

2. Belonging and Identification

Belonging is a multi-relational concept encompassing more than the often bilateral categorizations involved in processes of *identification*. Roughly defined, belonging as it is used here refers to people's processes of making sense of themselves as part of a group in terms of social, spatial and temporal dimensions (see 2.6), and as sharing specific practices with that group. The concept of belonging emerged from discussions about shortcomings or deadlocks surrounding the terms *identity* and *identification*. However, in its present conceptualizations, it still intersects with these concepts. Hence, I will start this chapter with an approach to the term *identity* and an outline of the turn from *identity* to *identification*; later I discuss the relationship between *identification* and the concept of belonging. *Identification* covers questions of "who am I" and "who are we" in processual terms of active and intersubjectively achieved boundary drawing. It is, even in its theoretical and analytical differentiation into personal and social *identification*, always a process involving (imagined) others. It is *per definitionem* a social process. In the following sections (2.1, 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4), we will look at the relationship between an individual's social *identification* and groups, and some critiques between the connection of the self with the social. Finally, a more recent and empirical approach to *identity* and *identification* as *social positioning* (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005) is introduced in section 2.5. By understanding *identification* as emerging, as "happening" at different levels in interactive encounters – as relational and as always partial – it provides a useful link to the understanding of belonging that is introduced in the same section.

In the beginning of the second part of this chapter (2.6), the growing salience of the term belonging in scholarly accounts in different fields (such as anthropology, human geography, sociology, psychology and linguistics) is reviewed. In this vein, belonging is presented according to its three major dimensions as "place belonging" (2.6.1), "social belonging" (2.6.2) and "temporal belonging" (2.6.3). After shedding light on the various aspects the term is associated with, I will conclude by delineating my understanding of the concept in the specific context of this book's empirical analysis: as a speaker's indexing (Silverstein, 1976) of social attachment to groups, spatial attachment to place and of construing possible temporal relations between the two. Second, belonging can be accomplished by the very use of these relations in linguistic expressions. Sharing "ways of speaking" (Hymes, 1989) indexes a speaker's belonging to a community of language practice, as will be developed in section 3.2. It is important to note that the properties

of the concept of belonging as used here emerged from an in-depth interrogation of the data, and from an analytical attempt to conceptually grasp what people say and how they speak about “who they are” and “where they belong”.

2.1. Making Sense of Ourselves and Others

Over the course of the last decades, many scholars have observed the proliferation, persistence and resilience of the concept of *identity* in scholarly endeavors. The term outlived discussion from post-structuralist and post-modern perspectives, where it was highly criticized in its original definition of being “stable” and based on “sameness”, and as being too essentialist (among others by Hall 1996, Brubaker & Cooper 2000, Anthias 2002). On the other hand, increased literature on identities as being constructed, fragmented, uncertain and multiple has also been seen as being too “weak”, “saying too little” or limiting the focus on individuals’ perceptions of personal and social self (Brubaker & Cooper 2000, 1; Anthias 2002). Regardless, it is hard to imagine sociological, political or linguistic research focusing on how people perceive and make sense of themselves and others in the social world without reference to – or variations of – the term identity (not only, but also because of its actual presence in public discourses and common language use; Fearon 1999, Jenkins 2008, 14). Initially, the term was used in psychology to define the sameness of an individual’s self-perception. Erikson (1959) depicts this sameness as challenged by different crises throughout the course of a person’s life, and in ideal cases how they deal with these crises. In his stage model, he describes these challenges, and how the individual incorporates and connects experiences from the different crises into her ego identity (or personal identity). Even though this model focuses on ego identity defined as an inherently stable and coherent version of the self, the crises Erikson delineates are socially triggered. He focuses on the strategies of an individual to deal with certain obstacles in her psychological development. The crises are related to respective significant people during the course of one’s life. The crisis-work of a person is to see herself from the perspective of these others. Hence, the individual’s self-reference can only work if the individual ‘steps out’ of the self and changes her perspective. Self-reference only functions from a self-reflexive point of view. The ability of the individual to ‘step out’ and see herself with the eyes of the other is described by Mead (1934) as influenced by the social relations in which she is embedded. The *self* “arises in the process of social experience and activity, that is, it develops in the given individual as a result of his relations to that process as a whole and to other individuals within that process” (Mead, 1934, 135). The incorporated other is an aggregate of viewpoints within the social group in which

the individual is socialized as a member.¹³ These viewpoints are condensed into collective attitudes represented by the “generalized other”¹⁴. Mead explains that subjectivity is always and necessarily tied to intersubjectivity. This relationship is reflected in his conceptualization of the self as being, on the one hand, represented by an *I* as its “individual” side. On the other hand, the self consists of a *me* involving the internalized norms and expectations of the “generalized other” and hence, representing the “social” side of the self. Krappmann (1971) also follows an interactionist approach looking at the structures which make identity “possible” in interaction, emphasizing the “building” of identity in intersubjective relations, and the “negotiation” of the same with other interlocutors. Identity, then, is built upon anticipated expectations of others towards the individual, and the individual’s reaction to that expectation (ibid.: 39). The interactive negotiation of identity is a dual process of offer, approval or dismissal, and possible adjustments of self and other. Three aspects can be derived from these reflections on identity. Firstly, a person’s sense of self or identity is grounded in interaction with others, especially in verbal communication. Hence, it is constantly negotiated, reaffirmed and adjusted. Second, a person’s sense of self concerns two intertwined realms: Being construed by ongoing processes of identification, it is both personal and social. Third, if the *self* is constructed by the interplay of the *me* and others, the perception of the (social) self cannot exist by itself, but rather needs to be acknowledged and confirmed by others.

2.2. Processes of Identification

The aspects above point to a critique on the concept of identity in its original semantic sense as describing (a person’s) sameness or features she might “possess”. When identity is defined as something which is intersubjectively achieved in interaction, it should rather be viewed as a process: “It is a process – *identification* – not a ‘thing’. It is not something that one can *have*, or not; it is something that

13 Simmel (1890, 103) already pointed out that an individual’s personal identity is the “individuelle Kreuzung der sozialen Kreise in ihr”.

