

Nina Degele (1998):

### **Postmodern(ized) Identities (Manuskript)**

Identity has become a much-used word. The term captures the dilemma of self, for it describes and seems to explain the contradictions of living in a society that appears to be in constant change<sup>1</sup>. Similarly, 'postmodernism', 'postmodernity', and 'postmodern' have become widely-used terms in public life as well as in the social sciences<sup>2</sup>. In this context, identity-construction and maintenance in the 80s has been discussed in terms of 'identity-work' as well as 'identity-management', where reference to Erving Goffman has often been made. Postmodern theories and descriptions of identity focus on the floating, playful, and non-binding part of the so-called 'handicraft-biographs' or 'patchworkers'. In this notion, for several decades a process of informalization has been going on presupposing the emancipation of straight rules and external control. As an effect, 'life as a whole has become a sport or an art, the sport and the art of everyday life' (Wouters, 1989, cit. in: Hochschild, 1989: 444). As I do not hold this view, I wish to demonstrate something different in this article: Against the background of those postmodernized 80s, the funny side of identity has given way to far more serious games today. Based on increasing economic and professional uncertainties and competition (e.g. globalization), due to loss of clear patterns of orientation and regarding ecological as well as health-specific uncertainties, social constraints in labour and everyday life increasingly require contributions on the part of individuals. Integrating different requirements has become a crucial condition for staying afloat. Identity construction and maintenance are hard labour - to be expressed and performed in a playful and easy way. If it is true that the constraints of social and economic rationalization models require an adapted identity - which kind of identity is it which meets such different requirements?

Processes such as those mentioned call for individual arrangements which go beyond straight rationalization (e.g. flexibility, non-predictability). Early postmodern visions of pluralization and disembedding, have in fact become true. But the conditions are completely different from those expected. Whereas modern assumptions of social development are based on increasing differentiation, postmodern ones emphasize social change in terms of augmenting pluralism. Both concepts fail to grasp identity which has to come to terms with demands of rationalization as well as pluralization as an everyday task. As I will argue, in focusing on the area of work, boundaries between professional and private life, competence, skills, and demands are blurring. At the same time, modern issues of rationalization and instrumentalization of the workforce are still valid. As an outcome, modern requirements are displayed in a postmodern fashion. I will sketch this as postmodernized identity, which has not been theorized adequately

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<sup>1</sup> A selection in alphabetical order: Burkitt, 1991; Erikson, 1959; Giddens, 1991; Goffman, 1959; Hahn/Willems, 1997; Hitzler/Honer, 1997; Keupp/Höfer, 1997; Mead, 1962; Taylor, 1989.

<sup>2</sup> For a general overview see Baumann, 1988; Lyotard, 1984; Vester, 1993; Zima, 1997; for focusing on identity: Anderson, 1997; Gergen, 1991; Glass, 1993; Gubrium/Holstein, 1994; Keupp, 1988; Lifton, 1993; Martin, 1994; Turkle, 1995.

by social scientists. Instead, the body of work addressing issues of identity swings between celebrating released individuals and lamenting lost community: identity is locked up in the closet of individual self-perception (Erikson, 1950; 1959), it is generalized broadly as social character (Bellah et. al., 1985; Lasch, 1978; Riesman, 1953; Sennett, 1977; Trilling, 1972), or it is addressed in postmodern issues of liberation and informalization (Anderson, 1997; Lifton, 1993; Rorty, 1989; Wouters, 1986). Of course, the expression of identity in everyday action is a central topic considered by Goffman (1959; 1967). However, as I shall point out, he only refers to the surface aspect of the appearance of feeling, not the feelings themselves.

The missing link I will touch upon is the concept of emotional work as it was introduced by sociologist Arlie Hochschild (1979; 1983) in the late seventies. Against this background, I wish to shed light on postmodern(ized) identity from the vantage point of emotional work. Hence, the structure of this article is as follows. First, I shall introduce an understanding of postmodernization which I refer to (1). Then, I move to modern and postmodern concepts of identity (2) and discuss the shortcomings of both (3). Finally, I will offer a postmodernized (or stated radically, a 'postpostmodern') understanding of identity based on a theory of emotion (4).

