exchanges. They support these theoretical propositions through the discourse analysis of two family cases. Here they illustrate the discursive co-construction of adolescent agency and autonomy as being continuously negotiated rather than being non-linear. The examples presented in the chapter highlight that families oscillate between different interactional configurations, with individual family members claiming, declining, reclaiming certain roles and competencies vis-à-vis other members of the family. In addition to illustrating the value of bridging the gap between different disciplinary perspectives, Everri and Sterponi demonstrate the analytic purchase that a micro-examination of social interaction offers to adolescence and developmental psychology research.

In the next contribution under theme two, "Rethinking Identity in Adult Language Learning Classrooms", Jenny Rosén focuses the performatory dimension of adult language learners' identities in institutional spaces. Learning a new language, Rosén argues, involves transformation and investment of identities, since people negotiate not only who they are, but also who they have been and who they are becoming. In this chapter, she investigates how participants in a Swedish language learning program, Swedish for immigrants (SFI), use their multiple linguistic resources in the negotiation of identity in situ. The chapter aims to explore how participants in this specific setting use their (multi)linguistic resources in the negotiation of identity generally and gender and national belonging more specifically. Rosén traces the

development of the SFI program since the 1960s and its organization in Sweden. The chapter combines a sociocultural framework that emphasizes the relationship between learning, participation and identity with a post-structural, intersectional understanding of identity. Grounded in an ethnographic framework, Rosén uses the work of Sangeeta Bagga-Gupta, Francis Hult, Ron Scollon and Suzanne Wong Scollon on a multi-scaled approach, which includes national policy of the SFI program and, interactional data from a SFI classroom. Rosén highlights how language learning is embedded in the socialization of students into certain values and norms which are perceived as specifically Swedish, tied to the geopolitical spaces of Sweden. She also shows how the participants constitute and negotiate meaning about the world and who they are through language-use. How linguistic and institutional identities in the classroom intersect and enforce the unequal distribution of power is another important contribution of this chapter.

The final contribution to theme two introduces the concept of *Before-and-After stories* as a special kind of story where the narrative structure serves as a means for identity construction. On the basis of two interview narratives Julia Sacher in "The Passage of Time as a Narrative Resource in Constructing a 'Better' Self" illustrates how these kinds of stories consist of three phases in which narrators position different facets of their selves in different ways. Crucial to the analysis is the observation that the passage of time – in most instances a rather inconspicuous aspect of telling a story – is utilized to advertise personal change for the better. Drawing on methods from the social constructivist paradigm (such as discourse analysis, positioning analysis and interaction analysis), Sacher reconstructs how contrasting facets of individual selves serves as a means of doing implicit face-work while avoiding self-praise at the same time.

Theme 3: Politically framed identities in embodied interaction

The third theme brings together three chapters that, in different ways, explore identity construction in political/public contexts.

In the opening Chapter 8 titled "From Political to National Identity. Changes in Social Practices in the Region of Zanzibar", Sigrun Marie Moss argues that people sort other people into categories, and define themselves into groups they feel part of and distance themselves from groups they do not belong to. She also highlights that identity constellations influence emotions, cognitions and behaviour towards in-group members and out-group members, and shifts in group identity are accompanied by changes in social practices that express these identities. Taking anthropological tenants as points of departure, Moss describes how a shift from polarized political identities to a shared nation-state identity is mirrored in changes in social practices on the semi-autonomous archipelago Zanzibar, off the coast of the geopolitical spaces of Tanzania. She makes the case that there is a dearth of research on such processes in intergroup conflict, and that uniting under a shared overarching identity has been emphasised as a way of overcoming intergroup conflict. Moss also builds on the premise that given that people increasingly see themselves as members of a singular (national) identity, this influences

emotions and behaviours towards (and evaluations of) former outgroup members. The analysis builds upon extensive fieldwork and interviews with members of the population including political leaders in the community. The chapter illustrates how people talk about reconciliation processes in relation to the conflict and how these shape social practices in the community.

Ellen Andenæs discusses embodiment related to professional identity in Chapter 9, "'She didn't know I'm black, you see' – Practices, Body Signs, and Professional Identity". Andenæs contrasts the common conceptualization of professional identity as the image people build up based on the way an individual performs a job, related to particular kinds of knowledge and competencies that are shared with colleagues, with identity as being embodied. She discusses the latter in terms of complex relationships between competencies and bodies. This chapter presents research based upon an interactionist, practice based approach to professional identity. The research focuses Norwegian nursing homes where the employees were ethnically diverse and were represented by an unusually high proportion of males on the one hand, and residents were overwhelmingly white ethnic Norwegians. Thus, how the bodies of nurses are perceived by the patients, and how such interpretations figure in negotiations of nurse's professional identity positions are centre-staged. Issues related to identity conflict are reported to be common in that it was not unusual that some residents rejected nurses whom they disliked or distrusted. Andenæs discusses this by taking Dorte Marie Søndergaard's work on "body signs" relating it to the nurses' appearance i.e. their skin colour, accents, and markers of gender. The study focuses on how nurses account for such situations in research interviews, and on the nature of identity work their accounts accomplish.

