INTRODUCTION

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Introduction

In the past decade we have been working out a comprehensive analytical framework on identity and conflict. It distinguishes three levels of extension (the individual, the group, the community), where identity is construed in terms of personality, sociality and culturality dimensions. The model is deliberately nonessentialist, dynamic and multifaceted. It has been applied in the description of some cases around the world (France, Belgium, Siberia, Kivu-Rwanda, Bolivia, etc.) in Pinxten and Verstraete (1998). We argue that an analytical framework is needed which can serve as an instrument that will allow us to speak with scientific rigour about the various dimensions of identity.

The present chapter in particular focuses on the notion of culturality and its relevance as 'one dimension of identity dynamics'. It is obvious that the notion of culturality has a markedly different and indeed more restricted meaning here than that of culture in most anthropological studies. This position needs defence and explanation. We propose this particular notion of culture (i.e., the culturality dimension) deliberately and consciously in a context where 'culture' increasingly appears to be replacing 'race' within the discourse of the extreme right in Europe. Hence, introducing a notion of culturality in identity discussions is a politically relevant move. Such a move is argued both on the basis of scientific rationality and on the basis of political choices. An example from the field of studies of our centre will illustrate the argument.

On Reclaiming Identity

We see ourselves as living in the situation of Otto Neurath's sailors. In his famous metaphor about knowledge, Neurath states that the continuous rebuilding and reshaping of knowledge can be viewed very much like the rebuilding of a ship while it is sailing the high seas (Neurath in Cohen 1964).

In the present contribution we are very conscious of this predicament: it is impossible to 'step out' of the world of social, cultural and political forces and structures in order to reshape it and finally to implement the result of our thoughts into reality. As anthropologists (or social scientists in a more general perspective) we are fully aware that our thoughts and analyses may impact the sociopolitical reality we are examining. One of the intentions of this chapter is to invite the reader to look at the possible frames of the 'ship' of social and cultural identity, firstly by studying its plans.

For decades, anthropologists have been struggling with two supposedly opposed traditions of scientific work, implying quite different understandings of social and cultural phenomena. Illustrative is E. Service's (1989) overview of one hundred years of anthropology under the appropriate title *A Century of Controversy*. According to Service's analysis the Durkheimian, positivistic and sometimes scientist approach can be identified as one school of thought in Western anthropology. The focus hereby is on 'social facts' of any type, while 'culture' is seen as – at the most – a rather unimportant by-product or residue of the social world. The alternative view, then again, is held by the so-called culturalists, who have tried to identify a layer of 'super organic' reality. Early on, figures like F. Boas were classified as culturalists, and via C. Lévi-Strauss the present-day interpretive anthropologists (starting with Geertz 1973) are also often characterised as culturalists or philosophical idealists. In a very recent attempt to think through the basic concepts of cultural anthropology, Borofsky et al. (2001) invited distinguished scholars in the field to re-address the issue of sociologism versus culturalism in order to determine what notion of culture would be a scientifically tenable one. Since American anthropology overwhelmingly focuses on the notion of culture (in comparison with the British or the French schools, for example), the exercise is a significant one. The results are indicative of the point we are trying to make here: some authors claim that one does not need the vague notion of culture if one sticks to a solid sociological analysis (e.g., Barth in Borofsky 2001), while others side with the culturalists (e.g., Shweder, ibid.). Our point is that scholars are trapped in prescientific positions, endlessly elaborated on in further work, but whose fundamental value is never questioned.

As scientists we need to look for some kind of yardstick which would enable us to appreciate the relevance of the analytical terms of culture and social reality, rather than keeping us trapped in mere ideological positions like culturalism and sociologism. Only then will the seemingly mutually exclusive 'theories' appear as alternative perspectives on the 'ship' we are sailing, not different 'ships' all together. In other words, we reject the obligation to choose on a priori grounds for either a sociologistic or a culturalist position, but rather wish to search for a scientific criterion which will make both appear as particular foci on the complex reality we are studying. Our analytical framework of dimensions of identity will serve the purpose of the yardstick here. A by-product of this type of approach is that the essentialism lurking in some of the present identity claims can be identified and critically assessed for what it is, namely an ideological construct. To phrase it even more explicitly: the ship can be viewed from both the perspective of the culturalist and from that of the sociologist, but

we should refrain from seeing the ship as either a 'cultural ship' or a 'social ship'. For, in the latter case, we would have started out from one or the other a priori. Such a detached view is necessary, since it will enable a deconstruction of the dichotomy of culturalism versus sociologism as an ideological one. It will subsequently allow for a reconstruction of both perspectives as heuristic paradigms, to be tested on their own worth.

   In order to make this shift from an ideological (and somewhat ontological) view on identity towards a scientific one (in terms of perspectives) we claim that two particular lines of questioning are most valuable: first, we state that the essentialism in the sociologistic and in the culturalist positions is an uncalled-for addition which does not stand in the light of serious scientific critique. Secondly, we hold that most of the time human beings are demonstrably engaging in communication, interaction and/or negotiation in their sociocultural life. Hence, essentialism in the guise of culturalism (e.g., in the new rightist parties) or of sociologism (e.g., in the laicist French position) is then an extreme and basically exclusive form of communication, which can be labelled 'mono-logual', rather than dialogical or interactive. In our view essentialism does not belong in the realm of social reality, but is a particular and rather closed view of groups and individuals on socio-cultural life. Hence, it is an ideological position, which can be recognised as such, but does not qualify as an analytical tool of scientific research.