## 1 What is postmodernism?

Postmodern thinking basically refers to the experience of pluralism, disorder, and fragmentation as well as ambiguity, dissolution and dedifferentiation. To work towards some preliminary sense of the meaning of postmodernism it is useful to distinguish several families of terms derived from 'the modern' and 'postmodern' (Featherstone, 1988). In the first place, the contrast of *modernity-postmodernity* suggests an epochal meaning. From the point of view of late nineteenth and early twentieth-century German sociological theory, modernity is contrasted with the traditional order in terms of progressive economic and administrative rationalization and differentiation (van der Loo/van Reijen, 1997). Consequently, to speak of postmodernity is to propose an epochal break towards a new social totality, such as a post-industrial age. In the second place, the terms *modernization-postmodernization* refer to ongoing processes of developing and changing the socioeconomic infrastructure we live in. Postmodernization, then, has its merit of suggesting a process with degrees of implementation, rather than a fully fledged new social order or totality. Finally, the pairing *modernity-postmodernity* focuses on the centrality of culture. Whereas modernism points to the styles we associate with the artistic movements which originated around the turn of the century (e.g. Joyce, Proust, Kafka, Musil, just to name a few), the central features associated with postmodernism are pastiche, parody, rhetoric, irony, playfulness and the celebration of the surface 'depthlessness' of culture, and the decline of the originality/genius of the artistic producer.

As I shall be referring to the second pairing mentioned, *modernization* and *postmodernization*, a sociological concept of identity can be outlined in a dynamic way - as a process of postmodernization. Accordingly, several characteristic themes can be distinguished. First, a waning of optimism - it has become obvious that progress is no longer guaranteed. Second, there are no more fixed solutions to

problems which refer to the undecidability of a culture that is refracted through many different points of view. Third, an accelerated pace of change and the constant newness of forms raise expectations that are often disappointed. Fourth, the replacement of productive work by consumption is a central life activity for many people, which alters the meanings not only of human actions but also of social relations. Finally, and this feature suggests a broader theoretical framework, there is a suspicion that even if modern processes have not yet come to an end, at the very least they have taken an unexpected and peculiar turn. Consequently, postmodernization challenges our understanding of unity, rationality and identity.

Beyond the postmodern notion of relativism, which has been widely criticized<sup>3</sup>, I will sketch postmodernization as an intensified process of modernization. Therefore, I will be following van der Loo's and van Reijen's (1997) illusive analysis of modern society, which describes processes of strengthened modernization as fundamental contradictions at structural, individual, natural and mental levels in terms of (functional) differentiation, individualization, domestication, and rationalization. Taken one step further: Postmodernized society realizes basic features of modernity beyond linear paths. Given several breaks in the process of modernization, postmodernization can be seen as a process of accelerated modernization which drops established certainties and self-evidences. Whereas modern identity is based on individual achievement, postmodern identity works as a playful management and stage-management of a discharged 'I'. Postmodernized identity, or more exactly: 'postpostmodern identity', is neither the former nor the latter. Postmodernized identity, as I shall outline - is modern in the sense of adaptation to professional requirements. But the means are postmodern - flexible and playful. It is a new fit of social requirements and forms of identity which has to be addressed. To make my argument, I will set out postmodernization as a process of reinforced modernization in more detail and relate it to identity. As I put it, the character of the self would change as the character of social life historically changes. That, in turn, suggests that our inner lives and selves are quite different from those of all but our most immediate ancestors. As Uwe Schimank (1985) points out, 'reflexive subjectivism' encompasses a form of identity which parallels processes of functional differentiation<sup>4</sup>. The concept of reflexive subjectivism integrates features such as continuity as well as contingency as basic characteristics of identity (I will touch upon this point later). Contemporary individuals have to match both demands: they have to maintain continuity within an accelerating pace of the everyday world becoming more and more unpredictable and contingent. In contrast, premodern, e.g. medieval societies, required 'substantial teleological' concepts of identity due to their mainly stratificatory differentiation which allocated each individual their place in society. Therefore, the affiliated type of identity had to be based on religious instructions and external reference. There is a difference which now becomes obvious: Whereas premodern societies provided people with subject-specific device orders, modern societies cannot address a variety of behaviors and actions which are necessary to behave competently in a world full of differentiated demands. God and religion have lost their unifying character and attraction. As a

<sup>3</sup> Gubrium/Holstein, 1994; Hradil, 1990.