14 In human psychological development, the child primarily reflects attitudes of significant others in the phase of “play”. This phase could best be described with modes of identification in terms of “mother”, “father” or “teacher” – that is, singular persons of reference. These relationships grow more complex in the phase of “game”, where individuals are engaged in complex social processes and identify with collectives such as team members, friends, peers, ethnic groups or nations. In this phase the individual incorporates the attitudes of the “generalized other” into her own self-conception (Mead, 1934, 154f.).

one *does*" (Jenkins, 2008, 5, emphases in the original). This processual perspective on identity emphasizes the subject's agency in the sense-making of herself and others, and her engagement in "discursive work, the binding and marking of symbolic boundaries, the production of 'frontier-effects'" (Hall, 1996, 3). Furthermore, this process of "knowing who we are" and "knowing who others are" (Jenkins, 2008, 5) is not unilateral (as an emphasis on subjectivity might suggest), but is in fact bilateral. Identification involves the individual's positioning within social structures. This position, however, can be challenged, validated or rejected by others, as already mentioned above. Alternatively, a position the individual does not necessarily identify herself with can be assigned to her externally. A specific case of external assignment will be discussed in chapter 6. Here, the label "indigenous" is assigned to individuals who frame their belonging in spatial terms and not within ethnic categories. The social validity and coercive function of these categorizations, as we also see in the example mentioned, is often related to positions of power and authority. Identity, then, can only be understood as a "depiction" or "snap-shot" of a never-ending process – a reification of past, present and future negotiations, or a "product" of identification processes which are never a finished or a tangible "thing". Hence, we have to differentiate the analytical view on identity from the understanding selves and groups might have of themselves as coherent and continuous.¹⁵

2.3. Personal and Social Identification

Theoretically, and as Mead's distinction of *I* and *me* suggests, the *self* is often divided into the dimensions of personal and social identification processes (or into the "results" of these processes as personal and social identity). This might cause some confusion, as it implies that these realms, though interrelated, still represent different "sources" for the self or occupy different positions in processes of differentiation. The attempts to define personal identity (still not framed within the processual term of identification) are numerous. They vary from psychological accounts as we have seen in Erikson's model of the self's continuous sameness in a changing environment (Craib, 1998), to "psychodynamic dimension(s)" of the unconscious and emotions as parts of the self (Vogler, 2000, 20f.). Other authors such as Fearon (1999, 25) see personal identity as a hierarchically organized "set of attributes, beliefs, desires, or principles of action that a person thinks distinguish her in socially relevant ways", which is associated positively with a

15 As emphasized by Brubaker & Cooper (2000, 4) in their distinction between *categories of analysis* and *categories of practice*.

person's self-esteem.¹⁶ Goffman (1991 [1963]), in turn, conceptualizes personal identity not as hierarchically, but rather chronologically organized experiences that are managed and developed by individuals into something like a biography or a narrative of self.¹⁷ However identity is defined, it is commonly agreed upon that personal identity, even though it might be conceptualized as an inward process or "interior subjectivity" (Jenkins, 2008, 51), is never detached but always related to or established by the social. Knowledge about what is considered a "positive" feature of a person, or what may differentiate an individual from others, can only be gained in interaction, during intersubjective relations. Jenkins (2008, 38) claims that any "kind" of identity (personal or social) is produced in interaction and follows the same kinds of processes. Both rely on processes of similarity and sameness. Hence, he suggests that a division of identification processes into personal and social is theoretically and methodologically not at all necessary or fruitful.¹⁸ Accordingly, a distinction of identification into personal and social processes will not be relevant in this book, as belonging points to its social dimension in collective identification processes. Neither would a distinction into the two realms be analytically beneficial. What we *can* observe is how individuals position themselves in (verbal) interactions, how they categorize and evaluate groups, places and times, and how they relate them to each other. A "narrative of self" or resources of self-esteem are always already related to others, and are therefore social.

2.4. Social Identification and Groups

Our focus is on constructions and negotiations of belonging, which is mainly concerned with the social identification of individuals. An often cited definition of social identity is that by Tajfel (1974, 69). He suggests that it is the individual's categorization of herself and others that matters:

-
- 16 Fearon's description of personal identity recalls an approach in the tradition of *rational choice* theories (Diekmann & Voss, 2004), in which individuals do things to achieve a maximization of utility (positive feelings about themselves). This implies a much too high level of consciousness about one's own features and some coherence in its hierarchization.
 - 17 Goffman locates the subjective and unconscious parts of the individual in a third part called ego identity (rather resembling Mead's *I*).
 - 18 This likening of personal and social identification processes drastically modifies earlier attempts to "outsource" subjectivity into psychology and "replacing the first-person subject of the Enlightenment thinkers into the sociological subject" (Welz, 2005, 6).

“we shall understand social identity as that part of an individual’s self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group (or groups) together with the emotional significance attached to that membership.”

However, the compositions of the groups and the relations an individual might have with them can vary. Brewer & Gardner (1996, 84) divide the social self into “public” and “collective” facets of the self. Whereas the public self maintains relations with small groups in real face-to-face interactions (e.g. family, peers, colleagues), the collective self “reflects internalizations of the norms and characteristics of important reference groups and consists of cognitions about the self that are consistent with that group identification” (ibid.). Here, we could imagine a membership affiliation to an ethnic or national group. What Brewer and Gardner call public and collective selves can also be seen conceptually as “roles” and “types” – as subcategories of social identities (Fearon, 1999, 16f.). Role identities apply to “some set of actions, behaviors, routines, or functions in particular situations” (ibid.: 17), and hence are identities adopted in specific kinds of interactions where different roles of the individual are most relevant and foregrounded, e.g. a mother, a farmer, a rebel etc. Type identities focus on shared aspects of collectivities (like gender, nationality, origin) and are interpreted by Fearon as something more “adhesive” to the individual. These concepts still point to identity as something that people can “take” or “activate” in specific settings, and are not grounded in the notion of its construction in interaction at a certain point in time. An interactionist perspective (as outlined by Goffman 1959, Krappmann 1971; Bucholtz & Hall 2004, 2005) looks rather at the formation and the possibilities of certain roles and types achieved in discourse.

