Chapter 1
Identity and Migration: An Introduction

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1.1 Identity Construction and Transformation in Migration Processes

Identity has increasingly become an important keyword in contemporary human and social sciences. Since the 1980s, research has intensively explored how meanings, expectations, and conflicts are associated with the different locationalities of individuals and groups; how individuals represent themselves using one or another element that constitutes their identity; how these elements can be categorized; and how multiple identities are compounded and negotiated when they conflict (Brubaker and Cooper 2000). The literature on this topic is so rich that it is nearly impossible to present an exhaustive overview of the different contributions in this field (Westin 2010). However, little attention has been devoted to the influence of migration on identity formation and transformation.

Although it has been largely recognized in most cases that the discipline divide does not provide an adequate framework for academic research (Geertz 1983; Fuller 1993), blurring the boundaries between disciplines is actually tremendously difficult because it is often perceived as a loss of power in individual disciplines (Bourdieu 1984). This edited volume brings together scholars engaging in a conversation about the issue of identity formation and transformation in contemporary multiethnic Europe. However, identity is a broad concept that has been defined differently by various disciplines. For this reason, a multidisciplinary approach is a highly complex task that continuously risks to results in misunderstandings caused by different definitions of the concept. Notwithstanding, because a single-sided perspective on identity is not able to address the multifaceted phenomena at stake (La Barbera 2013), a multidisciplinary approach is an appealing challenge that this volume undertakes.

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This project was born out of the need to challenge the traditional discipline division and to search for novel epistemologies and methodologies to address the research questions of how identity works in contemporary societies and how identity is negotiated in migration processes. This project is the result of a theoretical and methodological exchange among scholars from the fields of law, social and cultural anthropology, sociology, philosophy of law, political science, pedagogy, history, literature, and linguistics.

This volume is structured around several interconnected issues related to the (trans)formation, (re)construction, and negotiation of identity during migration processes. It addresses theoretical questions related to identity in plural and multicultural societies, the effect of migration policies on marginalizing migrants, the relevance of law and rights to the processes of identity construction; the strategies of identity (re)construction through (dis)identification, the relationship of identity with center/periphery dynamics in postcolonial and globalized societies, membership and belonging as constitutive aspects of identity, and oppositional representations and (re)articulation of identity. Contributions to this volume fundamentally focus on identity as a product of social interaction and address, from different perspectives and methodologies, how identities are constructed, negotiated, and transformed by exploring how interpersonal interactions and institutional framework interact.

The dialectic interplay among self-representation—meant as identification in terms of interpersonal differentiations—and social categorization—meant as hetero-definition in terms of categories that establish boundaries between "us" and "them" (Deaux 1993; Simon 2004)—is one of the main issues explored in this volume. Research shows that although membership is generated by the recognition of oneself as belonging to a group, it is not fixed or definitive. Individuals choose different ascriptions as self-descriptive in different situations and contexts (Stryker and Serpe 1994). Moreover, implying that social categorization and self-representation conflict to various degrees, the notion of identity negotiation (Swann 1987) is used to refer to the processes of conferring meaning to the elements that constitute identity and reaching (explicit or tacit) agreements regarding "who is who" in interactions with others and society at large.

At the crossroad between self-representation and social categorization lies the core mechanism of individual and collective identities. Individuals differentiate themselves by adopting criteria that are shared by the members of a group and by developing a sense of belonging to it. When outsiders recognize individuals' belonging, collective identity emerges (Jenkins 2008). One of the main theoretical issues is whether and how identity can be conceptualized by acknowledging individual features and collective identification when both tend to shift over time. Critics have argued that politicizing identity is counterproductive to the pursuit of social change. By claiming the peculiarity of a group's identity and asking for special group rights, the voice of those in power within the group is allowed to be heard, while people who face discrimination within the group are silenced and further marginalized (Okin 1999). Among political theorists, the debate on identity has shifted toward

the "politics of recognition" (Kymlicka 1999), "hospitable liberalism" (Habermas 1998), and intercultural dialogue (see Chap. 2). However, the main concern is the real feasibility of dialogical governance in contemporary multicultural societies. Indeed, intercultural dialogue does not occur among peer interlocutors. For this reason, argumentation, meant as the core component of dialogue, is not enough. In multicultural societies, identities adjust one to another and are gradually modified. The negotiation of identity, referring to a gradual transformation of identities within new vital contexts, generates new forms of cultural hybridism (see Chap. 3).