Culture and Identity

What we are aiming at in this volume is to deconstruct these notions and the way the relationship between them is often defined. In doing this, we reclaim identity as a scientific term (especially in Orye and in Longman) and as a political term (see De Munter and van Dienderen). This work is precarious, since we have to do it in the political contexts and the power-ridden situations in which we live.

An Appetiser

In a small city (of 40,000 inhabitants) in the vicinity of Antwerp we asked a self-identified spokesperson of the Moroccan community to arrange for us to meet with some young people in order to interview them for a research project concerning parent participation in schools. We looked for subjects who (a) were considered to be successful by the community, (b) were aged between twenty and thirty and (c) were raised and still lived in the city. Our questions centred on factors which had enhanced their success in school. The following picture emerged:

1. Intelligence and tenacity in schoolwork.
2. Character to decide with whom and how to spend leisure time.
3. Early 'maturity' to study autonomously, with clear goals.
4. A school with a good class, forming a social network.

5. A family with older brothers and sisters who aimed at good school results.
6. The fact that one's family would not belong to one of the two larger clans of the Moroccan community in the city. Hence, one could be free of an avalanche of mutual visits and festivities which abound within these two clans.
7. A certain degree of freedom vis-à-vis conservative/religious/traditional parents. This kind of freedom is only possible away from the environment of the clans, allowing for self-determinacy.

Looking at the list of factors which was given across the board by our interviewees, it appears that personal issues are identified next to social and so-called cultural issues: 4 and 6 are more social, but 5 and 7 seem to be 'cultural' elements. All of the factors are felt to be crucial for their identity by the youth. What approach in anthropology or social sciences could do justice to this list of identity markers? Some theories would focus on the personality aspects (1–3) and hence draw a psychological picture, while other ones would focus primarily on the social and psychological issues, emphasising the family ties. There seems to be nothing specifically 'Moroccan' here, whereas focusing on the 'otherness' of the youth would overemphasise the cultural issues.

This example shows what we want to investigate and why we need a strong and efficient instrument to do that, beyond the disciplinary models which are available at present. Rather than choosing to interpret the reality we confronted in the a priori frame of the culturalist or that of the sociologist, we wish to problematise these a priori positions.

The Instrument

In this section of the chapter we recapitulate the work we have done so far. In our struggle with the vague notion of 'culture' in its new prominent role beyond anthropology and into the political discourse of today, we develop an encompassing analytical framework which should enable us to get a grip on the multifaceted domain where 'culture' is claimed to be relevant. One major stumbling block, we claim, is the often downright essentialist discourse on 'culture': anthropologists of the past and political analysts of the present refer to 'culture' as an entity or as a fixed and core element of a (large) group. In the anthropological discipline one speaks about 'a culture' and defines the world's population as consisting of some 4,000 cultures (e.g., in the standard reference system of the Human Relations Area Files, started by Murdock and others: see Naroll 1983). In the past, the advantage seemed to be that one could point to structural characteristics, which could be distinguished from the next culture, having its own particularities. On closer examination, however, it proved to be next to impossible to stick with any classification, let alone to deal with continuous processes of change (because of war, exchange or trade, cultural traits are continuously transported, altered or abandoned by groups). Is a Chinese person becoming less Chinese and more of a Western cultural subject by eating a hamburger? Or is Western culture lost because of Chinese restaurants which are to

be found on practically every street corner, or the African music which is part of the world of experience of today's Western youth? There is no way to use this culture-as-entity notion in a clear and scientifically proper way, we believe.

The other common usage of 'culture' points to a set of basic characteristics that is adopted by a population, and that is hence considered as a deep value or a core of the survival system which marks that population as somehow distinctly different from the next one. Basically, the same sorts of problems are attached to this notion as to the previous one. Yet this has not prevented some advocates from making 'culture' into the main identity factor of a population, or its motivational force in intercultural conflicts. At least some of the prevailing theories on nationalism and on major war threats defend this point of view (alternating 'culture' and 'civilisation' on some occasions: e.g., Huntington 1996). It is even worth while to look at the UN peace treaty over Bosnia in this respect. The academic debate on the issue is then often narrowed down to one between so-called culturalists and others.

In our view this sort of approach is blind to a set of other factors that seem to be at play in so-called intercultural conflicts, whilst it still works with an encompassing but definitely unworkable category of 'culture'. Instead, we propose to capture the field in a multilayered and multifaceted approach to identity, conceptualised as a complex of ongoing processes. We propose the term 'identity dynamics' in referring to the field of phenomena at hand. With this conceptual move identity is reclaimed as a scientific term. The conceptual framework developed below will allow us to test identity dynamics with scientific rigour. In making this move the ideological usage of the concept of identity in present social scientific discourse is rejected. In this volume Lieve Orye (Chapter 1) develops a parallel analysis in the realm of religious studies. She shows that scholars in that field are trapped into a similar choice between two ideological positions: one is supposed to take a religionistic or a reductionist stand on religion. The appropriateness of the concept and the term of religion as a scientific or analytical category is her point of discussion.

