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# DIVERSITY OF PERSPECTIVES AS A RESOURCE: CONNECTING IDENTITY THEORIES IN MATHEMATICS EDUCATION

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This Working Group emerges from a small international community of early-career researchers in mathematics education who have been collaboratively negotiating how "identity" is conceptualised and operationalised in empirical research. Over the past year, we have met regularly to examine tensions in our own studies, compare and test methodological options, and reflect on how research settings and data sources shape what identity becomes in analysis. Our projects span multiple countries, learning groups, in- and pre-service teachers. Across diverse focal concerns, including language diversity, social justice, problem solving, and emotions, we draw on sociocultural, political, and psychological perspectives through narrative and participation-based approaches. Within this breadth, identity has functioned both as a shared focus and a productive point of tension. This leads us to a common set of questions about how identity is conceptualised across topics, how these conceptualisations relate to theoretical commitments, and how the analytic choices are justified.

To extend these conversations to a wider community, the Working Group is designed around two theoretical tools. First, we use a Darragh-inspired landscape mapping (identity as narrative, participative, discursive, performative or psychoanalytic) as an organising scaffold, to visualise plurality and surface key tensions and overlaps across approaches (Darragh, 2016). Second, we use networking strategies (Prediger et al., 2008) as a meta-theoretical lens for relating perspectives through explicit moves. Networking strategies are structured in paired moves: understanding and making understandable, comparing and contrasting, combining and coordinating, and integrating locally and synthesising. Crucially, Prediger and colleagues emphasise that networking becomes most productive when grounded in a shared empirical base and paradigmatic examples, because purely abstract dialogue can obscure explanatory power and limitations.

The main goal of this Working Group is to engage early-career and senior researchers in mathematics education in the process of identity research. Through participatory, hands-on analytic work, participants will explore how different theoretical and analytical perspectives can be brought into relation, and how these choices shape the



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identity objects, warrants, and claims that become possible. Organisers will provide a shared set of short empirical excerpts (e.g., a transcript segment) that will serve as common ground for analysis and testing networking moves. Thus, our questions are:

1. What are the core ideas, underlying assumptions, and research traditions that stand behind each of the theories used in shared identity studies?
2. How are multiple perspectives connected through networking strategies, and how do these choices shape the identity objects, warrants, and claims that become possible?

## OUTLINE OF SESSIONS

### Session 1 (90 min): Mapping multiple perspectives

**Introduction** (10 min): Presentation of the goal of the Working Group and visualise the theoretical plurality identity research through Darragh's landscape mapping.

**Overview of theoretical perspectives** (30 min): Members of the organising team present their research topic and the theoretical perspectives followed in their work.

**Landscape mapping activity** (40 min): Participants will work in groups to construct potential connections and tensions based on a landscape map of the perspectives represented in the organisers' studies.

**Discussion** (10 min): Discussion outcomes of tensions and promising connections.

### Session 2 (90 min): Testing data analysis through networking moves

**Re-entry and task framing** (10 min): Brief recap of Session 1 outcomes and introduce the networking moves.

**Shared data and lenses briefing** (15 min): Organisers will share empirical excerpts and minimal context. Organisers states the theoretical lens they would mobilise and what it foregrounds in the excerpt.

**Data engagement activity** (40 min): Participants, in small groups, will engage with excerpts through the aforementioned tools. They will work on interpreting the identity phenomenon foregrounded in the excerpts, choosing and justifying a networking move.

**Collective synthesis** (25 min): Senior researchers in the organising team synthesise patterns across groups, highlighting takeaways for operationalising identity and justifying when connecting perspectives.

## References

Darragh, L. (2016). Identity research in mathematics education. *Educational Studies in Mathematics*, *93*(1), 19–33. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10649-016-9696-5

Prediger, S., Bikner-Ahsbahs, A., & Arzarello, F. (2008). Networking strategies and methods for connecting theoretical approaches: First steps towards a conceptual framework. *ZDM Mathematics Education*, *40*(2), 165–178. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11858-008-0086-z