Embodied roles, and the specific behaviors associated with them, undoubtedly change over time and across space. Consequently, the perception, representation, and definition of identity also change. This shift is particularly explicit during migration. The research collected in this volume shows that migrants explicitly perceive identity as fluid and multiple. Identity is, indeed, better described as something that individuals "do" rather than something that they "have", as a process rather than as a property (Jenkins 2008). Identity is the result of the negotiation of personal given conditions, social context, and relationships, and institutional frameworks. Following a social constructionist approach (Goffman 1959; Berger and Luckmann 1966), categorizations that rely on essential features have been rejected. A number of studies have shown that the patterns of identification among migrants vary greatly, ranging from identification with one's country of origin, religion or mother tongue to receiving country, neither or both (Berry 1997; Roccas and Brewer 2002; Schwartz et al. 2008; Ramelli et al. 2013). In the migratory context, ethnicity and religion became especially important as identity markers and can be subjectively appropriated (Verkuyten and Yildiz 2007).

The views of scholars gathered in this volume, most of whom are migrants themselves, depict the arrival in the receiving country as a "total" event (Mauss 1966) because it requires the complete (re)construction of identity. Indeed, leaving their country of origin, migrants lose their social status, family, and social networks. In the receiving country, they find themselves without a history and without an image. Faced with an unknown universe of meanings, migrants feel lost, alone, and without reference points. As much as they strive to become integrated, migrants remain strangers. Moreover, migrants face distrust and hostility. The harsh reality of exclusion differs from the idealized image of the receiving country as a place to better one's life that originally drives migrants to leave their country of origin. Disillusionment and nostalgia contribute to idealizing the country of origin, which is in turn beautified through memory. However, when the migrant returns home, the contrast between the ideal and the real reappears. To a certain extent, migrants live between idealization and disillusionment both in the receiving country and in the country of origin (see Chap. 4). Their new condition is in between, at the borderland, in transit. The process that begins when one leaves his/her own country never ends, and it generates an unfinished condition of not yet belonging "here" but no longer "there".

In the postcolonial globalized world, this condition implies the (re)conceptualization of "home" as linked to the dynamic margins/periphery and the center/metropolis on a local and global scale. Recovering the feminist slogan

"the personal is political", "home" is defined as a geographical, historical, and emotional space that has political implications (Mohanty 2003) connected to material and symbolic resource allocation in multicultural societies (see Chap. 8). The very notion of home is questioned by considering that it can be defined as the place where one is born or where one grows up, the place where the family of origin lives, or the place where one lives and works as an adult in an exclusive or simultaneous way. One can actually have several "homes" that only partially match with the physical places. Nonetheless, the sense of belonging appears to be a crucial step in the processes of formation and identity reconstruction for refugee and migrant women (see Chap. 10). Their desire for roots and stability and belonging challenge the traditional constructs of social codes and national boundaries.

The goals of migratory projects are frequently related to upward mobility in the country of origin. The search for recognition and the feeling of empowerment are crucial to the (re)construction of identity. Because identity formation is a relational (and oppositional) process, recognition is an element that often appears in opposition to other groups or persons. Strategies of identity (re)construction through (dis) identification within the situationally redefined in- and out-group interactions are also addressed in this volume by examining how individuals negotiate their identity within a context of changing meaning of the social category of reference (see Chap. 13). If it is true that the Self needs the Other to self-represent (De Beauvoir 1949), then the question concerns how the Other is selected and integrated into the construction of identity. Belonging or non-belonging to a particular social category is not a straightforward process. Indeed, self-representation mobilizes different levels of belonging that do not reflect a simple dichotomous division between "them" and "us." Belonging emerges from a complex process of appropriation and (re)interpretation of social boundaries that depends on whether those who are on the other side of the boundary may accept or reject the minority group. The Other and the Self are not clearly defined as constant categories, but serve as situational shifting references used in relation to individuals who want to define themselves within the larger interactional context.