The final chapter that contributes to theme three, Chapter 10 "The Complexities of Deaf Identities", addresses the dynamic processes of deaf identity formation. Irene W. Leigh theorizes identity by deploying intersectionality and identifies gaps in research on deaf identity formation. She notes the importance of recognizing the fluid and dynamic nature of identities that are shaped through biology, cognition, sociohistorical contexts and language choices. Leigh's point is that knowledge of the fact that an individual cannot hear does not automatically confer a deaf identity to the individual. In contrast to stereotypical perceptions of deaf people as a homogenous group, she calls for the acknowledgement of the existence of different groups of deaf individuals, all of whom can and do claim different deaf identities. Life experiences, including those related to parent influences, school environments, exposure to deaf people, attitudes about deaf people, and cultural environments shape the specific deaf identity that deaf individuals have the possibility to become part of. The chapter also focuses identities related to ethnic background, sexual orientation, and additional disability status among other individual characteristics – none of which exist in isolation. These multiple layers intersect with one another and with deaf identities in unique dynamic, rather than static, ways, argues Leigh.

Theme 4: Identity work in institutional and technology mediated environments

The final theme in the volume builds upon the research presented in four chapters that empirically focus the making and shaping of identities in technologically mediated environments at work and in educational contexts.

Chapter 10 by Elisabeth Keating constitutes the first chapter under this theme. In "Identity and Culture Clashes in Cross Cultural Virtual Collaborations" the point of departure is the taken for grantedness among members of a community with regards to the relationships between identity and culture, even as they expertly manipulate them interactionally. Contexts where the negotiated nature of identity can be challenged, however, illuminate varied and conflicting ideas about identity, and cross cultural collaborations, where dissimilar ways of talking and different models and interpretations meet. Keating deploys Erwin Goffman's concept "spoiling" of identity and Harold Garfinkel's word on ritual status degradation when she describes identity conflicts in cross-cultural virtual collaborations where professionals from across the world work together. Her main point is that without some attention to how cultural patterns influence identity practices, those working in global teams can inadvertently spoil others' identities or participation in the status degradation of others.

Keating argues that the performance of identity is a fundamental aspect of human society and that identity is "talked into being" in interactions with others. This negotiated nature of identity, however, can be challenging in cross cultural interactions, where dissimilar ways of talking and different models and interpretations meet. Keating highlights that communication technology has made it routine for members of certain professions to work together from different cultural locations in sparsely furnished virtual spaces where it is not always clear that multiple systems of identity are in play (or at work). The chapter analyses one such context, engineers working in virtual collaborations. Keating shows how differences in the way cultures organize identities, (for example, along priority axes of self versus social role identity) are influenced by cultural ideas of the person.

In Chapter 11, Johan Hjulstad, highlights which of a person's multiple intersecting identities are most prevalent, and what they come to mean. These, he argues, constantly shift across various discourse contexts. The chapter "Identity Negotiations in a Visually Oriented Virtual Classroom", explores some of the identity negotiations performed by sign language learning students in a video conferencing classroom. These students come together in a distance education program which has the explicit aim of strengthening student's "deaf" identity. The chapter illustrates how a seemingly simple exercise has a powerful effect on what "deaf" identity means for hearing non-signing friends from the students' local classes: through working with a teaching plan on "friendship", where the signing students plan for and invite hearing friends, to the re-negotiation of what 'deaf' comes to mean in the inclusive setting of a local school.

The chapter explores identity negotiations by Norwegian Sign Language (NSL) learning students in a video-only mediated environment (VME). Hjulstad asks how mainstreamed deaf students can reach the goal of learning NSL so that it can form the basis of a positive subject formation and identification with positive dimensions of the signing community in the geopolitical spaces of Norway. By investigating a "friendship" teaching plan and the invitation of hearing non-signing classmates to the distance education virtual classroom, Hjulstad illustrates how the embodied interactional organization of participation gets cooperatively crafted and sustained through simultaneous co-occurring influences. He highlights the dynamic, changing, and complex ways in which identity negotiations are accomplished by the participants in the VME, and how the identity of 'deaf' is re-negotiated in unique ways. The chapter raises a number of implications for issues of identity development, the role of technology, and inclusive education.