Identity dynamics are held to be characteristic, in a nontrivial way, of processes of growth, decay and change in the self-image and the interaction potentialities of individuals, groups and communities. These are the three levels of extension we differentiate in the human social arena, as they are distinguished from one another by a formal criterion: the set of interactional relationships of each is intrinsically different. An individual can interact with him-/herself in a way that is indeed qualitatively different from the type of interactions s/he can have with other individuals or sets of them. The interaction to oneself is reflexive. However, no individual exists in isolation: the individual interacts through interpersonal relations with others, thus relating oneself to one or more groups. Hence, the second level of extension, the group(s), can be defined intrinsically as any set of individuals with real interpersonal or face-to-face interaction. Each individual belongs, most of the time, to more than one group: an alliance group (e.g., a couple), a family, a professional circle, a ceremonial group, and so on. At the level of highest extension we define communities as those sets of people who interact, so to speak, in a vir-

tual way: one cannot have face-to-face contact with 'the New Yorkers' or with one's ancestors. But it is clear that 'New York' or a 'clan' can be very important in identity conflicts all the same.

At each of these levels identity dynamics are at work. We distinguish between three sets of constitutive features, called 'dimensions'. They are differentially working at each level, depending on the traditions or learning strategies of individuals, groups and communities. The dimensions are:

1. *Personality* Here we refer to personality studies in psychology (e.g., intelligent, beautiful, introvert, etc.), but also social psychology and sociology (conformist, leader, etc.) and anthropology (e.g., Dionysian versus Apollonian personality in Ruth Benedict's model). In all social sciences personality has been studied, using various philosophical a priori (e.g., psychoanalytic versus system theoretic stands). It must be granted that the psychological personality studies of Western subjects are the most elaborate for the time being, but the study of personality is not the sole prerogative of the psychologies of the Western individual, as more or less extensive sociological and anthropological theories of personality have shown (Roland 1991).

2. *Sociality* 'Sociality' is characterised as a multitude of transpersonal sets, constituted by means of convictions, rules and learning procedures which detail how, when and under what conditions persons, groups and communities interact and communicate. We rightly say that individuals are socialised, that is to say that they learn how to behave with other persons, or otherwise relate to others in different ways by descent, alliances, and so on. Regulations on gender, descent, marriage, neighbouring, etc. belong here.

3. *Culturality* We define 'culturality' as the dimension which comprises all those processes which 'produce meaning'. The understanding of meaning we advocate is that of meaning in context, which thus involves situating the processes in their sociohistorical and political settings. Obviously, meanings are instrumental in identity dynamics in a differential way: sometimes, but not always, for this individual or community, but not for that other group, etc. Since 'culturality' is only reserved for the meaning-producing processes of identity in this contribution, it will never be an encompassing dimension, but rather one of the set of three dimensions. We are aware that meaning production in identity dynamics is a very strong emphasis in the Western (Christian) tradition, bestowing meaning on almost everything having to do with identity at all three levels, but we claim this is a typical feature of that complex of identity dynamics which we call 'Western' and which could be tracked down to a fundamental feature of Christianity. It does not necessarily have the same span of application to all human interactions. Thus, it should be possible to speak about ritual education in Hindu tradition as a basically meaningless socialisation process (Staal 1988), whereas a puberty socialisation process in Western-Christian groups will be invested with meaning. In the scientific approach of a decolonised social science, we should allow for a set of concepts that see the prevailing Western social scientific concepts as special cases and not as universal or technical categories.

The relationship between sociality and culturality in this approach can be seen as analogous to (with the risk that every such analogy holds) that between syntax and semantics-pragmatics in linguistics. Although the linguistic relationship is a difficult one too, it is conventionally agreed that syntax and semantics-pragmatics refer to different aspects of language (notwithstanding their close relationships and often intermingling in actual performances). The interplay between syntax and semantics-pragmatics makes a linguistic message into a communicable utterance, but both syntax and semantics-pragmatics have a semi-autonomy which can be studied in its own terms. We can teach syntax by educating children in the rules of a language so that they will be able to form grammatically correct and communicable utterances in that language, and we can teach about meaning-in-context of a language by learning such intricacies as polysemy or metaphor. Some aspects can be purely or basically grammatical (like word order), while others are identified as primarily concerning meaning (like double meanings in a joke). The analogy we are using here can be formulated as a homology: it stipulates that sociality stands to culturality in identity dynamics like syntax stands to semantics-pragmatics in language (including language learning).

An example will make this clear: in their synthesis of the field of ethnocentrism studies LeVine and Campbell (1972) present a list of some twenty-four characteristics ascribed to 'us' (and their counterparts attached to 'them'). Thus, 'we' are seen as morally good and hence we are the subject of love by our peers, while 'they' are regarded as morally bad and hence they rightly are the subject of our hatred. In the view of the authors the synthesis yields a universal model of ethnocentrism, using the twenty-odd features to compose identities of an in-group and of out-groups. When working in the field with Navajo Indians one of us grew conscious that although Navajos are markedly ethnocentric, the model does not apply. They would classify all others as non-Navajo/enemies by birth. However, this does not imply that non-Navajos should be hated, or that Navajos should be loved and appreciated as superior to the 'others'. The construction of us–them distinctions is by no means absent, but at the same time it did not correspond at all with the contrast features of LeVine and Campbell's model (Pinxten 1997). Our interpretation of this finding is that the 'syntactic' distinction us–them applies also among Navajo Indians (expressed in sociality categories which distinguish between groups and group adherence along these lines), but that the 'semantic-pragmatic' categories varied substantially. That is to say, the cultural identification of the Navajo us–them distinction is very different from the Western one. Thus, LeVine and Campbell's synthesis remains very valuable, but we claim that it only deals with Western culturality in ethnocentrism.