Although painful, the condition of being at the borderlands offers opportunities for improving one's life. Indeed, mobility is essentially a search for better economic, working, and living conditions; a search for food, love, and shelter; in other words, a search for happiness. This expectation helps migrants to persist in a process that often worsens their living conditions during the initial phases. However, although migrants perceive mobility as a way to escape a limiting environment, migration policies problematize migration as a destabilizing force that must be kept under control. This representation of the problem greatly influences the construction of identity and generates the resulting condition of urban and social marginality (see Chap. 9). As suggested by the sociological literature (Bourgeois and Friedkin 2001), social marginality is produced in forms of geographical isolation, which in turn generates social distance.

Some contributions to this volume are devoted to exploring the effect of the recognition of rights in the process of constructing identity, in particular how it affects self-representation. Law shapes identities in different ways by establishing a set of

options available for the construction of individual life trajectories (see Chap. 6). Because the rights that migrants can access vary considerably from one country to another, women and non-heterosexual people often undergo drastic and profound changes of personal identity during migration (see Chap. 7). This work also explores how the legal status of migrants influences integration patterns in the labor market (see Chap. 12). Migrant women at the intersection of the gender and ethnic hierarchies of the labor market are often limited by their migration status. Consequently, irregular migrant status caused systematic patterns of discrimination in the labor market, urging migrant workers to accept the lowest-status jobs.

Migrants often become particularly aware of the relational and contextual nature of gender as they attempt to fulfill expectations and behavior that may differ sharply from the expectations in the country of origin (Donato et al. 2006). It is true that all migrants, as they move from one society to another, show more or less subtle alterations of their way of representing themselves. However, in the case of women and non-heterosexual people, migration often leads to drastic and profound changes that substantially modify the most intimate dimensions of individuals life: feelings, strategies of self-representation and social interaction, and ability to imagine and create their own life paths (Nolin 2006). Many of the contributions to this volume use the intersectionality approach (Crenshaw 1989, 1991) to address identity in migration processes at the intersection of different axes of social categorization: gender, ethnicity, class, sexuality, and religion.

This volume also explores the processes of cultural identification and cultural variation in identity construction and transformation, by examining the self-positioning against the ascribed identities, the negotiation of categories for self-identification, and the deconstruction of those categories. As a product of belonging to multiple affiliations, the hybridization of being at the borderlands poses serious challenges to the existing hegemonic culture of society (Bhabha 1994). Re-interpreting practices and discourses of the "cultures" of the country of origin and the receiving country, migrants challenge the essentialist and homogenous representations of cultures and ethnic communities. The identities of migrants are understood as products of intersectional identifications, which require a procedural and dynamic understanding (see Chap. 5). More than a site of discrimination and exclusion, the marginality of being at the borderlands is reinterpreted as a speculative space (hooks 1990; Hill Collins 1998; Anzaldúa 1999; Sandoval 2000; Mohanty 2003; La Barbera 2012). The borderlands are hence described as an "interstitial zone of displacement and de-territorialization that shapes the identity of hybridized subjects" (Gupta and Ferguson 1992), which is deemed a particularly adequate conceptualization of identity in postcolonial and globalized societies.