<sup>4</sup> In social theory, functional differentiation works as a core concept of modernity and modernization (Alexander/Colomy, 1990; Schimank, 1996).

consequence, reflexive subjectivity can be described as a new type of a self-referring identity.

However, there is one step missing. Schimank compares premodern and modern forms of societies and identities. He is not interested, however, in enlarging his analyses to ongoing processes of modernization. Those further developments are modern features of reinforcement which include the power to transcend its own-established forms. As I mentioned, postmodernized identity does not mean the simple replacement of a modernized one. What is decisive is the way modern as well as premodern characteristics are embedded in new social settings. As an example, New Age movements (which are sometimes labeled as trendsetters of postmodernization) demonstrate that even a very substantial and teleological feature such as meaning of life finds its way into today's forms of identity construction (Keupp, 1988) as well as in social structure. The growing market for spiritual, esoteric and health-specific services shows that too well. Today, people stage-manage well-known issues in a new way. This is the hallmark: Postmodernity does not replace modernity in doing different things. It fully realizes modernity in doing things differently. The example of marriage offers a well-known piece of evidence (Burkhardt, 1995). In Germany, empirical data demonstrate that recent rates of marriage, divorce and birth as well as the average age of marriage parallels the figure at the beginning of the century. In contrast, the almost glorified and transfigured 50s and 60s with the baby-boom, high marriage and low divorcerates now appear as a rare historical exception which hardly fits into linear models of demographic development. How can this process be explained?

Nowadays, behavior in terms of marriage, divorce and birth rates is similar to that at the beginning of the century. The fundamental difference cannot be found in demographic figures but in social conditions: Whereas a century ago an individual's behavior was more or less socially determined, today it is based on choice. It is not the apparent behavior itself which has changed, but its meaning. About a century ago (and especially in the first few decades, when Weber, Simmel and Durkheim analyzed processes of modernization in terms of individualization), processes of pluralization, the fact that people were forced to make individual choices and processes of social disembedding concerned a minority of fairly well-off middle-class males. Today, on the other hand, even women, skilled workers and employees are captured by individualization. Unreasonable demands of 'living one's own life' are no longer restricted to a few but almost everybody (Beck, 1992). There are three factors addressed by those theories of individualization. First, people have become disembedded of socially determined forms of social life such as class, gender roles, and organization of working hours. Second, traditional certainties such as predictable careers have lost their power. Third, new forms of reembedding enable and require reinforced dependencies of individuals on institutions such as the labour market and the legal system. Put tersely, the individual works as a unit for the reproduction of the social which is attached to processes of differentiation. Given modernization as a dynamic concept, emerging forms and frames of reference have to be considered more carefully: Postmodern issues make their way through intellectual, cultural and political levels before they are realized (Hradil, 1990; Inglehart, 1997). Main features are universal standards such as equal rights instead of personal and traditional criteria of gaining status,

individual achievement as criteria for allocation of social positions, individual welfare as a shared aim of social progress and rationally legitimated power. Again, by no means does postmodern dynamics such as dissolving and disembedding suggest a *replacement* of modernization. Rather, they complete the program of modernization.

As a consequence, there are two points of reference which have to be considered. First, social structure has to be examined against the background of plurality and ambiguity. This strand can be addressed in terms of quantitative empirical research based on statistical data. It has its roots in classical concepts of differentiation as they have been sketched by sociologists such as Marx, Durkheim and Simmel. Second, postmodern issues find expression in narratives, ideologies, and discourses which are embodied in an individual' s identity. Here, reference to Weber, Elias, Foucault, Mead and Goffman must be made. To avoid the risk of isolating both dimensions, I will offer an overarching third perspective on postmodernized identity in referring to the category of social action as the basic unit of analysis. There are two reasons for this. First, social action works as an embodiment of identity, where the latter finds expression. Second, social action can be observed in sometimes well-structured social settings such as labour and the workplace, which can be seen as outcomes of social structure. In this notion, social action bridges the gap between the individual and society in the same sense as it mediates between structure and agency.