We distinguish between two vehicles for identity construction and marking at each level: narratives and labels. Through narratives an individual, a group or a community secures integration over time. That is, the constant manifestation of identities in ever-changing contexts is accompanied by narratives which enable the actor to position and reposition him-/herself. Thus, conflicts between former and present actions can be smoothed by an accompanying nar-

rative. In the second place, all individuals, groups or communities identify themselves and/or are identified by others by means of labels (such as signs, uniforms, particular words or a specific tongue, etc.). Especially in the development and the management of conflicts, narratives and labels can work as important vehicles indicating escalation or de-escalation of conflict: e.g., shifting to warlike language and codes, rewriting one's history during and after a conflict, and so on. Again, although narratives and labels cannot be seen in themselves as the nucleus of a conflict, they are indicative and offer relevant entries for studying the conflict. Of course, other aspects need to be attended to as well, such as material context, power balance and so on.

When we combine the levels and the dimensions, the field or domain of identity dynamics is characterised in the following model:

1. *Individual identity dynamics* are constituted and reorganised constantly by changing values on three parameters or dimensions:
   - personality: the physical and psychological make-up of each individual: strong, shy, emotional, beautiful, intelligent, masculine/feminine, young/old, etc.
   - sociality: the forms and means to fit into transpersonal settings: sociable versus individualistic, integrated versus displaced, etc.
   - culturality: the meaningful aspects in individual identity: a conscientious individual in the Christian religiopolitical tradition, a responsible capitalist in the present-day West versus a redistributive leader in Tuareg civilisation before the emergence of the new states, etc.
2. *Group identity dynamics:* group identities are constituted and continuously rearranged along the following three dimensions:
   - personality: certain professional groups may require a particular personality type (e.g., salesmen should not be shy, cheerleaders should be young, etc.), while others will induce a particular mixture of personality types (e.g., the staff of a university department). Other groups may be indifferent to personality characteristics (e.g., age classes for puberty rites).
   - sociality: the 'grammar' of a group can be very specific (e.g., initiated males only, that is, only those males who know how to behave in the select group of village elders). The rules and habits of interaction in a hierarchical family are quite different (implying heritage agreements, respect, etc.) from those of a leisure group of cyclists.
   - culturality: e.g., the historical references of a family (with a genealogical tree, a religious belonging and an economic tradition) bestow different meanings on the group's identity than the revolutionary vocation of a group of partisans who fought for the freedom of their city in Ghent, Flanders during the Second World War.
3. *Community identity dynamics:* again the three dimensions are constitutive:
   - personality: communities can select for, educate towards and allow special room for particular personality types. For example, Rambo and Marilyn Monroe are considered to be role models for the Westerner at the end of the second millennium, whereas they are seen as handicapped 'half-persons' (lacking feminine and masculine aspects, respectively) by Navajo Indians.

The research into so-called national characters illustrates how personality types can be constitutive for the identity of communities: e.g., the male-dominant, conformist and collectivist Saudi as opposed to the feminine, creative and individualistic Swede (e.g., Hofstede 1993).

- sociality: different communities socialise their members in a different way, rearing them in a different set of structures and mechanisms. Thus, the social contract model prevails in the West, whereas kinship-based power for the elderly is the rule in traditional rural communities.

- culturality: particular meaning-producing processes can operate on the level of communities. The processes will vary vastly at this level: e.g., the Christian tradition gives meaning to life and death and pervades the moral and political sphere profoundly in Western societies; the community bestows meaning through textual historical references, through interiorisation of good and bad by means of generalised education, and by organising life in terms of punishment and reward at every level (including jurisdiction). The Navajo community, on the other hand, attaches meaning through contextualised oral referencing (in myths and ceremonials), through rearing its members in a guilt-free control system, and through procedures to seek compensation and balance in conflicts rather than deciding who is 'right' and who is 'wrong' according to some preestablished written rule. The difference in meaning giving can be vast: an almost encompassing meaning system prevails in the religious communities around the Mediterranean, whereas 'local' meanings seem to leave room to realms devoid of meaning in other communities.

An Example: Reactions in France to the Gulf War of 1990

On 2 August 1990 Iraq invaded Kuwait. The same day the UN Security Council votes a resolution condemning the attack as an act of aggression and demanding immediate withdrawal of the Iraqi troops. From then until the end of November no less than ten resolutions are voted. Also, an embargo is declared against the state of Iraq, enforced from the sea and from the air. On 17 January 1991 a coalition led by the U.S., starts the Gulf War. The war is brought 'live' on television all over the world, broadcast from aboard the bombers. The war escalates when Iraq successfully hits Israel with Scud rockets. France sends 19,000 soldiers, 14 ships, 500 tanks, 120 helicopters and 60 aeroplane bombers.