Even though social identity might be divided into subcategories, the concepts of social identity and collective identity (and identification) are sometimes used arbitrarily or as exchangeable concepts when it comes to individuals’ relations to groups. I think, however, that a thorough conceptual differentiation is necessary. Social identity, as we have seen in the definition from Tajfel (1974), emphasizes the individual’s perspective of establishing and maintaining links to manifold social groups – of categorizing the social world. Collective identity can be understood as depicting social identifications that overlap. It describes what can happen if different individuals identify with the “same” kind of people (like a community, a sport’s group, or a nation), and how people negotiate, guard, or attach a shared definition of the group and its properties. This is why collective

identities are of crucial concern in inquiries about collective action.¹⁹ Critiques of identity as being static and reifying have also been formulated for the conceptualization of social and collective identity. As we can see in Tajfel's definition, groups are perceived as something preceding any individuals' association with them, and the individuals would just have to create the links to these entities. Brubaker (2002) counters this position well, positing that groups do not exist in principle, but are rather created through common sense, journalism, and academia by essentializing "groupism".²⁰ The only "thing" that exists, according to him, a person's feeling of being part of one or more groups. He is, then, instead interested in the social and political processes that can enhance or mitigate *groupness*. Even though groups are seen from a social constructivist angle, they are, nevertheless, "real" in their social significance (Brubaker, 2002, 168). Groups are more than the "arithmetical aggregates" of their members (Jenkins, 2008, 10), they "are imagined, but not imaginary" (ibid.: 11). People engage with them, and groups do not necessarily unravel when some members do not identify with them any more (especially when they reach the size and complexity of organizations). Callon & Latour (2006, 77) use the term "translation" to describe the process whereby individuals move from their own social identities, and hence from different micro agents, toward collectives as macro agents: "immer wenn ein Akteur von »uns« spricht, übersetzt er oder sie andere Akteure in einen einzigen Willen, dessen Geist und Sprecher/-in er oder sie wird"²¹. In other words, "groups" exist in so far as individuals create them by speaking. However, when individuals speak on behalf of a group, they refer to something superseding their own imagination. Groups, being more than the sum of their parts, rely on ongoing relations between their members; these relations are grounded in practices which are habitualized within a specific community and a material world inhabited by a group (ibid.: 83). Individuals negotiate terms of access to

19 Melucci (1995, 43ff.), for example, states that collective identifications in the form of a 'we' can only emerge within relational identification processes around some kind of action.

20 These two positions do a good job depicting the differences between social psychology and sociology in that matter.

21 Agents who speak on behalf of a group of course can occupy different positions and speaker roles, respectively. Some speakers might be assigned a higher legitimacy to speak on behalf of certain groups (like spokesmen, politicians or village eldest), or they may at least claim that legitimacy. Others' claims to speak on behalf of a group might be denied. Bourdieu (2005, 125ff.) refers to this phenomenon as a "Delegationsprinzip", a principle of delegation.

bounded collectives, they negotiate the attributes a collective might share, and they negotiate their own roles and the membership to different groups in interaction. Negotiation implies that, depending on the context of interaction, different aspects of identification can either be focused on or omitted, affirmed or rejected, and they can be expressed explicitly or implicitly.

2.5. From Social Positioning to Belonging

Incorporating identity as both categorical and relational processes of identification, and pointing at the multiple levels of identity formation, Bucholtz & Hall (2005) propose an empirically oriented framework. They define identity as “the social positioning of self and other” (ibid.: 586). This positioning is interactively achieved. Driven by findings from empirical analysis, Bucholtz and Hall (2005) propose several ontological implications of the identity concept. First, identity is seen as emerging during interactions which has already been discussed above (ibid.: 588). Second, identity in interaction emerges on various and interlinked levels of identification. While it includes “macro-level demographic categories”, it also emphasizes “local, ethnographically specific cultural positions”, and attached to the (verbal) interaction itself, “temporary and interactionally specific stances and participant roles” (ibid.: 592). This broadens the view on social identity, which is usually taken as relating to macro categories. However, in the above discussion, these social roles seemed to present a primordial asset of an individual (mother, farmer, occupant), whereas here the position would depend on its negotiation, foregrounding, or mitigation in the course of an interaction. Third, identity is indexed with linguistic means, for example “referential identity categories” (ibid.: 594). Fourth, identity is always relational not only in terms of adequation and distinction, but also in terms of authentication and denaturalization, authorization and illegitimization. Adequation and distinction refer to speakers’ emphasis or downplay of similarities or differences between individuals or groups depending on the interactive context (ibid.: 595). Who has the right to speak – and from which position – is regulated by processes of authentication and denaturalization as a “social process played out in discourse” (ibid.: 601). Whether or not identities (on each level) are successfully achieved and established in interaction is negotiated during processes of authorization or illegitimization.

With these different relational processes, Bucholtz and Hall try to encompass both the micro (observable interactive processes) and the macro (larger social discourses or ideological processes) level of identity negotiation. These points allude to the partialness principle, which is the last one in their sociocultural linguistic approach to identity: “Because identity is inherently relational, it will always be

partial, produced through contextually situated and ideologically informed configurations of self and other” (ibid.: 605). They try to tackle the structure-agency discussion²² by conceiving of language use as agency in which structure can be indexed and jointly negotiated by the speakers and their interlocutors.

Identity, when viewed as processes of identification in terms of positioning, is based on the individuals’ *doing* of identities. This *doing* encompasses the different levels of interaction in which identification can be achieved, along with the involvement of others in these processes as co-construction or de-construction of different positions the speaker takes. It also emphasizes social identification as not only categorical but also relational at a “point of intersection” of different positions available to a speaker within a specific context of interaction. The model of Bucholtz & Hall (2005, 2004) shows that more recent concepts of identity and identification have answered to the critique of sameness, continuity and stability. The apparent conceptual shortcomings have been addressed with thinking in terms of social positioning and by grounding it in different levels of interaction. Nevertheless, there are three considerations that have led to the introduction of *belonging* as an alternative concept for people’s notions of who they and others are in this book. First, and on a less “existential” scale, if one chooses to use the term identity or look at identification processes, one has to be aware of the conceptual “baggage” that comes with it:

“For, however many ‘multi’ or ‘layered’ prefixes we use, it remains the case that what is retained must have some singular meaning in and of itself, otherwise the term ‘identity’ would be a rhetorical flourish more than anything else” (Anthias, 2002, 495).