## **2 From modern to postmodern concepts of identity**

In order to gain some deeper insights into the issues addressed, I wish to demonstrate the limited reach of modern notions of identity. In addition, I will be discussing several extensions proposed so far. Finally, according to the concept of postmodernization which I have sketched, I will present postmodernized identity as reinforced modern identity differing from classical notions in terms of social settings and strategies, not in terms of new features themselves. The structure of my argument is as follows. Whereas George Herbert Mead laid the groundwork for modern concepts of identity which is socially embedded (Erik Erikson), Erving Goffman addressed the fundamental meaning of self-expression for identity-construction. Both failed to grasp the full range of identity concerning the foundation of expressions. The missing link I shall introduce here is the concept of emotional work developed in the context of feminist sociology. For theorizing identity, I will sketch the framework of identity in its classical notion first.

According to Erik Erikson (1959: 3ff), identity basically means perception of one' s own continuity and coherence in time. Replacing common models of an individual' s development as a linear ladder which s/he has to follow, Erikson suggests the metaphor of a wall bar, which, at every stage of human development, includes the full range of issues which have to be addressed and worked out. Whereas pure psychological approaches emphasize early childhood as the crucial stage in human development, Erikson, by contrast, focuses on adolescence as decisive: finding and maintaining its own identity occurs as a process which can be described as crisis. In sum, Erikson' s view of identity addresses the individual' s

achievement which has to be maintained - as a uniform, ahistorical, and stage-driven process<sup>5</sup>.

Given this background, one can question the connection between social change and the way an individual experiences the world. At least two strands of discussion can be distinguished. First, identity is addressed in the context of changed value systems. Based on demographic changes within society (Riesman, 1953), this type of empirical research offers some evidence regarding the shift from materialistic towards postmaterialistic values (Inglehart, 1997; Schulze, 1993; Vester, 1997). This research is based on psychoanalytical issues concerning 'narcissistic characters' (Anderson, 1997; Bellah et al., 1985, Lasch, 1978; Sennett, 1977) in the broader context of 'social characters'.<sup>6</sup> Second, a broad range of contributions in the context of postmodern culture offers additional insights into the constitution of postmodern identity (Gergen, 1991; Keupp, 1988; Lyotard, 1984).

First, research on value systems is based on a rich body of empirical data. The key idea is a shift from materialistic toward postmaterialistic values which 'reflects the diminishing marginal utility of economic determinism: economic factors tend to play a decisive role under conditions of economic scarcity, but as scarcity diminishes, other factors shape society to an increasing degree' (Inglehart, 1997: 337). Referring to the theory of motivation developed by Abraham Maslow (1981), higher order values such as self-actualization, esteem and social belongingness, and love are based on the satisfaction of lower order values such as safety and satisfaction of physiological needs. The change in value systems can be described as a basis for giving way to playful behavior beyond pure materialistic orientations. According to surveys which cover 43 countries representing 70 percent of the world's population and a timespan of 26 years, a postmodern shift in mass values and attitudes actually is taking place. Inglehart found remarkable strong linkages between macro-level characteristics such as stable democracy, and micro-level characteristics, such as trust, tolerance, postmaterialist values, and subjective well-being among individuals. However, the shift towards postmaterialism is only one component of a much broader cultural shift of postmodernization.

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<sup>5</sup> The latter parts of Erikson's theory have been criticized widely, as they may have outlived their usefulness. Holding on to the issues of continuity and coherence as basic features, Keupp (1988), for example, describes Erikson's understanding of identity as a 'possessive individualism' which means an internally managed accumulation of individual possession (property). As a consequence (and against his own purposes), Erikson remains in the framework of static and immobile features of identity. Moreover, his assumption of identity as a universal, irreversible process can be criticized, as especially feminist scholars demonstrate, as deeply value-laden and male-based (Rommelspacher, 1997). As a consequence, Erikson's ideas challenged a mass of theoretical as well as empirical research which adds gender-specific issues, which takes culture-specific comparisons into account and finally addresses the question of identity-building as a reversible process. See also Keupp, 1988; Krappmann, 1997.