The ensuing public debate in France is centred mostly on internal affairs: the main fear is that Algerian immigrants and the 'pieds noirs' in France will get into conflict with the Jewish community there. By the end of January, hundreds of thousands of 'Islamists' are protesting in Algiers, demanding that the Algerian government train Islamic volunteers to participate in the war on the Iraqi side. Spokesmen say on French and Belgian television that this war is only an excuse for the West (and mainly the U.S.) to further establish world hegemony by crushing Islamic regimes. The Palestinian case is discussed as the real issue

of this war. In the south of France civilians are seen to buy more arms than usual and in some cities they even start bunkering supplies. At the same time church leaders, university professors and politicians speak up to keep the public calm. On 22 January and 4 February representatives of the Catholic Church, the Protestant Church and the mosque of Paris issue joint statements to 'live by the spirit of fraternity of the children of Abraham' and to avoid confrontation amongst each other. In most cases such appeals, also by state officials, are directed towards the communities of origin. The citizens from Maghreb origins, often those born in France, express their concern with this approach: they feel they are 'taken into hostage' by the French state's singling them out and addressing them as 'Arabs', rather than as Frenchmen. Thus, the state shifts in identity attribution in this matter and focuses on Arab, Christian and Jewish identities rather than on national identity for its own citizens. Some citizens take this issue up and declare they feel 'aggression against our origins' (as Muslim, etc.) by this overseas war of France and their American allies. Others express their disillusion in France, and declare themselves incapable of identifying with 'those people' (i.e., French officials).

But the war is not only an issue in public debate. In daily practices and interactions shifts in identity are experienced as well. Individuals and groups are sensitive to changes in context[1] and express shifts and changes in their identities. We give some examples from the interviews carried out in France (Schnapper 1993; translation ours):

> A 30-year-old educational aid worker from Maghreb origin, but born in France, stated: 'I was behaving like any other young person; I was drinking alcohol. But suddenly, from one day to the next I was scolded to be a filthy Arab. Before that event, I was never thought of as an Arab. I was indifferent to the issue, since I was with French colleagues. I was with young people, and that was it. There are people who do not feel attached to communities, and even reject them. But all of a sudden you become an "Arab".'

> A 33-year-old university staff member from Algerian descent told us in one of the interviews we carried out: 'Not anti-racism, but racism became normal. Even some shopkeepers refused our money. At that time I had some trouble with a grocer about a silly matter, a mere futility. I had peed against the wall of her house. She ran outside and started scolding me. She demanded to see my ID and said: "In this city there are some 5,000 followers of the Front National now. After the next elections we will certainly count 10,000 and then we will come and get you." The police picked me up and brought me to their station.'

> A 57-year-old Jewish woman told us: 'In the beginning I was lost. I felt a deep solidarity with the Jewish people… But at the same time I wanted to know more about Islam. I gained information and urged friends to do as much. Now many of them did not take this for granted.'

So, in daily practice and in concrete contexts of work, friendship or family, shifts appear. Not all of them need to point in the same direction. In the first example the labels were changed and the individual was thereby moved to another level of identity: the group level of colleagues at work is left for the

community level of 'Arabs'. In the second example the emphasis is on norms, rules and constraints of socially acceptable behaviour. In the mind of the shop-keeper the misbehaviour has to be punished, and hence she takes the stand of community representatives in power and threatens the individual in the name of the community. In the third example, an individual who identifies herself with a community first and foremost, starts searching for meanings that would transcend the community level of identity and is reprimanded for it by the community.

Thus, the international conflict poses a series of internal problems in France because it is lived and understood in a set of different identity processes by the subjects and the state. The official 'Western' identity discourse proclaiming that the war has to be fought because of the violation of human rights, as the basis of UN actions, is part of the identity narratives of next to none of the citizen groups and therefore constitutes yet another narrative at the international level. It is questionable whether it unites the West, let alone the world. The resurgence of the Front Islamique de Salut (Islamic Blessed Front) and the Groupements Islamiques Armés (Armed Islamic Groups) in Islamic countries may be taken as an expression of quite a different reading of contextual and of intrinsic aspects of this international conflict in yet different identity terms. It is our conviction that such an example can show which different sets of dynamics are at work in such conflicts, using quite diverse and often oppositional labels and narratives. In the following months the conflicts in France grew and frustrations vis-à-vis the state may be difficult or even impossible to ease for years to come.

This example does not deny that 'real' military and economic interests and conflicts were at work in this case, but it aims to show that people's identity dynamics can also operate as causal forces in the development and treatment of such conflicts. This inspires us to describe them as distinctly intercultural con-flicts because they are significantly codetermined in their origin or phasic development by culturality features as well. Moreover, the shifts and changes in and by the conflict of identity constellations justify our dynamic approach. (The actual historic developments in France are further documented in Ver-straete and Pinxten 1998.)

Culture or Culturality

In treating this subject for a readership of anthropologists, politicologists and sociologists we need to go deeper into the issue of culturality. As we mentioned earlier, a strong current in European and American anthropology is culturalist in one sense or another, understanding 'culture' as the pivotal element on which groups or communities differ from each other. The history of the concept of culture, however, is a bleak one: notwithstanding the efforts of hundreds of researchers in this field, no definition was ever agreed on by any representative sample in the discipline.