The blurring of "here" and "there" has also perplexed the cultural fixities for those who have lived in the same place their entire lives (see Chap. 6). Recent research shows how the illusion of the essential relationship between culture and place is broken in contemporary societies (Gupta and Ferguson 1992). The detachment of identities from local places is a major concern of contemporary social sciences, which approach the (de)territorialization process as linked to globalization; claim the need to theorize how space is being (re)territorialized; and problematize

the relationship among nation, state, and territory (Gupta and Ferguson 1992; Kearney 1995; Cerulo 1997). In particular, the notion of political transnationalism, referring to those political activities that migrants undertake across the borders of two or more countries, endorses the need to reconsider the conceptualization of political communities, their institutions, and their conceptions of belonging (Bauböck 2005). Research shows that transnational political participation is driven primarily by identity concerns and the need for belonging. Despite the positive correlation between the attainment of double nationality and the development of a sense of belonging to the receiving country, the concession of transnational rights distracts from the recognition that full citizen rights are still denied to migrants in most receiving countries in Europe (see Chap. 11).

Migrants in Europe are still the most marginalized Others. However, since 9/11, a shift from migrant to Muslim has occurred in Europe, transforming Muslim veiled women into the Other *par excellence* (Aldbi Sibai Sirin 2012). The supposed antimodernity of Islam (Buiteleaar 2006) is considered to be incompatible with a democratic, secular, and progressist Europe (Erel 2003; Karakaşoğlu 2003). The hegemonic public discourse essentially regards Muslim women as inferior, uneducated, backward, and victims of their culture (Mani 1987, Spivak 1988, Mohanty 1988, Ahmed 1992, Narayan 1997, Yegenoglu 1998). Both the media and social science literature mostly represent Muslim women as passive victims of their religion who are oppressed by the patriarchal structures of their communities (Okin 1999, MacKinnon 2000). Stereotypical images of Muslim women and patriarchal societies are repeatedly used in the media to spread this representation. In addition, the *hijab is* considered as a sign of their unwillingness to integrate into European society. On the other hand, Muslims women consider the veiling to be a crucial practice in constructing their identity as Muslims in European non-Muslim countries (see Chap. 14).

The action of exhibiting one's identity has been defined as identity performance (Klein et al. 2007; Hopkins and Greenwood 2013). In the pursuit of challenging stereotypes that affect a group, its members may present themselves strategically by displaying specific elements of their identity (Ellemers et al. 2002; Barreto et al. 2003; Hopkins et al. 2007; Klein and Azzi 2001). Recent research illustrates the two-way relationship between identity and performance by examining how the display of one element of identity is connected to the perception of oneself as a group "representative" and how behaviors conform to ideal types (see Chap. 13). Markers create and define the boundaries that distinguish similarities and differences. The language, dress, behavior, and occupation of space used for the purpose of identification are largely visible markers of identity. However, their effectiveness depends on a shared understanding of their meaning. In a multicultural social context, misinterpretation of the meaning of markers—and, consequently, of identity—may occur. *Hijab* is analyzed in this volume as a contested marker of identity.

Oppositional representations and (re)articulation of identity is addressed by answering the questions of what the *hijab* means for those who wear it in contrast to how the image of the female body is represented by the media and public discourse. Young migrants react to the victimizing media discourse that depicts them as subjugated to and oppressed by patriarchal systems (see Chap. 14). Through their

narratives, it is possible to resignify the meaning of the *hijab* and transform it from a symbol of oppression into a site of assertion of their oppositional identity (see Chap. 15).

The theory of narrative identity argues that individuals construct their identity by integrating their diverse and conflicting life experiences into an evolving yet continuous narration that provides them with a sense of unity of their vital trajectory (Somers 1994; McAdams 2001). Nevertheless, the process of identity construction of migrants cannot be understood only with reference to subjective meanings attributed to individual biographical experiences (see Chap. 5). This process is analyzed here as the products of the social locations of the subjects as well as the products of the institutional framework, such as migration policies, citizenship regimes, hegemonic cultural norms, values and categories of both the receiving countries and the countries of origin (Vermeulen and Govers 1994; Pessar and Mahler 2003). The negotiation of identities is presented here as a mean through which migrants give meaning to their (some times contradicting) experiences. It is a social practice that can be understood as the combination of discourses, performances, and (dis-) identification strategies constructed on a multiplicity of cultural frameworks and reference systems. Through this practice, migrants manage to assert their agency in the migration context.