<sup>6</sup> This branch is rooted in the work of the Frankfurt School, especially Erich Fromm's studies conducted in the 30s. Fromm merged Karl Marx' analysis of capitalist society and Sigmund Freud' s concept of personality into a concept of social character. Referring to the basic need for self-maintenance and coherence, Fromm derived passions as socially shaped satisfaction of one' s needs and drives. This is what he called social character - a system of guiding passions which gives satisfaction and makes sense.

To make this argument, Inglehart offers a theory of intergenerational change (1997: 33f, 132f) which includes two key hypotheses. According to the scarcity hypothesis, an individual's priorities reflect the socioeconomic environment: one places the greatest subjective value on those things that are in relatively short supply. Regarding the socialization hypothesis, the relationship between socioeconomic environment and value priorities is not one of immediate adjustment: a substantial time lag is involved because, to a large extent, one's basic values reflect the conditions that prevailed during one's preadult years. This means that a generation does not change its value system growing older. Instead, it occupies the key positions in society and therefore replaces the former generation.

As a result - and this leads to the second strand of research - intergenerational change as well as existential security are crucial drivers of a postmodern shift taking place. Such a shift finds expression in orientations which focus on the inner world of the self (e.g. New Age). At the same time, there is a move towards experience which gives everyday life certain thrills. As sociologist Gerhard Schulze (1993) found in a representative survey conducted in Germany, especially the generation born in the sixties and seventies shows an increasing orientation towards experience/adventure orientation (*Erlebnisorientierung*) which replaces traditional values such as stability and security. In this notion, the individual's life has become basically arranged along issues of aesthetics (stage-management). Individuals meet the demand for fluidity. Moreover, fun and fascination are stylized to a postmodern social character. Such individuals can be described as 'timepioneers' (Hörning/Michailow, 1990), who manage different demands in a flexible and relaxed way, as suspense-seeking 'bungeejumpers' (Vester, 1993: 151), as sportsmen (Wouters, 1989), or as suspense-oriented younger people who basically refer to aesthetic instead of ethical values (Schulze, 1993).

As everyday life turns to aesthetic events, life styles become diversified, individuals are offered a broad range of choices on how to live their lives. From another angle but with similar results, Peter L. Berger, Brigitte Berger and Hansfried Kellner (1973) discover augmenting plurality in society which finds expression at the level of consciousness. This is what they call 'homeless mind'. Given a broadening range of choices, a postmodern perspective celebrates a liberated self, whereas modern scholars such as Daniel Bell, Robert Bellah, Christopher Lasch, David Riesman and Richard Sennett expose those choices as a triumph of commodification, commercialization, and standardization. There are two dimensions to note. First, the self, feelings and emotions become the central point of reference to the modern individual. Second, the observed shift from ethics to aesthetics works as a key concept of an individual which is liberated from the iron cage of modernity. Against this background, I will sketch a postmodernized view on identity as a coercion to choose instead of a possibility of doing so. Being perceived as a possibility or as a constraint depends on the social setting. Before I move to the social embedding of 'constrained choices', I will outline some sociological concepts of modern identity as a principle for an emotion-based postmodernization of identity.

### 3 Modern and postmodern shortcomings

Sociological concepts of identity have their roots in the last decade of the past century (Burkitt, 1991). However, it was in the 20s that George Herbert Mead (1962) theorized the self as socially constructed. His analysis of the social origins and the character of the self inspired the development of a distinctive sociological psychology as well as sociological research on identity. Mead observed that the individual's adoption of the attitude of an organized community, or generalized other, unifies her or him. His main contribution to a sociological concept of identity consists in the insight that the self (as an paraphrase for identity) is profoundly social - not only in the sense that it arises in social experience, but also in the sense that it is a social process.

Mead as well as Erving Goffman (1959; 1967) maintain the self as socially constructed. Whereas Mead emphasizes the process of role-taking and the meaning of significant symbols, Goffman is mainly interested in the social construction and definition of the public self. According to identity-construction, Goffman radicalizes the relevance of the other: ' I know who I am through the way I am treated' (Hahn/Willems, 1997: 199)- his basic assumption could be put tersely. Beyond Mead, Goffman is not so interested in the individual's subjective self or inner conversations but rather in the construction of the public self during social interaction. As a consequence, identity is not a material thing but must be dramatically realized on each and every occasion of social interaction. One basic means for such an end is face-work. By face-work Goffman means ' to designate the actions taken by a person to make whatever he is doing consistent with face' (Goffman, 1967: 10). Goffman observes that individuals effectively claim positive social value or ' face' through the lines they take or parts they perform during interaction. He also argues that individuals are emotionally invested in claiming and maintaining face. Regarding emotional involvement of identity-work, Goffman's dramaturgical approach (1959: 48; 252f) can be criticized from at least three angles, namely modern, postmodern and feminist critics.