Our move in this chapter and elsewhere is double: on the one hand, we want to resituate the cultural phenomenon, and, on the other hand, we aim at fight-

ing the unhealthy essentialism we encounter. A very similar line of thinking is developed in this volume by Chia Longman (Chapter 2). She analyses the debate on identity from the perspective of gender sensitivity. In the particular domain of gender identity she scrutinises the essentialism which is hidden in the dominant conceptual frameworks and proposes ways to adopt anti-essentialist stands.

The essentialist use of culture is most clearly expressed in the common reference to 'a culture', identifying a community which is somehow distinctively characterised by a set of features that are not biological, and are hence termed cultural. In the century-old debate between social and cultural anthropologists (Service 1989) the culturalists have been stressing that groups or communities differ transgenerationally and/or structurally by their cultural features, often at the expense of (social) scientific methodology. The difficulties in reaching a scientifically sound model or concept of culture (as a culture) are plenty: it is impossible to demarcate a culture because of borrowing, war and trade which continuously change the picture. Also, it proves impossible to identify a culture as a diachronic and hence changing phenomenon, leading to the denial of a historical dimension to non-Western communities (Fabian 1984). These two criticisms may be the most important ones (though not the only ones: we should include orientalism and other bias thresholds in the picture) inspiring our decision to drop the concept of a culture altogether. We speak about material units instead: persons, groups and communities, distinguishing between all three by means of intrinsic features of the interactions of each type of unit. What was and is studied under the name of 'culture' is seen as a part of the complex of processes of individuals, groups and communities, a complex we call identity dynamics. Only those features and phenomena which somehow or other involve the production and transfer of meaning are dealt with in the category of dimension of culturality. The first major problem with the old concepts of culture is thus dealt with: the essentialism is avoided.

In the example we used above it became clear that the presumed national culture of France was threatened by the culturality aspects of different groups and communities in France, who stressed their particular identities over and above that of their national identity. A comprehensive and marvellously detailed picture of the multicultural political landscape of modern France is to be found in Pierre Bourdieu's (1994) book on the old and the new poor in the cities.

A second problem remains, however. Why do we still require the concept of culturality, and what does it stand for? Why not do away with the cultural, as some materialists or social anthropologists do? Our model leaves room for culturality as the dimension which deals with contextual meaning-producing processes. We explicitly and expressly make room for such a dimension because we are impressed by the human capacity to invent, interpret, fantasise and symbolise aspects of the world. Neither a purely materialist (e.g., Harris), nor any formal approach (e.g., Chomsky) so far has offered an adequate theory of these human capacities, we claim. Hence, any reductionism which denies meaning a place next to syntax seems unwarranted. This meets the challenge we set ourselves: avoid the trap of essentialism, but also that of reductionism,

by exposing both as ideological positions. The model will allow us to cover the subject matter and test the viability of the perspectives we advance.

Since we want to construct a comparative model, the category of meaning-producing processes is kept as open as possible: that is to say, it would involve phenomena which can either be found under semantics (reference, meaning, even deixis) or pragmatics (use, speech act meaning), as well as nonverbal or paralinguistic meaning (as in proxemics and the like). Moreover, we explicitly state that the contextuality of interactions and communications are included in the notion, leaving room for the particular contextualisations each person, group or community recognises and uses. Although the notion of culturality may still be rather vague, its open-endedness is important for our purpose. Again, the example helps to illustrate this point: as stated, the Iraqi conflict was lived in very different ways by citizens of France, who often attached diverging or conflicting meanings to signs and acts in the process. The counterexample of the mere lack of a genuine public discussion on the topic in another Western nation adds to our consciousness of the impact of culturality over and above 'realistic' political issues (on the reception in the U.S., see Pinxten 1998). On this subject we share the view on conflict resolution and culture, which has repeatedly been expressed by the political anthropologist Robert Rubinstein (e.g., 2002): 'Realpolitik' misses the point by blinding us for culturally sensitive issues. In particular, the present post-Cold War era might illustrate the danger of this blindness, according to this author.

We grant that these are vast issues which need much more elaborate discussion than we can manage here. However, the approach we advocate may have been made sufficiently clear by now. Since we need a model that can describe in a comparative way markedly different processes of recognising and mapping personality, sociality and culturality dimensions, the present open-ended approach may do the job.

A final point needs to be made here. We consider the tradition in the social sciences and the humanities that withdraws into monocausality struggles as severely limiting: one explains the complex phenomena we are dealing with in terms of the algebra of underlying structures only (and hence becomes a convinced structuralist), or one accuses the former of idealism and resorts to a hardboiled materialism only (and thus becomes Marxist or conservative ecologist), or one takes one single other perspective as the rock bottom of an alternative theory. We are convinced that a scientific theory on such complex matters as social and political units and their histories will certainly be of a probabilistic nature (as natural scientists have grown accustomed to in the study of the simpler phenomena they deal with), and that complexes may have to be dealt with in a multitude of ways when looking for a comparative theory. We therefore shy away from simplistic monocausal explanations for the complex and dynamic phenomena we are dealing with and invite scholars from different perspectives to consider the present multifaceted and open-ended approach. It is our conviction that any choice for one or a combination of (probable) causes-within-a-context will emerge only after undertaking this exercise, if at all.