1.2 Synopsis of the Chapters

This volume is structured around seven interlocked issues related to identity and migration: cultural diversity, otherness, rights, belonging, membership, differentiation, and self-representation. The first section is devoted to the conceptual entanglements of identity and cultural diversity. Chapter 2 proposes to address multiculturalism as pluralism of identitarian horizons. From a philosophical perspective, Giovanni Bombelli approaches the "multicultural issue" as located between the universality of values and the contingency of possible multiple visions. This approach is presented as a necessary step for conceptualizing intercultural dialogue. Chapter 3 recognizes that intercultural dialogue occurs among parties with different degrees of power. Argumentation and negotiation are considered to be components of this dialogue. Francesco Viola thoroughly analyzes the relationship between collective identities and core values, along with the appropriateness of negotiation as a method to address conflicts of identitarian values.

The second section of the volume addresses the relationship between identity and marginalization, particularly the influence of the conceptualization of migrants as the Other in contemporary European society. Chapter 4 explores the effect of migration policies in portraying migrants as the Other in Europe. Lorenzo Ferrante presents the case of Italy to demonstrate the weakness of European policies in developing effective forms of coexistence and integration among different ethnic groups within the larger debate on multiculturalism and its failure in Europe. In Chapter 5, Anil Al-Rebohlz shows how the interviewees challenge hegemonic and othering

images of Muslim migrant women by generating their own creative way of being Muslim and being young migrant women in Germany.

The third section focuses on how law shapes identity. Chapter 6 considers the role of human rights in formal and informal processes of identity building. Daniele Ruggiu shows how the absence of the right of immigration can create malfunctions in the legal human rights system, which can in turn affect the very notion of European of identity. Chapter 7 reflects on the effect of law in establishing a set of options available for the construction of individual life trajectories. This chapter particularly focuses on the processes of (de)constructing gender identities in contemporary migration. Roberto Solone Boccardi argues that, because the rights to which women and non-heterosexual people have access vary considerably from one nation-state to another, migration implies drastic and profound changes in personal identity.

The fourth section analyzes the link between identity and "home" and how it is affected by center/periphery dynamics. The notions of mobility and subjectivity on the move are approached here. Chapter 8 considers the issue of identity in postcolonial literature. Lisa Caputo challenges representations of the relationship between center/metropolis and margin/periphery as a one-to-one link. She focuses on diaspora, memory, and identity through the work of three "African-Indian" female writers who blur the perception of fixed identity through the narration of their origin, journeys, and "home". Chapter 9 considers the concept of mobility within internal migration processes in Francoist Spain. By examining different interpretations and values assigned to the concept of mobility, Inbal Ofer examines the condition of urban marginality of internal migrants and its influence on the processes of construction of their identity.

The fifth section examines belonging and membership as crucial components of the identity building process. Chapter 10 explores the need to belong as a crucial step of identity reconstruction of refugee and migrant women in London. In this chapter, based on a visual ethnographic methodology, Nela Milic uses images to capture refugee women's desire for roots and stability and to challenge the perception of migrants and refugees in the UK. Chapter 11 analyzes the concession of external voting rights to migrants by their countries of origin as a tool of transnational political participation. By analyzing the case of Ecuadorian migrants living in Madrid and voting in the presidential elections of their country of origin, Gabriel Echeverría critically addresses the relationship between territoriality, identity, and politics.

The sixth section focuses the on strategies of identity (re)construction through (dis)identification. Chapter 12 focuses on migrant women working in the domestic sector in Spain and explores the paradox of the empowerment of migrant women through the self-appropriation and enforcement of the traditional role of women as caregivers. Paloma Moré Corral analyzes the process of identity construction of migrant women who work in the care sector in Spain from an intersectional perspective that considers not only their gender, but also their race and class in both their countries of origin and the receiving country. Chapter 13 addresses the relevance of religion in the processes of identity negotiation, focusing on the refugee Muslim community in Luxembourg. Lucie Waltzer examines how individuals negoti-

ate their identity, and discusses the changing significance of religion and its role in shaping identities within situationally redefined in- and out-group relationships.