Surely, an outright dismissal of the term, as some have called for (e.g. Brubaker & Cooper 2000, Anthias 2002, Pfaff-Czarnecka 2011), is jumping the gun on the debate. However, using it demands a proper positioning within the array of academic literature devoted to the term, and requires a definition of what is actually meant theoretically and methodologically when talking about identity. The second, and empirically grounded consideration, points to the categorical limits of identification. In most cases, identification processes refer to social categorization into groups, and to social relations of speakers in terms of occupied (interactional or macro-level) positions. While “the social” certainly is a

22 The structure-agency discussion is concerned with the fundamental sociological question of what shapes human society – the individual’s agency as an acting human being or the social structure in which the individual is embedded; the relations between agents and structure has been discussed among others by Simmel (1908), Berger & Luckmann (1966) and Bourdieu (1977).

hallmark of an individual's understanding of self and others, it is still an abridged approach to how people establish that understanding in interaction. Spatial and temporal categorizations need to be recognized as resources for speakers' identification processes, as I will show in this book. Third, this study investigates shared practices between people that can point to some form of "commonality, connectedness and groupness" (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000, 20). This shows relational thinking that goes beyond specific positions taken or assigned to others by speakers, in terms of mutually oriented *practice*. Collectivity is not only grounded in categorical "sameness", but also in joint action (c.f. Melucci 1995; 1989). Concluding these three considerations, my theoretical and empirical findings in this book are based on the concept of *belonging*.

Belonging as it is used here encompasses spatial, social and temporal aspects in both categorical and relational dimensions. It overlaps with thoughts about identification as social positioning, but it also goes beyond conceptualizations of "mere" social categories. Belonging is "by its very linguistic force about place, about context and about location" (Anthias, 2016, 178). Furthermore, it also focuses on what Barth (1969, 15) calls the "cultural stuff" social boundaries enclose, the categorical contents, shared experiences *and* practices that can bind people together. In the following, I will introduce different (though sometimes intertwined) conceptualizations of belonging, concluding with an operational definition of the term as it is used in the specific context of this book.

2.6. Concepts of Belonging

Belonging is a concept that draws on the discussions of identity as social positioning (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005). Identification – personal and social – is not only seen in terms of internal and external categorization (Jenkins, 1994), but comprises relations between people, and hence is also a question of where people position themselves within a social structure and specific place. The relationship between belonging and identity is not entirely agreed upon in the current literature; in fact, we are far from anything resembling a thorough and shared definition of belonging. Similar to identity, belonging as a concept is increasingly present in a wide range of areas of inquiry – among others, political sciences, psychology, geography and sociology (Lähdesmäki et al., 2014, 2016). In (socio-)linguistics, however, the concept has yet to gain a foothold. Socio-linguistics often focuses on *identity* in its different dimensions, and its relation to language and/or language use or linguistic means of identification (see section 3.1). Sometimes implicitly, other times explicitly, belonging accompanies the identity concept

and is sometimes even presented in the form of the *co-occurrence*²³ “identity and belonging” (e.g. Kraus 2006, Krzyżanowski & Wodak 2008). However, in comparison to the concept of identity, belonging has not been widely theorized until now (a few exceptions are discussed below). Its common sense semantic meaning of ‘feeling at home’ or being ‘rooted’ somewhere might have played into that. What all approaches from the different disciplines agree on is that belonging is at its core a social notion, indicating categorical belonging to groups organized both on the small to large scales, such as families, friends, communities or nations. Belonging has two dimensions within the notion of social identification, depicted by the distinction of belonging *to* and belonging *with*, a division which is semantically more precise in the German language with *Zugehörigkeit* (to) and *Zusammengehörigkeit* (with) (Pfaff-Czarnecka, 2011, 202). Whereas belonging *to* points to categorical group memberships, belonging *with* points to the relational dimensions within the group. These include shared experiences, memories, practices, interactions etc. – all the activities that might strengthen the cohesion of collective feelings of belonging, but which are not necessarily based on shared categories. Belonging is hence categorical, relational (Pfaff-Czarnecka, 2011; Anthias, 2016) and primarily social. A second dimension of belonging covers these kinds of collective relations in specific spaces – social as well as geographic. Temporality is the third dimension in constructions of belonging, which is yet to be treated theoretically and empirically. I recognize that the temporal notions of memory (as depicting collective experiences), continuity/disruption and temporal connections between place and groups are of significance here.²⁴ The different and interconnected dimensions of belonging will be discussed in the following order: spatial belonging, social belonging, then temporal belonging. This segmentation into spatial, social and temporal belonging improves chapter readability. The concepts are, however, theoretically and empirically indivisible and intertwined, and will refer back to each other in the different subsections.

2.6.1. Spatial Belonging

Antonsich (2010b) discusses belonging in terms of individual feelings of being “at home” and in terms of discursively negotiated politics of belonging. As we will take an in-depth look at the latter in section 2.6.2.2, we will focus on

23 Lemnitzer & Zinsmeister (2010, 16) define co-occurrences as two linguistic items that are juxtaposed. If this co-occurrence is of statistical relevance, the two items are defined as a *collocation*.

24 This approach is also envisioned and precisely analyzed by Höfler (forthcoming).

place-belonging for now. Antonsich argues that personal identity in the sense of self-understanding is thoroughly connected to notions of place. Place encompasses an actual geographical space, but also social relations embedded into that specific place. Belonging to place is then the “personal, intimate, feeling of being ‘at home’ in a place” (Antonsich, 2010b, 645). “Home” is thought of as a “symbolic space of familiarity, comfort, security, and emotional attachment” (ibid.: 646). Although there is a social aspect within the concept of place-belongingness (in terms of families, friends and communities we imagine in relations to specific places), the concept puts emphasis on the individual’s relation with, and attachment to place. The “primacy of place” within the formation of an individual is attributed to the “human subject’s mode of being, which is always ‘being-in-the-world’, ‘being in place’” (Antonsich, 2010a, 121). Hence, the self within this conceptualization is not seen in relation to an “other”, but is rather rooted in surrounding local materiality in space. This relation is also emphasized by Tilley (1994, 26) when it comes to an individual’s basic human needs: “These qualities of locales and landscapes give rise to a feeling of belonging and rootedness and a familiarity, which is not born just out of knowledge, but of concern that provides ontological security”.²⁵ This aspect indicates why a feeling of non-belonging or displacement might have a severe impact on the individual in terms of feelings of insecurity or vulnerability. Lovell (1998a, 1f.) also states that territoriality, locality and belonging are deeply interlinked. In contrast to Antonsich or Tilley’s views, she assigns the importance of these links especially to the construction of a “collective memory surrounding place”. Place is both crucial for groupness (see 2.4 and 2.6.2) and an individual’s self-understanding, a “sense of who one is” as a “bounded self” (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000, 17f.). Although place-belonging is often addressed in inquiries of collective identities, it is also often underrepresented in works on personal self. It is put into a vocabulary of social identification or of in- and exclusion, as Antonsich (2010b, 129) criticizes. When it comes to the concept of belonging, spatial belonging as fundamental for self-understanding (forming part of personal identification) should be interconnected with social identifications and categorizations concerning place (forming part of social and collective identification). Antonsich draws attention to the defining role place has for biographies and the sense of where we belong. One can belong *to* a place