In the third chapter under theme four, "'Janne X was here'. Portraying Identities and Negotiating Being and Belonging in Informal Literacy Practices", Annaliina Gynne presents a study where young people's identity work and informal literacy practices are examined in two separate but intertwined settings: in a bilingual school context and at a social network site. The study draws on ethnographic data, and the concepts of language and identity-as-agency are explored from a discourse analytic perspective. Here Gynne argues that portraying identity positions and negotiating being and belonging is possible in and through practices where multiple aspects of communicative repertoires and modalities are employed.

Drawing on sociocultural approaches and (n)ethnographic data, the study aims to expand understandings dealing with identity work and heteroglossic languaging, including informal literacy practices, in settings across the offline-online continuum. Through analysis of data sets consisting of video recordings, photographs and screen grabs, Gynne illustrates the ways in which interactions, agency and social positionings emerge at the intersection of people, discourses, spaces, practices and technologies.

In the final chapter that contributes to theme four Elina Tapio, focuses on the conflicting discourses in relation to English language learning by deaf Finnish sign language signers. The chapter titled "'I do this all the time!' – Turning Points in Understanding Language Learning", Tapio documents how a deaf Finnish sign Language signer, Hanna, suddenly realizes that what she herself has taken for granted – that she has limited resources for language learning – is not true at all. Hanna's revelation is based on her own daily communication practices and opens up for a new understanding of herself and her linguistic resources. The hegemonic discourse in deaf education highlights that deaf sign language learners have limited resources for language learning. Tapio contributes to recent empirical studies of communication-practices among signers and challenges this view. Through the case study of Hanna, she illustrates how an individual becomes aware of the conflict between a dominant, authoritative discourse – the perspective she has adopted from others – and the contrasting practices with English in her everyday life. This moment of revelation, a rupture of taken-for-grantedness

during an interview, leads to new self-positionings. Tapio argues that such moments of self-revelation offer possibilities for reverse discourses where new identity spaces can emerge.

Two critical readings of identity and diversity

Joseph Lo Bianco, professor and chair of Language and Literacy Education, Melbourne Graduate School of Education, University of Melbourne, Australia, authors his critical reading of the research presented in the volume in the Foreword through a focus upon identity, peace and conflict mediation. He highlights that the volume breaks new ground in approach and content, and suggests that this is summed up in title of a *revisiting* of the approaches to identity scholarship with the intent of *re-imagining* the object of analysis. According to his critical reading, the studies presented represent a wide range of research, approaches, settings and problems that are held together by a common emphasis of combining empirical documentation with refined thinking. He highlights that 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.

Lo Bianco suggests that traditionally, identity scholarship 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. He highlights that the volume aims to transcend this limitation by making complexity and diversity a central element of analysis.

Building upon the fact that communication is always involved, Lo Bianco points out that all the chapters in the volume represent a challenge to analyses of identity that make use of demarcated fields of study, 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. He suggests that one of the important things the volume can teach us, is about struggle in the social and public life of communities where demands for recognition of differences are present, and where these differences are represented, displayed, negotiated, accommodated or repudiated. 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; there is immense conflict at the sub-national level all across the world in which something like identity is present, prominent, and problematical, he stresses. 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. These problems give rise to the critical importance of research on identity, and have brought about new thinking about conflict and conflict types. Some conflicts are network based. Network conflicts involve a struggle for power beyond state actors alone, such as in Syria currently. Their newness, Lo Bianco says, 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.

Joseph Lo Bianco highlights that research, knowledge accumulation and reflection and dialogue must play their proper roles towards producing peace. When scholarship reflects on issues so critical to the conduct of social and political life, divisions between 'theory' and 'practice' worlds need to 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, he stresses. 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. Lo Bianco highlights that the innovative work of scholars who 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. We need the kind of steady, sobering, historically attuned and globally oriented scholarship the volume offers, on identity and its complexities, to take into our classrooms, research projects and civic life. He highlights that currently 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.

In the Afterword of this volume, Roger Säljö, Senior Professor from Gothenburg University, Sweden presents a critical historically framed view on cultural experiences, identities and diversification in the hands of researchers, and especially researchers within social sciences. He highlights that a critical perspective in the social science research domain emerges first (at least in European spaces) in the wake of the enlightenment and the French revolution. Even though philosophers and scholars of various backgrounds had taken an interest in human conduct and life conditions since the ancient Greeks, through inquiries into areas such as moral philosophy and various branches of theology, it was during the late 18th and the 19th century that the ideas of an empirical social science in the modern sense were shaped and institutionalized as disciplines, Säljö underlines. Through the writings of Auguste Comte (1830-1842) and others, the ideas of a scientific approach to studying society, with the aim of covering the laws that regulated social life, where articulated and, he maintains, spread globally. Based on this epistemology, researchers were required to study society by limiting their attention to what was directly observable to the senses, and seek explanations in terms of cause and effect, mechanically. As a consequence of this type of research, they would provide valuable insight into how to predict human behaviour and how to organize society through the scientific principles of social engineering.