From a modern vantage point, Goffman's approach misses a concept of time he neglects to shed light upon the fundamental meaning of lifecourse. Lack of time and time pressure are crucial features of modern life (Shor, 1992) - which has to be managed by the individual. Individuals are involved in public roles and tasks, and they are forced to display different presentations of the self. As it takes a growing part of everybody's timebudget to meet those requirements, less time for biographically oriented reflections is available. At the same time, life has become an individual possession to be managed as a project (Hahn/Willems, 1997; Kohli, 1996). Given today's far reaching continuity of average lifespans, they proceed more or less predictably and can be organized according to the requirements of gainful employment. As a consequence, lifecourse provides a fiction of continuity which meets individuals' needs for structuring their lives. According to those considerations of time, identity can be understood as a radically temporalized process - which is obviously far beyond Erikson's classical proposal of continuity and coherence.

Second, postmodern researchers such as Walter Truett Anderson (1997), Richard Rorty (1989) or Kenneth Gergen (1991) emphasize the dissolution of the self which Goffman has not considered adequately. As postmodern selves can be

viewed as liquid, fluid, dissolved, mediated, short-time-oriented, and are ' never quite able to take themselves seriously' (Rorty, 1989: 73f), unifying concepts of identity have become less and less fitting. Contemporary modes of travel and communication expose people to the often inconsistent attitudes of countless others and communities. They allow and force everybody to maintain relationships, despite physical separation, and to participate in communities spread over great distances. Television and movies, not to mention print media and the internet, bring individuals into contact with numerous other actual and fictional people and communities. This is what Kenneth Gergen calls ' social saturation' , which ' furnishes us with a multiplicity of incoherent and unrelated languages of the self' (1991: 6f). Such a saturating of self can be equated to the condition of postmodernity. As the adoption of the attitudes of such countless and contentious significant and generalized others does not unify selves but pulls them apart, Gergen calls this new pattern of self-consciousness ' multiphrenia' , which literally means many minds. Individuals are many different minds to many different people and to themselves. Consequently, the belief that they possess a single true or real self begins to erode. People become increasingly aware that it is their connections to others that makes them what they are. They no longer ask themselves ' Who am I?' They ask others ' Who can I be with you? Put tersely: ' We realize increasingly that who and what we are is not so much the result of our "person essence" (real feelings, deep beliefs, and the like), but of how we are constructed in various social groups' (Gergen, 1991: 170) This is what Gergen calls postmodern being - a new kind of human being living a new kind of social life.

#### 4 Postmodernizing identity: emotional work

As I have maintained, postmodernized identity meets social and especially economic demands in terms of output-based, profit-oriented, professional behavior. In contrast to modern orientations as they were imposed by Protestant ethics, individuals fulfill expectations based on capitalistic efficiency and maximizing of profit in a far more playful way. The next challenge, then, is to theorize the missing link between professional requirements in the workplace on the one hand and the practice of face-work and impression-management introduced by Goffman on the other hand. The missing link I will touch upon leads to a third strand of criticism: emotional work as ' management of feeling to create a publicly observable facial and bodily display' (Hochschild, 1983: 7) There are at least four factors to be considered. First, the almost obvious end of normal working hours (Osterland, 1990; Shor, 1992) which is accompanied by a destandardized ' normal biography' (Hradil, 1999). This configuration requires flexibility as well as management competence by the individual (Degele, 1997) - concerning especially one' s individual emotional set. Without externally imposed schedules, individuals have to structure their days, weeks and lifetime by themselves. As a fundamental requirement, an individual' s identity has to be developed as a coherent one, even and especially under fast changing circumstances. Second, institutionalized boundaries between labour and private life are becoming blurred due to emerging kinds of self-employment, freelancing,