25 The basic human needs that are put forward by Tilley (1994) recall Maslow’s (1970 [1954], 20) five-tier hierarchy of needs. The most “basic” need is physiological (water, food, air, shelter) followed by less basic but still fundamental needs of safety, love and “belongingness”, support of self-esteem and finally self-actualization in the sense of personal fulfillment.

but can also belong *with* a place, even though the latter seems to be semantically inappropriate. Belonging *to* a place highlights a person's geographical positioning, in the past, in the present, or in the longing for it in the future. Belonging *with* a place highlights the binding effect place can have for an individual's positioning in the social world. It is the shared experience of a specific place – the shared origin or a shared geographic materiality that can bind groups together in terms of commonality. In the case of the Nueva Alianza, speakers represent relations of origin that are grounded in place – specifically the community and its corresponding land – as essential for social and place-belonging. In this example it becomes evident that an understanding of the self (also as a part of a group) in its relation to place needs to be connected to social and temporal dimensions.

2.6.2. Social Belonging

Belonging is a concept that relies on processes of social identification because it “allows us to study the links between ‘the self’ and ‘society’ from the point of view of the person” (May, 2011, 368). In his work on belonging (*Zugehörigkeit*) as communicatively produced with linguistic means, Hausendorf (2000, 1) defines the concept as denoting membership in social groups. Hence, belonging here is thought of as located in an individual's social identity, as in Tajfel's (1974, 69) definition which was cited above. Hausendorf looks at belonging to groups based on social categories speakers make relevant in different contexts of interaction. Categories and the ascriptions or evaluations speakers relate to them point to social structures and groups placed within these structures by the speaker. To put emphasis not only on social categories and memberships that are attributed by speakers to themselves and others, Brubaker & Cooper (2000) are interested in the social and political contexts in which these memberships emerge and introduce the concept of *groupness*. It offers an alternative approach to identity and is conceptualized as a cluster *around* collective (or social) identity. Groupness focuses more thoroughly on belonging as a “Zusammengehörigkeitsgefühl” (Brubaker and Cooper 2000, 20, with reference to Weber 1980). Collective identity has heretofore often been used as a term denoting groups sharing one or more categories, but the authors consider this kind of conceptualization too narrow for the description of group affiliation and (possible) cohesion. Belonging in terms of groupness is flanked by the terms of categorical commonality²⁶ – “the sharing of some common attribute” – and connectedness – “relational ties that

26 The same term is used in Paff-Czarnecka's (2011) belonging concept introduced in section 2.6.2.1.

link people” (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000, 20). Both can but do not necessarily trigger groupness – “the feeling of belonging together” (ibid.). Although both commonality and connectedness increase the possibilities of groupness, they are neither necessary nor sufficient conditions for its ‘happening’. Brubaker & Cooper (2000, 20) speak of “events”, “public narratives” or “discursive frames” that bind people together. These lived experiences are shared but are not categorical features of people. Shared experiences and practices add to the list of possible markers of commonality – which are part of events, narratives or discourses. Dividing up collective identity in an analytically more specific vocabulary focusing on the making of groups (relations between “commonality”, “connectedness”, “groupness”, Brubaker and Cooper 2000, 20), opens the possibility to position research along a continuum of stronger, weaker and changing forms of belonging:

“belonging can be understood as scalar: one can (feel to) belong to certain groups to a certain degree, for a moment. Thus, while identity implies sameness and coherence within a group or an individual and assumes a shared basis, belonging can account for that which can change and shift in time and place” (Lähdesmäki et al., 2014, 96).

In Antonsich’s view, place-belonging certainly falls into the category of stronger forms of belonging, especially when it comes to something conceptualized as “home”. In the social dimension of belonging, the nuances of importance of belonging can vary. Belonging to the group of students, workmates, or players in a bridge club may have different levels of importance. Some of these groups are abandoned and membership to others acquired. Multiple belongings of an individual can be differently relevant in different contexts and life stages. However, even though the importance of multiple belongings might be organized on a continuum, not all of them can be abandoned or denied by others without consequences. Not belonging to a group, which is very relevant to an individual’s self-understanding, can be as devastating as displacement from “home”. Within the Guatemalan community of interest here, there is a high degree of commonality, connectedness and feeling of belonging together, so we can expect significant group cohesion. However, talking about belonging in this context will not be based on (more or less) observable networks or features shared by the community’s inhabitants. Similar to Hausendorf, I am instead interested in the production (“Hervorbringung”) of belonging by speakers within terms of commonality, connectedness and groupness and the linguistic constructions and negotiations of belonging within narratives and other forms of verbal interaction between community members. Hausendorf’s (2000, 111f.) conceptualization of belonging as membership in social groups is based on belonging as something produced by speakers undergoing the steps of categorization (*zuordnen*),

attribution (*zuschreiben*) and evaluation (*bewerten*)²⁷ as principal tasks (*Aufgaben*) of linguistically indexing affiliation to groups. This is a good starting point when focusing on a speaker's means of producing belonging *to* specific groups. However, if we are also interested in the linguistic production of dimensions of belonging *with* a group, we will then need supplementary forms of methodological approaches, as in identifying practices shared by the community – in our case, narrative practices (see 4.3 and 7).

