

Eduardo de Gregorio-Godeo &
Ángel Mateos-Aparicio
Martín-Albo (eds.)

**MAPPING
IDENTITY
AND
IDENTIFICATION
PROCESSES**

**APPROACHES FROM
CULTURAL STUDIES**

Peter Lang

EDUARDO DE GREGORIO-GODEO AND
ÁNGEL MATEOS-APARICIO MARTÍN-ALBO

Introduction

In its exploration of “the production and inculcation of culture or maps of culture” (Barker 2004, 42), contemporary cultural studies continues to be centrally concerned with the examination of identity and identification processes as one of its main concerns. Commonly apprehended as culturally specific and socially produced, identity is often conceived of as resulting from a whole range of different, possible identifications linked to specific modalities of power under particular social and historical conjunctures; hence the unstable and fluctuating nature of identities and identity formation processes. As Chris Barker’s makes it clear in connection with the anti-essentialist theoretical position which is commonly adopted within cultural studies: “identity is a process of *becoming* built from points of similarity and difference. There is no essence of identity to be discovered; rather cultural identity is continually being produced within the vectors of resemblance and distinction. Of course identity is a matter not only of self-description but also of social ascription” (2002, 224). Indeed the tension between self-description and social ascription has become fundamental in cultural studies examinations of how “both individuals and groups construct, negotiate and defend their self-understanding” (Edgar 2002, 183). Through processes of personal identification with discursively constructed subject positions, identities emerge across a wide range of cultural practices in the course of social interactions involving the use of language and other semiotic systems manifested in cultural artefacts of various kinds. Such identification processes entail “a form of emotional investment in the discursive descriptions of our self and others that are available to us” (Barker 2004, 93), so that identity emerges as individuals take up—or resist—the subject positions which are made available in the