Late 19th and 20th century scholars (i.e. Max Weber and Georg Simmel) pointed however to the limitations of staying within such a narrow paradigmatic worldview since this type of research left many important issues (like i.e. issues of cultures, values, minds and the role of

collective acts in the lives of humans) outside the realm of scientific inquiry. Today in the 21ˢᵗ century these legacies of positivism continue to exist and influence our lives inside and outside research. Säljö stresses that many alternative philosophical perspectives and epistemologies have been developed with the explicit ambition of broadening the role of research using systematic exploration and analysis of social action. He maintains that the Chicago school of sociology (Bulmer, 1984), has played an important role, when it comes to empirical social science research. Säljö calls for returning to their methods and research approaches when studying processes of diversification and identity transformation. What these members of the Chicago school (inspired by i.e. the pragmatist John Dewey and the founders of symbolic interactionism, George Herbert Mead and Herbert Blumer) saw, when they did research on social life, was based upon the consequences of a radical restructuring of large groups of people in the wake of industrialization. The unequal distribution of wealth created conditions, where in a short time period, enormous fortunes were built up by successful industrialists, while their workers lived in poverty with miserable and insecure working conditions, poor housing and health care, and lacked other physical and social resources. The schooling offered to large proportions of the children, especially those of migrants, was limited and low in quality, and in most cases whatever was offered in terms of education was not relevant to the needs of children who, in many cases, did not even speak the majority language.

What members of the Chicago school experienced, Säljö goes on to stress, were the consequences of a social diversity due to migration and urbanization. The Chicago school scholars realized that social research would have to adopt different methodological and theoretical premises if it would have anything interesting to say about the state of their geopolitical settings. Large-scale surveys based on the language and ideals of mainstream society were not deemed enough to produce data that would give insights into the dynamics of urban life and the conditions of the homeless, the immigrants, the elderly, those who suffered the consequences of alcoholism, or, more generally, those who were marginalized in an increasingly diverse society.

In contrast to the natural sciences, which commonly adhered to strict laws and rules, and often contained large-scale surveys based on language backgrounds and ideals of the mainstream society, the social sciences have focused on qualitative research, with a large spectre of methods – observations, interviews, narratives and going from looking at individuals to seeing them as parts of society. Säljö here critically raises the issue of what a society is. He refers to society as a construction and points to the fact that we should rather look at the communities in society, communities which are contexts, in which people develop their worldviews, identities, values and practices. Communities are organic and offer interactional settings. He asks scholars at large to, in line with the work presented in the volume, to look at people's living and daily doings, and at the social complexity that people are part of. This he points out is what the contributions in the volume do: look at people's living and daily doings, and the social complexity that they are a part of in different contexts.

Empirical and Theoretical Contributions on the Nature of Diversity across Analogue-Digital Timespaces
Sangeeta Bagga-Gupta, Aase Lyngvær Hansen

Today, in a world of globalization, migration, virtualization and diversification we see the need to revisit and reimagine identity positions in different settings. Of the many arguments and results presented in the volume, Säljö highlights three central points that need emphasizing. The first point is *the acceptance of diversity and diversification as productive base lines of social inquiry.* In many areas and disciplines, this might be a challenge, since they on many occasions build on stereotypes and hegemonic conceptions of people and social practices. Säljö reflects on his own research area (pedagogy) where he has observed the dominating tendency of a narrow Eurocentric theoretical perspective on human development. Furthermore, tests related to intellectual development were, for a long time, constructed as a capacity for abstract forms of thinking, and the implication was that reasoning in terms of abstract logic, should be the target for the mature mind. Säljö raises a critique vis-à-vis assumptions regarding cognitive, social and other forms of development results in designs and practices that end up portraying non-Western populations as performing poorly. This is pertinent not only in cross-cultural research on human development (as many studies have highlighted previously), but is also problematic given the analogue-digital intersections of current human existence.

The second point is *the necessity of analysing processes of social change by linking the individual and the collective level.* Interactional practices and joint activities make up the glue that simultaneously creates continuity and transformation of the ways in which we lead our lives. A third and important point is that we as researchers have to be *cautious in our claims and sensitive to the categories and explanations we rely on in our work.* Analytical frameworks never tell the full story, Säljö cautions. They will always be partial, and what we claim to find is relative to our conceptualizations and methodological procedures. We will never be able to critically scrutinize how identities emerge, are remade and performed, unless we are willing to acknowledge that they are embedded in societal and institutional practices, and assumptions of what it means to grow up, or to act in specific settings. This, he highlights, is illustrated in the contributions to the volume, where both virtual as well as physical encounters are analysed.