2.6.2.1. *Intersected Belonging: Social Location and Social Positionality*

Scholars researching belonging as social location (Pfaff-Czarnecka, 2011, 2013) or social positionality (Anthias, 2002, 2009, 2016; Yuval-Davis, 2006, 2011) draw on the broadening of the term by Brubaker & Cooper (2000), or on an approach which defines groups only as a second-order phenomenon of social positionality. While the vocabulary used to define belonging is very similar to their work, Pfaff-Czarnecka (2011, 201) stresses the multiple different forms of belonging an individual can feel. She defines belonging as an emotionally charged “social location” incorporating “commonality”, “mutuality” and “attachments” (*ibid.*). This definition follows earlier critics in condemning identity as an analytical concept being too focused on categories, emphasizing homogeneity of and dichotomies between ‘us and them’ (*ibid.*: 203f.). Following her work, belonging as an alternative term has more potential to encompass both processes of ex- and inclusion, as well as individual and collective perspectives on belonging. Regarding the latter relation, Pfaff-Czarnecka stresses the aforementioned distinction between belonging *to* and belonging *with*. While the former analytically captures what Hausendorf or Tajfel call the individual's membership into a group, the latter describes the norms, values and practices keeping the group together. Commonality, mutuality and attachment are bound to aspects of belonging *with* in Pfaff-Czarnecka's conceptualization. Commonality refers to groups forming around more than just categories. It involves “sharing experience and the tacit self-evidence of being, of what goes without saying; means jointly taking things for granted, and sharing common knowledge and meanings” (Pfaff-Czarnecka, 2011, 204). Shared knowledge, experience, values and practices encourage mutual expectations and

27 In another paper (Hausendorf & Bora, 2006), the English terms “assigning”, “ascribing” and “evaluation” are used to translate the three terms from Hausendorf's original conceptualization (Hausendorf, 2000). However, the chosen translations are more in line with Sacks' membership categorization analysis (see 4.1) Hausendorf's approach is based on.

“norms of reciprocity, loyalty and commitment” (ibid.: 205). Boundaries around social groups and conditions for in- and exclusion (sometimes conceptualized as “regimes of belonging”, see 2.6.2.2) are often based on these kind of reciprocal expectations within a group. Finally, attachment encompasses people’s relations to material things and immaterial ideas about these relations. These can be possessions, artifacts, landscapes, territories, or places. It refers to and widens Antonsich’s concept of place-belonging and underlines the capacity of belonging as a multi-layered concept including not only human relations, but relations to nature, places or possessions such as a house or farm. Attachment does not necessarily need to be related to a group people feel they belong to. For example, I can always feel attached to my home town even though my present social relations and group memberships might not be connected to my hometown at all. Belonging in the collective dimension (*with*), however, is strengthened if members articulate similar kinds of attachments to a certain (im)materiality or place. In the Alianza corpus, we observe a connection between the community and attachment to place that speakers use to strengthen the community’s claim to the territory, or to validate their struggle of becoming owners. Attachment to place seems to play a crucial role in the speakers’ understanding of self and groups, and is articulated as a central feature of commonality. All three aspects – commonality, mutuality and attachments – form part of belonging *with* a group, they enforce and secure a sense of the collective felt by group members.

An individual’s belonging *to* groups is, as I pointed out above, multiple, changeable, and of varying significance. For example, belonging to an activist group defending women’s rights might be more fundamental to an individual’s self-understanding than belonging to a weekly knitting class. Hence, individuals have to deal with different restrictions and possibilities of belonging *with* a group, and of leaving behind some ties of belonging while forging others (certainly always rendered through the regimes or politics of belonging). Pfaff-Czarnecka (2013) envisions individuals “navigating” these different allegiances and constructing the self within these intersections of multiple belongings.²⁸ Thinking of individuals as occupying a social location situated at intersections of different belongings widens the analyst’s view. Individuals make sense of themselves and of groups from this specific intersectional position; for example, a woman who is also a member of an ethnic group, a church member, a mother

28 This integrates into the feminist debate on intersection in terms of class, gender, race, ability etc. (see for example contributions to Winker and Degele, 2010 and Kerner, 2009).

and a farmer participating in certain practices and having a certain set of experiences. Focusing only on social categories and reducing an individual to her membership in an ethnic group is analytically stunted. Ethnicity might be the most relevant category for her self-conception in a given situation; however, it is just one of many which can possibly be made relevant in interaction. Pfaff-Czarnecka highlights belonging (as social location) as combining “categorical attributes” with “social structure”, although the relation between category and structure remains somewhat opaque (ibid.: 216f.). The surplus of belonging as a concept of social location lies not only in the combination of categories and structure, but also in the connection between the two concepts. Speakers use categories to demarcate different forms of collectivities and position themselves and others within or outside these groups.²⁹ On the other hand, this positioning is not carried out or undergone in a social vacuum, but within a social structure where categories are related to each other, often hierarchically, and where the positioning might be restricted or encouraged by certain regimes (see section 2.6.2.2).³⁰ The concept of location and the relationship between structure and agency in belonging processes are discussed in further detail in Anthias’ (2016, 178) or Yuval-Davis’ (2006)³¹ conceptions of belonging as “positionality”. Social locations connect macro-sociological categories like gender, class or nationality with their “positionality along an axis of power” (Yuval-Davis, 2006, 199), and hence point to their hierarchical organization in a specific social system, in a specific place, at a specific time. Belonging in terms of positionality is both geographical and symbolic, and refers to spatial *and* social dimensions:

“belonging can include an attachment (to place, community), claims (for place, community), attributions (of place, community), formal membership to places through meeting criteria of such membership, as a commitment or practices of consensus to a state/social system” (Anthias, 2016, 178).

Anthias finds the advantage of the concept of belonging over that of identity in not delimiting people’s questions of “who am I” and “what am I” to often essential and primordial categories resulting in social groups. Belonging encloses “the actual spaces and places to which people are accepted as members or feel that

29 That these might be construed in that very instant of interaction or be conceptualized as ‘already there’ has been discussed in 2.4.