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<sup>7</sup> As an overview of sociological research on emotions, see Bendelow/William, 1998; Fineman, 1993.

illicit work and alternative forms of labour (Shor, 1992; Voß/Pongratz, 1998). Hence, individuals have to distinguish carefully between different requirements and balance them - as a job based on emotional work. Third, demographic shifts as well as changes in family life (Lüscher/Lange, 1996; Stacey, 1990) find expression in decreasing rates of marriages and births and increasing rates of divorce. As 'unusual' forms of households and family life gain more acceptance, such a configuration requires decisions to be made by individuals instead of following externally given patterns - which challenges emotional balance. However, even the range from possibility to force of choice, as Inglehart (1997) has pointed out, is founded in achieved material security. Finally, the need for bringing emotions into play is due to enlarged knowledge and competence as a consequence of improved educational opportunities as well (Vester, 1997).

What, then, does the concept of emotional work offer to bridge the gap between social requirements for flexibility, efficiency and self-management on the one hand and Goffman's facework, impression management, and identity-work on the other hand? It was Arlie Hochschild who came up in, 1983 with the widely acclaimed book 'The managed heart: commercialization of human feeling', introducing the concept of emotional labour, 'feeling rules' (the norms which govern emotional labour) and the 'emotional exchanges' on which these bear. These concepts shed light on the nature of the emerging service work, and the workers' potential estrangement from it. Referring to Goffman's focus on consciously designed appearances as well as to the Freudian emphasis on unconscious intrapsychic events, Hochschild marks out reference points of a sociological theory of emotions. Whereas Goffman fails to develop a fully-fledged picture of emotions, individuals not only attempt to express but also feel what they think they should be feeling. They go beyond mere facework: 'Goffman's actors actively manage outer impressions, but they do not actively manage inner feelings' (Hochschild, 1979: 557). Hence, the management of action and those of feelings have to be distinguished. Emotional work covers more than surface-acting of emotional expression. It also involves a deep acting of suppressing and evoking the very feelings from which emotional expression flows.

As nowadays the mechanical assembly line has become supplemented (if not replaced) by the human production line, Hochschild takes flight attendants in the highly competitive service sector as an example of empirical research. Given competition as a central issue of today's working conditions, emotional labour becomes more important: 'When competition in price is out, competition in service is in' (Hochschild, 1983: 92). As a consequence, one of the basic requirements flight attendants have to meet, is to be nice and: 'keep smiling! In doing so, such emotional labour affects the definition of the self. Moreover, it redefines identity. This can be described as follows. As a response to the contradiction of doing their job as clients and the airline expect it and maintaining their self-esteem, flight attendants have to go beyond Goffman's so-called surface acting. In surface acting, flight attendants try to change how they outwardly appear, the action is basically body-language: smiling. Instead, the flight attendant's main job consists of deep acting. In deep acting, the actor does not try to seem happy or sad but rather expresses spontaneously, s/he has a real feeling

that has been self-induced. This is the main issue of emotional work: ' people are made increasingly aware of incentives to *use* feelings' (Hochschild, 1983: 197f)<sup>8</sup>

Whereas Hochschild maintains standardization and internalization of control to an increasing degree, models of emotional exchange can be interpreted rather differently. They can be assumed to be more varied, more escapable, less rigid and less coercive. Such a postmodern version of emotional labour is held by Cas Wouters (1989). Wouters follows Norbert Elias (1994) in suggesting psychologization (the complexity of human interrelations causes the need for coordination which cannot be achieved by physical force but by internalized discipline) as a core feature of civilization. Beyond that, he claims an increasing informalization and liberation in (professional) identity - against Hochschild's assumption of increasing control of standardization of flight attendants' work. Wouters' analysis focuses on democratization of access to consumption<sup>9</sup>: As today more people of different classes use aeroplanes, this fact works as a driving force for increasing informalization in airlines. As an example, the Dutch airline KLM imposed guidelines on the flight attendants' professional behavior which differ from those outlined by Hochschild's Delta Air case. At KLM, the workers are not supposed to strictly follow rules but to decide flexibly and autonomously.