Dynamics, Change and Creativity

When dealing with issues like culture, change, tradition and so on, we are confronted with a host of attached problems. Partly, terminological questions interfere: for example, the connotation of stability and even unchangeability is still attached to the notion of tradition. Partly, we are in the midst of conceptual vagueness and die-hard colonial attitudes, when Western identities are thought of as more easily adaptable to new demands and hence in a sense more 'rational'. In view of all this, it is necessary to focus on such issues and make clear how the present approach wants to avoid such connotations and unwarranted colonial by-products.

It is our claim that any individual, group and community changes and creates (new, adapted) identities. Depending on intrinsic elements and on specific contexts this will happen at particular intervals, at particular levels of impact and with particular effects. With the present model we offer a means to recognise and conceptualise such changes along a variety of criteria and not along the criteria of one partner only. Looking back at the model, we predict that any momentary identity constellation is a mixture of values on the personality, sociality and culturality parameters at one time. But the mixture is somewhat specific for each agent. Some agents (e.g., the Navajo community after the Second World War) will keep talking about the Navajo way or about tradition by stressing a certain formal way of dealing with the world, almost regardless of the contents or of the meanings attached. This is somewhat awkward for the Westerner who particularly emphasises meaning and ideological or world view stands, and finds him-/herself at a loss when confronted with the seemingly meaningless or at the least indifferent Navajo way. Thus, it is perfectly possible for the Navajo community to integrate or Navajo-ise foreign elements in a coherent way, although these elements seem to conflict qua contents or meaning with each other. In fact, tradition in the Navajo way may well best be understood as precisely this coherent way of 'sucking up' and turning into aspects of one's identity anything useful or interesting, almost regardless of consistency in meaning (see Farella 1984; also Pinxten and Farrer 1993 on the role of paradox).

We think we can understand this by pointing to the larger range of the sociality parameter in such creative processes, compensated by a smaller range of relevant points for the culturality parameter, that is, larger and smaller in comparison with the opposite case along these lines, i.e., the Westerner. In Western identity processes we witness a very heavy emphasis on meaning production (and explanation) and a sort of horror for sociality devoid of meaning.

In anthropology there are examples which describe the processes and procedures of change, creativity and adaptation with emphasis on particular mixtures of the three parameters (personality, sociality, culturality). A great emphasis on personality (not disregarding the other parameters, though) will be found, for example, in revitalisation movements, religious movements and the like (e.g., Chief Wovoka's movement). A particularly prominent role of change along the sociality parameter was the focus of the Manchester school, with major contributions in the field of political anthropology by Max Gluck-

man and Victor Turner. Actually, the identification of ritual structure as a more or less 'syntactic' locus of change (i.e., sociality in our understanding) has been a major idea of Turner (e.g., 1969). In the present volume the contributions by Koen De Munter (Chapter 3) and An van Dienderen (Chapter 4) give ethnographic support for this idea.

De Munter carries out ethnographic work in Bolivia, where the Aymara redefine and relive their identity in the context of a metropolis like La Paz. The native intuitions on the dimensions of sociality and culturality are expressed in narratives and labels, which underscore the Aymara city-identity of today. An van Dienderen, on the other hand, offers a detailed analysis of the processes of identity formation in nontextual and nonliterate media. The analysis is substantiated by a description of the cover illustration of this book as the instantiation of one particular point.

Thus, to put it in a nutshell and oversimplifying for the sake of the argument, we claim that all agents change and create, but they do it in a variety of ways either emphasising sociality rather than culturality in one case (e.g., Navajo), or the culturality at the expense of the personality dimension (e.g., in religion-dominated societies) or the personality parameter at the expense of both others in a third case (maybe in the individualistic postmodern world).

Political Impact: Identity and Conflicts

Reclaiming identity is not only a matter of developing an analytical framework in order to allow for a scientific study of the issues at hand. By the very nature of the subject matter, it also has political implications. In the context of the West, ever since the fall of the Berlin Wall and the implosion of the USSR, choosing for one or the other perspective or model inadvertently draws the researcher into a political debate. Indeed, since that time the success of polemical and exclusive extreme right movements and political parties in the West has been such that the scientist's results are likely to be misappropriated in political debates. In particular, the scientifically nonsensical but politically successful use of culture and cultural differences as a line of propaganda by extreme rightists in elections throughout the EU should be a concern to scholars in this field (Evens Foundation 2002).

Anthropologists and sociologists are not often directly involved in political conflicts, but we recognise that the claim of rightist groups to draw on cultural origins, the discourse by native groups about cultural heritage, and the urgent debate on multiculturalism in the large nation states (U.S., Russia, but also the EU) forces us to confront the political implications of cultural issues head on. All of a sudden it proves unavoidable for the social scientist to take a conscious stand on political choices, although various 'postmodernist' predicaments may seem to have us locked away in a stuffy corner of academia. It appears to us that the reality 'beyond the text' is demolishing this fiction at high speed and is forcing us to understand that science and politics inevitably meet in our disciplines. Preston (1998) makes a plea for 'political/cultural identity' research in

politicology. From the perspective of anthropology we can meet the politicologists in this project and offer what methods and insights we have developed in our discipline.