30 As based on Bourdieu (1977) this structure, however, is not just antecedently “there” but “emergent”.

31 Yuval-Davis (2006, 2010) proposes three dimensions of belonging in terms of social locations, identification and emotional attachment, and ethical and political values.

they are members” (Anthias, 2016, 177), and the intersection of these spaces and places in multiple belongings of an individual. Social space is defined in terms of the individual’s location within a social structure and related to “organizational, experiential, intersubjective and representational” (Anthias, 2009, 12) patterns the individual can resort to. Place is the actual geographical space to which these social spaces are tied. The agency of the individual lies in her making sense of her own positioning within these spaces and places at a specific time (for example through “narratives of location” as a form of empirical data, Anthias 2002, 2009 uses in her inquiries). These active processes of positioning are by definition context-bound in a social, spatial and temporal dimension. Positionality is, then, the middle-ground between both position (structure) and positioning (agency). Social positions are occupied by different individuals. Sharing a social position and its affiliated practices may then lead to the emergence of collectivities (but, as was argued in Brubaker & Cooper 2000, does not have to). Individuals can not only position themselves in (or navigate through) available “social locations”, but they can also negotiate the act of positioning or the attributes and hierarchical organization of the location. For Yuval-Davis (2010, 266), these articulations of social location and belonging to them are expressed in narratives, which will be discussed further in section 4.3.1.

Pfaff-Czarnecka, Anthias and Yuval-Davis point to the same phenomenon of “intersected belonging”; however, in Anthias’ and Yuval-Davis’ conceptualizations, the individual’s agency in positioning processes and in making sense of their social positionalities (surely, within the constraints of belonging politics) is even more accentuated and grounded in empirical findings as “actively lived” social structures (May, 2011, 363). Therefore, it is crucial to introduce the concept of practice as activities associated with specific positions (Lähdesmäki et al., 2014, 96). This will be elaborated in more detail in section 3.2, when we discuss belonging as social positionality. Individual positioning processes can often be empirically ‘translated’ into ‘things people do’ linguistically, with their bodies, with material objects etc.: “belonging is pre-dominantly viewed as the product of everyday practices that connect individuals and groups to the social and civic fabric of a place” (Garbutt, 2009, 98f.). For example, people can index belonging to a specific community of narrative practice by organizing their stories in a similar and recurring pattern, as we can see in the *Alianza* corpus (see section 7).

2.6.2.2. *Regimes of Social Belonging*

Processes of social identification rely on the basic differentiation of individuals (as specific members of a collective) from others:

“This may be one of the most troubling aspects of all: the fact that the formation of every ‘we’ must leave out or exclude a ‘they’, that identities depend on the marking of difference” (Gilroy, 1997, 301f.).

This holds true for processes of belonging defined in terms of social identification and groupness. Belonging is interactively achieved, and when we talk about who is *in*, we implicitly or explicitly talk about who is *out* – who does not belong. Belonging relies on boundary drawing, i.e. separating one group from another. Lamont & Molnár (2002, 168) define symbolic boundaries as “conceptual distinctions made by social actors to categorize objects, people, practices, and even time and space”.³² This means that every ‘side’ of the boundary is occupied by people (in a specific place and time) who are conceptualized as doing things differently than others (Vallentin, 2012b; Jenkins, 2008, 17). These boundaries do not always separate the *we* from the *other*, but are sometimes more complicated and “beyond ‘us’ and ‘them’”, as Yuval-Davis (2010, 272ff.) observes. As I have shown elsewhere (Vallentin, 2015), boundaries might be construed not only in dichotomous differentiations of the *we* from a specific *other*, but for example by introducing groups functioning as a liminal ‘buffer’ between the two. Where to draw boundaries, and what features or practices determine positions between people, is a matter of negotiation. Similarities might be emphasized to enhance group coherence, or downplayed to increase apparent distinction from others (Barth, 1969). The moment of negotiation is where questions of “who we are, where and how we belong” are conceptualized as “regimes” (Pfaff-Czarnecka, 2011) or “politics of belonging” (Antonsich, 2010b; Anthias, 2016; Yuval-Davis, 2006, 2011). Regimes underlie Pfaff-Czarnecka’s division of belonging into commonality and mutuality. If people share ongoing relations with each other, mutual expectations of behavior emerge which lead to “institutionalised patterns insisting upon investments of time and resources, loyalty and commitment” (Pfaff-Czarnecka, 2011, 205). In contrast to the benefits individuals gain by belonging to a group (social capital, rights and security etc.), obliging to the regimes – which means obliging to certain rules and norms – is the “price people have to pay for belonging together” (ibid.). Politics of belonging relate to identity politics as ideologically motivated claims and struggles about social power and hierarchy: “The politics of belonging also include struggles around

32 Lamont & Molnár (2002, 168) define symbolic boundaries in distinction to social boundaries, which are conceptualized as materially represented forms of social difference, for example “landowner” and “peasant”. These differences can then cause or be associated with inequalities.

the determination of what is involved in belonging, in being a member of such a community” (Yuval-Davis 2011: 3). This involvement is based on “ethical and political values” (Yuval-Davis, 2006, 203) attached to social locations, and according to Yuval-Davis, separated from belonging conceptualized as a “feeling of being at home”. Hierarchical boundaries between those who can belong and those who cannot are then politicized concepts of “socio-spatial inclusion/exclusion” (Antonsich, 2010b, 645). Apart from also encompassing a spatial aspect of location, these definitions recall identity politics as processes of in- and exclusion based on specific group memberships and/or contested allocations to them. However, politics or regimes of belonging entail memberships prone to relational shifts – to redefinition and inclusion (Pfaff-Czarnecka, 2011, 204). Belonging emphasizes peoples’ intersectionality between multiple memberships to different collectives and (social) spaces (Anthias, 2002, 2016; Yuval-Davis, 2006, 2011). Though this concept may seem quite appealing, especially in its political sense for the negotiation of in- and exclusion in modern and globalized societies, the conceptualizations presented here on regimes and politics of belonging focus rather on macro-scale phenomena within social dimensions of migration, ethnicity or citizenship. Institutional, organizational or political apparatuses are seen as the ‘partner’ in dialogue granting or denying belonging. Using a macro-scale approach to politics of belonging the ‘dialogue’ is thought of in terms of (political or social) rights and obligations, for example connected to citizenship (Yuval-Davis, 2011, 3). This points to reciprocity and mutuality, but omits the actual construction of belonging in interaction:

“We make claims for belonging which others either reject or accept, and therefore, mere familiarity with a place, a group of people or a culture is not enough for us to gain a sense of belonging” (May, 2011, 370).

