Recent ideas concerning the development of self and identity have stressed the importance of moving away from an approach which is mainly concerned with outcomes, to one which focuses instead on processes of development and, more specifically, on a relational perspective on these processes. *Identity and Emotion* focuses on the individual development of identity and the processes involved. By working from emotions and a dynamic systems perspective the book offers a new and exciting approach to human identity and its development across the lifespan. The contributors to the book are specialists in this approach, and offer challenging ideas on the development of identity as a self-organizing process. The book offers a wealth of new ideas and insights, but also concentrates on the ways these insights can be translated into research.

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Identity and Emotion
Development through Self-Organization

eeded by
Harke A. Bosma and E. Saskia Kunnen
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Preface

Recent ideas concerning the development of self and identity have stressed the importance of moving away from an approach which is mainly concerned with outcomes, to one which focuses instead on processes of development and, more specifically, on a relational perspective on these processes. This change has also led to increased attention to the role of emotions in the development of self and identity. These developments offer new possibilities and challenges for theory and research. However, they also lead to new concerns and questions at a theoretical, as well as a methodological level.

In 1996, a workshop on the development of self and identity was organized with the explicit intention of focusing on these new trends. The main topics of the workshop were the conceptualization of the development of the person as an emotional, relational, and self-organizing process and the way in which such a dynamic conceptualization can be translated into empirical research employing methodological approaches which are adapted to the study of dynamic processes in self-stability and change.

During the intense and lively workshop discussions, new ideas were developed, and serious attempts were made to clarify and elaborate the development of self and identity as an inherently emotional process embedded within a relational context. This book can be seen as a next step in this discussion. Most of the contributors to this volume were participants in the workshop. Using the workshop discussions as a starting point, they were asked to elaborate their perspective both theoretically and methodologically. Their ideas and the comments provided by others reflect and extend the nature of the workshop discussions and provide an illustration of the self-organizing, dialogical, and open approach which is advocated in this volume.

In the organization of the original workshop and the preparation of this volume we have received considerable support from individuals and
organizations. Here we wish to express our gratitude for their help. The workshop was supported financially by the Dutch Science Foundation (NWO), the Association for Developmental Psychological Research, and the Departments of Developmental Psychology of the University of Utrecht and of the University of Groningen. The latter department provided additional help by paying for the transcription of the audio-taped workshop discussions. This was greatly appreciated since the resulting transcripts not only brought the workshop discussions back to mind, but also helped the authors to prepare their chapters for the book. The Departments of Developmental Psychology of Utrecht and Groningen Universities also gave financial support for the preparation of the book itself.

A variety of individuals provided us with essential help and we wish to express our deep thanks to each of them. Nel Wiersma transcribed the workshop discussions and also helped to abbreviate some of the contributions. Fiona Buiter corrected the English of the non-native authors. Leen Van Geert provided editorial assistance in the preparation of the manuscript in its final form. Their help was truly indispensable. We are also very grateful to our publishers, Catherine Max and Sarah Caro, for their trust in the project and the series editor Tony Manstead for his very careful and supportive review of the manuscript.

This book would never have been prepared without the enthusiastic and creative efforts of the presenters/authors. They all kept on schedule and conscientiously revised their texts on the basis of the feedback we provided. We are thankful (and proud) that they were all willing to share their scholarship in their contributions to the book. Finally, we want to give our special thanks to Matty Van der Meulen and Cor Van Halen, who helped us organize the workshop, who greatly contributed to the introductory and concluding chapters of the book, and who gave us the essential comradely support during times when the completion of the book seemed a distant prospect.

Harke A. Bosma and E. Saskia Kunnen