Whereas Wouters emphasizes liberation, Hochschild insists on the changing *quality* of overall external constraints (' the object of social constraint is more internal than it was, that we are controlled to a greater extent through our feelings, and less through our externally observable behavior' Hochschild, 1989: 442) But even such a ' controlled decontrolling of emotional controls' (Norbert Elias) or shift from social constraints towards self-constraints misses the postmodernized point. Hochschild as well as Wouters neglect the dimension of responsibility, namely the control of sanctions: Neither superfluous (Wouters), nor beyond individual control (Hochschild), ' there is a cost to be paid: the worker must give up control over *how* the work is to be done' (Hochschild, 1983: 119) This is only partly true as Hochschild holds a limited modern notion: What has changed today is the shift of *responsibility*. Whereas in modern times, companies imposed rules on the workers *how* they had to manage their work, this responsibility today is internalized (Voß/Pongratz, 1998): As the increasing number of freelancers, teleworkers, self-employed as well as employed workers with enlarged responsibility for their work output shows, external force is not necessary any longer. It has been internalized - due to increasing competition, globalization, and emotional skills.

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<sup>8</sup> Whereas Goffman describes with great acumen the surface of surface acting, Norbert Elias analyzed its social function in the ' court society' of the 17th and 18 century in France and England in more detail (1983: 82-83). Regardless of any direct use-value, etiquette at the courtyard worked as a mechanism for balancing power, regulating hierarchy and stabilizing social life. Although such a mechanism of strategic behavior is formally similar to emotional work in service work, there are at least three important differences between the symbolic function of ancient etiquette and modern emotional work. First, the latter has less political, but basically economic implications. Second, the actor is less dependent on one singular person (the king) but a variety of different clients. Finally, there is no fragile set of privileges of a ruling aristocracy but a widely accepted form of social interaction and order to be maintained.

<sup>9</sup> For an insightful discussion of consumer culture in the realm of rationalization, ' McDonaldization' and beyond, see Miles, 1998; Taylor/Smith/Lyon, 1998.

## 5 Conclusion

The analysis outlined grasps more about postmodernized identity than the analysis on identity-work of the 80s. There are two reasons for this. First, effects of modernization create growing demands on individuals which are harder to meet. Time squeeze and the erosion of leisure (Shor, 1992) are quite obvious examples. Second, a fluid self is an adequate response to fulfill those conditions. It is asking too much of today's individuals to require that they maintain many as well as profound relationships with each other. Given a limited budget of time and energy, individuals are forced to make choices. The one who prefers intensifying personal relationships cannot cultivate a large number of them. The other who is involved in a vast amount of personal as well as professional relationships, is well advised to construct a public self which is flexible enough to adapt like a chameleon. Referring to the case of Dutch flight attendants, Wouters states the costs of contemporary working conditions and points out the fact that under conditions of shift work and fast-changing workplaces ' it is hard to develop or maintain stable relationships' (Wouters, 1989: 128) As a consequence, surfing on the surface is not as much a moral question but a demand for self-protection. Staying afloat within conditions of social saturation addresses emotional work as a first-rate question. This issue parallels the correspondence of social requirements based on social structure and identity, and takes up Goffman's concept of facework. However, it has to be theorized in a far more in-depth way than Goffman or postmodernists did.

As I have pointed out, modern identity is a reflexive project, an achievement rather than a given. As Anthony Giddens (1991) suggests, most aspects of social activity undergo chronic revision in light of new information or knowledge. All existence is contingent, a project to be worked on. Identity is achievement as well as a reflexion of those achievements. Postmodernized identity is neither solely a premodern given, nor a modern achievement, nor a postmodern game. Joining the remarks together, a postmodernized notion of identity refers to coherence and continuity as well as contingency. Ironically, Mead's modern suggestion of identity being deeply based on acceptance by (significant) others, finds its main confirmation in a postmodernized social setting: ' Who am I?' to an increasing extent depends on the requirements which are directed at the individual. Hence, the term ' identity' encompasses a socialized sense of individuality, an internal construction of self-perceptions concerning one's relationship to social demands and requirements articulated by others, that also incorporates views of the self perceived to be held by others. To sum up, postmodernized identity is internalized surface-acting (as Goffman mentions briefly but has failed to argue), playfully performed, and presented in a highly competitive and pressure-driven economic environment which forces the ' liberated' individual to make choices every day.

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