Of course, this rejection or recognition can be enforced by organizations and institutions representing politics and regimes. It can also, however, be the ‘other’ in an interaction of verbal exchange, who rejects or accepts our situational construction of belonging. Alterity and the existence of an *alter* (Jungbluth, 2015) is crucial for in situ achievement of belonging in interaction. Individuals index belonging (in its different dimensions) and this must be externally validated, rendered or denied. For social identification processes, Jenkins (2008, 40) called this procedure the “internal-external dialectic of identification”, as outlined in section 2.2. This paradigm also holds true for belonging. The alter does not necessarily have to play an active part in interaction, but can also exist within cognitive projections or imaginations of the individual about a generalized other in the sense of Mead (1934). Antonsich (2010b) and Yuval-Davis (2011) conceptualize

politics of belonging as separated from the individual's personal "feeling of belonging" and, in comparison, as collectively achieved, at stake and negotiated. Anthias (2016, 176) counters that even the "affective placement in terms of what we share with others and to what this sharing relates" is infiltrated by the politics of larger social relations, and that belonging in terms of politics and individual feelings cannot be separated. From a social interactionist point of view, the critique goes even further. Regimes and politics of belonging are reproduced on the micro level in day-to-day encounters between people; however, they are also altered, rendered insignificant or are not made relevant at all. An analytical focus on regimes or politics of belonging on a macro-scale can reveal insights about social inclusion, policies of citizenship or global migration. However, the range of forms belonging might take when negotiated in the context of actual intersubjective encounters might be overlooked if there is no complementation of an analysis of belonging on the microlevel. They might deviate from official categories, norms and rules of behavior, and are put up for evaluation and renegotiation with the alter in the interaction. We can see an example of this kind of negotiation in the analysis of an interaction between community women and a trainer from outside the community (see chapter 6). In an excursus (section 8.2), I will outline other possible regimes of belonging that mark the difference between inside and outside of the group.

2.6.3. Temporal Belonging

Temporal dimensions in the construction of belonging are the least theorized in recent literature. A feeling and articulation of belonging to a place or a group which is not present in our current surroundings is still possible.³³ By categorizing ourselves and other people, we might assign social locations associated with backwardness to the others (the "uncivilized wildlings" vs. the "civilized settlers", the "conservative" vs. the "modern" etc.). Hausendorf (2000, 279) finds empirical evidence of temporal indicators of belonging (as social identification) in "formelhaft verkürzte(n), typisierende(n) und verallgemeinernde(n) Rückverweise(n) auf bekannte und deshalb eben gerade nicht differenzierungsbedürftige Zeiterfahrung". This temporal experience is collective, and hence available for every member of a social group (ibid.). The naming of historical events and phases, as well as temporal adverbs or pronouns, are ways in which speakers can display

33 For example, even though the Jewish community is spatially and socially dispersed, there is still a strong sense of commonality, mutuality and attachment to the community (Brubaker, 2005).

belonging; however, more is typically required than the reference to a specific moment in time to indicate that we belong somewhere or to/with someone. Temporal dimensions can create boundaries used to index a time-frame in linguistic interaction, for example in the form of narrated time (Ricoeur, 1988, Part IV), thus binding possible social positionalities, significant places or relevant practices to that specific time.

Temporal dimensions also provide a frame of temporal (and mostly past-oriented) orientation for the speaker and the alter in interaction; they can provide a link between places and/or groups and often work as legitimization devices of belonging to a specific place: “Belonging can in other words be depicted as a trajectory through time and space” (May, 2011, 372, with reference to Certeau 1984). Within my corpus, time plays a crucial role – for example, when it comes to genealogical tracking of family lines and the speakers’ biographies linked to the place of the Alianza community. The link between ‘back then’ and ‘now’, and the stable relations of the people within that temporal space, is used to highlight the legitimacy of the speakers’ belonging to the community and the place they inhabit. Hence, the temporal dimension cannot be omitted in thinking about the interactive construction of belonging.

2.7. Conclusion: Conceptualization of Belonging

Finally, I will outline how the concept of belonging is used in the specific context of this inquiry: It expresses the speakers’ identification as individuals and as a group in terms of (1) spatial, (2) social and (3) temporal categories, and in the dimension of shared practices in that group. From the deliberations in this chapter, this can be more productively conceptualized in the terms of belonging than in those of identity, even though identification processes are a crucial part of belonging constructions in interaction.

Spatial forms of attachment which can bind individuals together in groups entail shared relations to place, and may serve to underline their distinctiveness. In the data of this study, place is made relevant by speakers of the community as a marker of categorical place-belonging (= belonging to/*Zugehörigkeit*), and in this very function, also as relational device of shared experiences and memories (= belonging with/*Zusammengehörigkeit*).

Furthermore, belonging encompasses the individual’s dimension of being part of social groups (= belonging to/*Zugehörigkeit*). It hence signifies different memberships, whereby some can be more loose and temporary and some can be understood as more defining for an individual’s social categorization. Belonging also encompasses a dimension emphasizing shared knowledge, meanings and

practices (commonality), and interactions or mutual expectations (mutuality). Within this perspective, the making of groups as a process entailing more than just categorical sameness, but also practices, is envisioned (= belonging with/ *Zusammengehörigkeit*). This will be discussed in more detail in section 3.

The temporal dimension can relate social and spatial belonging dimensions to each other. For example, a speaker can arrange multiple belongings chronologically or can use time to relate a group to a place. Legitimizing the occupation of a specific place in terms of ‘we (social) have always (temporal) been here (spatial)’ elucidates this possible relation.³⁴ These spatial, social and temporal dimensions of belonging are linguistically constituted, negotiated and implicitly or explicitly articulated in interaction. How we can analytically live up to a concept of belonging as encompassing categories and practice that are articulated with linguistic means will be discussed in the following sections.

34 The relations between a group and place through time point to the concept of *autochthony*. The concept is discussed i.a. in Ceuppens & Geschiere (2005), Geschiere & Jackson (2006), Zenker (2011) as a label for communities who are (or claim to be) “historically longer in a place” than others, who are consequently *allochthonous*. The concept has recently been presented as a continuum between the two terms by Tacke (2015) and re-conceptualized within the possibility of *neo-autochthony* by Jungbluth (2017) and Savedra & Mazzelli-Rodrigues (2017). It will be revisited in chapter 9 of this book.

