Abstracts for paper presentations at 31st International Congress of Psychology (ICP2016) – Thematic Session Title: “*Identity and Identity Research in Psychology and Neighboring Disciplines*"

***Introduction: How to make sense of* Identity *and* Identity Research *from the angle of different approaches***

Michael Bamberg

Clark University, USA

This opening presentation to our session outlines how identity has recently been theorized in Psychology (social, developmental, and organizational), Sociology, Linguistics (applied and socio-), Anthropology, and other neighboring disciplines. Three common organizational dimensions of how identity and identity research is being approached will be differentiated and theoretically elaborated: (1) identity as located within temporality (between constancy & change), (2) located synchronically between self and others (differentiating and integrating sameness and differences between people), and (3) locating identity as agency/responsibility (viewing the person as endowed with agency producing their own conditions versus being conditioned by world/culture/history and society). The contributions following this introduction will be foreshadowed along these three dimensions as a *’catalytic recalibration’* that will prove helpful in viewing commonalities and differences between identity theories and enable the development of new empirical approaches to identity research.

***An interactional view on identity/self, discourse and culture***

Carolin Demuth

Aalborg University

The talk takes an *interactional* perspective and conceives of identity and sense of self as dynamic processes that are constituted discursively in situated human interaction. As such identity is fluid and inherently social. The approach is based on a *dialogistical* understanding of self as interdependent with others' experiences, actions, thoughts and utterances. It is contextual in that various meaningful contextual resources (discursive and socio- material affordances) that have evolved through socio-historical praxis are accessible and potentially made relevant in a concrete situation. It is *mediated* through embodied perception, cultural traditions and artifacts as well as available semiotic systems. *Narrativity* plays a crucial role in that it provides a means to navigate between constancy and change over time. Methodologically, then, identity needs to be studied in concrete mundane social interactions with micro-analytical and multi-modal approaches such as *positioning analysis.* Examples from empirical research will be presented to support the argument.

**T*he social origins of our internal sense of self: A theoretical framework for integrating evolutionary psychology and discursive analysis***

David C. Lätsch, PhD

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In many cases, the safest way to appear as someone is to actually be that someone. For example, a person who communicates a commitment to the welfare of others when he is in fact concerned only with his own advantage will run the risk of eventually giving himself away. In the long run, this camouflage will often be uncovered and punished by others. Natural selection has provided us with a safeguard against socially destructive egotism: authentic altruism. Along similar lines, forming a personal identity may be the safest way to appear predictable in our interactions: we develop a sense of self so as to be better capable of projecting an image of predictability. The study of identity should begin with an inspection of how identity is socially performed. The paper will present a theoretical framework for such analyses and how they connect to evolutionary theorizing about the functions of identity.

***The “snap-shot” approach to identity research: Investigating self-narratives of a person with a severe language problem***

 Masahiro Nochi

Tokyo University

A person’s identity is often researched through narratives or conversations involving him or her. Some individuals with disability, however, possess limited language capacity, and it is difficult to obtain verbal data from them. Then, how can we understand such individuals’ identity? I conducted a longitudinal study on the identity of a man with severe aphasia, from whom extensive verbal data could not be obtained. I examined the individual’s images in snapshots taken at the vocational aid center that he had been attending for more than 10 years. I focused on the non-verbal expressions represented in his snapshots, including facial expressions, clothes, and his ways of responding to the photographers. I also collected complementary data from direct observation of the individual and interviews with people around him for further analysis. I will discuss the significance and possibility of this “snapshot” approach in identity research.