The final section concerns the issue of representation and explores the discursive and embodied (re)articulation of stereotypes as a source of oppositional construction of identity. Focusing on the use of the Islamic veil, what Muslimness means in contemporary Europe is explored here. Chapter 14 analyzes the linguistic representation, of the *hijab*, women's bodies, and social integration in the British press. Ghufran Khir Allah analyzes metaphorical structure variations and the ideologies that lie behind each linguistic representation, and underlines the relevance of the religious dimension to the processes of identity construction and social integration within British society. Chapter 15 focuses on the *hijab* as a contested symbol and marker of identity. Salam Adlbi Sibai explores how Spanish Muslim women represent themselves differently from the image of oppression portrayed by the media. The narrative of Spanish Muslim women represents the choice to wear the *hijab* as a tool to oppose both the patriarchal culture of majority Muslim countries and the victimization of Western mainstream feminist discourse.

1.3 Conclusions

Seeking to provide a tentative yet operative definition of the concept of identity, I find it useful to recall the linguistic roots of the Latin term *idem*, 'the same'. Identity is indeed essentially comparative in nature and must be understood as originally connected to inclusion/exclusion dynamics. Identity is intended and best described as a relational and contextual process that refers to how individuals and groups consider, construct, and position themselves in relation to others according to social categories such as gender, sexuality, culture, race, nation, age, class and occupation. Identity encompasses the multiple roles endorsed by individuals in social life that are externalized through the use of markers, such as language, dress, and occupation of space. Drawing on social psychology, sociology, anthropology, political sciences, and feminist studies, the concept of identity that grounds this volume is a complex social phenomenon resulting from constant negotiations among personal conditions, social relationships, and institutional frameworks. Identity refers to the outcome of two main processes: self-representations and social categorization. The combination of these two processes results in the feeling of differentiation from others, the recognition of one's own difference, the sense of belonging, and consequent mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion, which are in turn created, maintained, and reinforced through public policies and the law.

"Migration" is used in this volume as an umbrella term that refers to human mobility from countryside to city (internal migration) or across national borders (international migration), and the term includes both the process of coming to a country and the process of leaving another one. Migration is addressed here not merely as the actual time of entrance into the national territory of a country that differs from the one an individual is a member of (read: citizen) because of the birth within the

national borders (*ius soli*) or filiation from nationals (*iuris sanguinis*). Migration is referred to as a process that begins with the arrival into a country but continues during one's (regular or irregular) permanence in a foreign country while one holds the status of alien or foreign resident. In this respect, the endurance of the migrant status for those who were born on national soil (so-called second- and third-generation migrants) and the effect of naturalization raise the issue of whether and how holding *papiers* and citizenship rights alter one's self-perception and social categorization, and thus affect identity formation.

Migration is addressed here as the material and existential condition of being at the borderland, in-between, in transit. The sense of belonging, (self)representation, and (dis)identification that is experienced by migrants is observed, analyzed, and theorized by the authors of this collective volume. The creation of spaces for participation, inclusion, and belonging through negotiation processes is described as a way to maintain emotional, relational, and institutional linkages with one's family, group, country, culture, and religion of origin, while also striving to be part of the social and political context of the receiving country. Strategic (dis)identification and (re)interpretation of the context of origin and of arrival are described as processes of identity negotiation.

Focusing on migrants as "people in transit" reveals that exploring migration is crucial to research on identity. The "in transit" locationality implies the deprivation of "home protection"—meant as one's family, town, social network, or nation-state—and the search for new symbolic and material spaces in which to stay. Through a conceptual and emotional re-elaboration of multiple belongings, being at the borderlands can be transformed from a marginalized condition of exclusion into a fruitful epistemological position from which to interrogate and theorize individual and group mechanisms of social identification and marginalization. As a migrant feminist scholar myself, I depict the subjectivity of being "in transit" as a suffered but fruitful locationality, which could provides a space for developing new political thought and impulses to social change.

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