2.1 Globalization, Localization, and Identities

2.1.1 Introduction

Heterogenization, particularization, and localization are phenomena that have been observed in the course of globalization. In these processes, the issue of identity seems to have become more complex than ever before. Certain identities that have been silenced or invisible are becoming more visible, and are sometimes seeking for reconstruction. On the other hand, new identities such as global consumer, cosmopolitan, and new middle class are constantly constructed based on rather shallow commonalities among people. Education has been contributing to construct, reconstruct, maintain, and sometimes destroy identities. This chapter first overviews different types of identities, and consequently presents three examples of how school education has been contributing identity reconstruction, preservation, and construction.

2.1.2 Identities: Ascribed, Acquired, and Named

In general terms, an identity is a social category with which an individual is identified. Certain identities may be ascribed, cannot be chosen, or there is little room for choice, while other identities may be acquired or can even be chosen. In the premodern traditional society, a person was born into “primary ties” (Fromm, 1978) that existed before the emergence of “the individual” resulting from the process of individuation. In such a society, persons are born into the prescribed norms and values (Tönnies, 1955), and thus their identities are ascribed. Furthermore, persons in such a society may not be conscious of some of their identities because they are embedded in the taken-for-granted knowledge of the lifeworld (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Schutz & Luckmann, 1973). Some of the unconscious identities
are taken as identities only when there is the consciousness of otherness. For example, the Maori in New Zealand became conscious of their identity as Maori in confrontation with, and differentiation from, the Europeans (Olssen, 2002).

In the modern society, some identities are chosen and constructed. Such identities, in order to distinguish from the identities in the premodern society, may be considered as the naming of self, of others, and by others (Brenner, 1993a). When a person is conscious of his or her own naming, whether of oneself or by others, then he or she may attempt to adjust the self to be suitable for the naming. For example, if a teacher is conscious that students see him as a good teacher (naming by the students), he or she will likely make efforts in the way that students continuously regard him as a good teacher. If a Muslim immigrant living in Europe wants to present himself or herself as a Muslim (naming of self), then he or she may behave in a way that emphasizes the naming as Muslim.

The modern state has been the dominating base for the construction of the national identity, which in return has contributed to the nation-building. However, recent history has witnessed that (1) some identities constructed by the modern nation-state have fallen apart due to the collapse of the nation-states (e.g., the case of former Yugoslavia); (2) there have been gradual changes that previously invisible local identities have become more visible; and (3) some particular identities (actually “names”) are globalized (e.g., global elites who move on the globe). In other words, identities are constantly constructed at the local level within a nation-state, on the one hand, and at the level beyond the national border (i.e. international and global levels), on the other.

Following Berger and Luckmann (1966) and Habermas (1987), culture here is defined as “stock of knowledge” that is the accumulation of experiences and interpretations by one’s predecessors. Some identities are cultural in the sense that they have deep cultural roots. With regard to cultural identity, Hampton (1995) cites High Pine who stated: “It is not important to preserve our tradition, it is important to allow our tradition to preserve us” (p. 22). Other identities are acultural and ahistorical. By acultural it is meant here that a “name” is newly constructed with no historical root.

### 2.1.3 Politicization of Culture and Identities

There are observations that the role of the modern nation-state as the base of the national identity has been undermined. State has “an institutionalized structure of domination” (Hyden, 1992, p. 7) over a territory or territories. Nation, on the other hand, is “a cultural entity often defined in terms of ethnicity” (Holton, 1998, p. 85). Although the definition of nation-state as being confined to the notion of one nation-one state is obviously erroneous, complex plurality of nations within a state tended to be silenced under the national identity maintained by the nation-state. In the last few decades, the way of perceiving boundaries maintained by the nation-state became obsolete (Wallerstein, 1991; Waters, 1995), and the role