We distinguish between three problems here:

1. Culturality rather than culture allows for both a politically conscious and scientifically valid model.
2. Culturality plays an important role in identity dynamics and thus has relevance for conflict resolution involving identity claims.
3. Sustainable conflict resolution will most likely be reached by taking into account culturality aspects of all parties involved. To that end an intercultural negotiation procedure (with a comparative perspective) may be a necessary alternative to the monocultural negotiation models diplomacy has applied so far.

1. As mentioned before, the very notion of culture is scientifically indeterminable. At the same time it has recently been politically abused. Indeed, present-day political discourse in the EU uses culture and cultural differences at best in a very shallow way (not bothering about what would be cultural and what might be social aspects, for example), at worst as a catch-all term. The latter is exemplified by extreme rightists, who install an essentialist notion of the 'Other' as unalterably other vis-à-vis 'Us'. From this premise follows that coexistence, 'by the nature of the essences involved', is made impossible or at least very troublesome. The rightist think-tank GRECE in France thus picked up a reasoned suggestion about thresholds of identity by Lévi-Strauss (1973) and turned it upside down by claiming that we are doomed to be flooded and even annihilated by the Other coming here when we omit to stress our own essentialist identity as an insurmountable threshold at all times. In our own research on developing trajectories for refugees and immigrants in Belgium, we experienced how deeply rooted such biases are both among lay people and in policymaking circles (Verstraete et al. 2000). On the other hand, we think it cannot be denied that different contexts and their interpretation systems codetermine the identity complexes and the conflicts they play a role in. Therefore, we strive for an operational concept which to some extent covers the vague field and at the same time overcomes the handicaps of the anthropological notion of culture: we capture this concept under the label 'culturality', which is one of the three constitutive dimensions of identity processes of material units (individuals, groups and communities).
2. Culturality aspects (as values of one dimension of identity dynamics) play a differential role in identity processes: we think it unlikely that only one factor in the complex phenomenon of identity processes is the cause of all behaviour, beliefs, and the like. Our model provides for a diversity of factors at all levels: three dimensions together constitute the identity dynamics; identities are construed by and for three types of agents (individuals, groups, communities) all the time; any of the agents mentioned collaborates with,

opposes or is otherwise linked to a multitude of others (e.g., as an individual you are also member of a family, a clan, a nation, etc.); and personality, sociality and culturality values change over time and differ from context to context. This complex of factors can form a configuration which then triggers conflict with a similar complex from another person, group or community. We do not deny that one cause or reason for the conflict could be material needs (because of scarcity of goods) or power and territory interests. What we claim is that human beings, groups and communities enter into conflicts with their full human set-up, that is to say with the highly particular identity configuration which co-constitutes the agent. In that perspective it is possible to understand why people are willing to die for their country, or for their religion, or for their family in some contexts, and why in other places and times they may seem oblivious to demagogic appeals. The identity complex is at work here. Hence, identity dynamics with culturality aspects as constitutive elements have a political impact. Localising culturality as one dimension of what is politically relevant adds significantly to the potential of conflict analysis, and avoids the pitfall of the notion of culture as a reification of a super-organic entity, somehow over and above material agents.

3. In a scientific analysis a crucial aspect of the work is, apart from the conceptualisation of the problem, that of operationalising a basic insight. We opt for qualitative research, yet where necessary in combination with quantitative analyses. Anthropological fieldwork is an integral part of the empirical studies we advocate, without for that matter falling for the naïve fallacy that 'what the native says is always right'. On the other hand, the identity discourses of the subjects should be known by the researcher and the parties involved in a conflict and/or negotiation process, since here they are politically relevant. So in the concrete cases studied in our research group we document the histories, the narratives and the contextual data of the parties involved and explore their potential relationships.

Conclusions

In this chapter we developed a line of reasoning that would allow the researcher in the field of (cultural) identity to reclaim the term of identity as a scientific term. We feel that the debate is most often voiced in ideological categories, implying that the researcher has to choose a sociologistic or a culturalist stand on moral or ideological grounds. The dichotomisation of the field is, we claim, without ground. We have developed an instrument of analysis which can be used to investigate the problem area in a scientific way first, capable of exposing the unwarranted nature of the essentialist conceptualisation of identity. Our analytical framework approaches the field by looking for three distinct dimensions of identity dynamics: personality, sociality and culturality dimensions.

Having done this, we demonstrated how the analytical framework can be used to describe the multifaceted phenomenon of identity dynamics. However,

in a second move we turn around and state that, because of the political weight of 'identity' in the present era, it is necessary to deliberate about political positions in the debate in the real world. Indeed, scientific data and models do not exist in a vacuum, but they are contrived and used in the very political contexts in which the scientist is working.

Notes

1. By context we mean a range of phenomena: practices and interactions take place in a physical context (time, space, material surroundings) and they belong to a realm of activities (work, family, professional activities). Moreover, meanings, convictions or traditions can be part of the context of a group or an individual. Hence, context(s) have an influence and define constraints for concrete practices and interactions, and the latter codetermine contexts as well.

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