DIVERSITY AND DIFFERENCE

Studies in Subjectivation

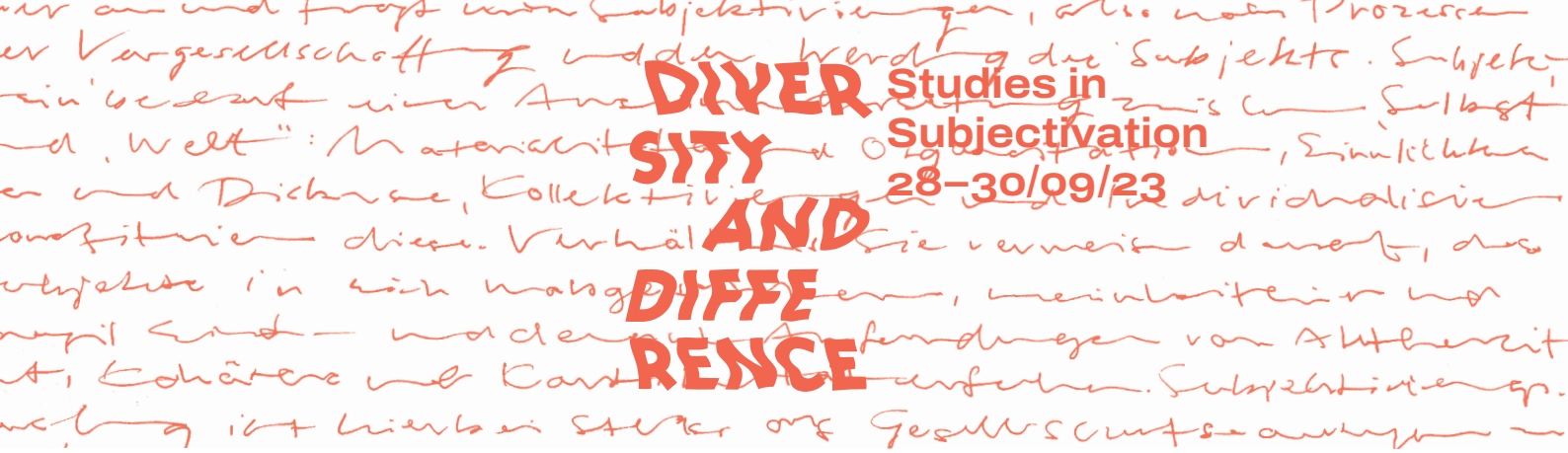
28–30/09/23
CAU Kiel

International conference of the
"Studies in Subjectivation" Working Group

Annual Meeting of the German Sociological Association (GSA's)
Biography Research Section

In cooperation with the GSA's
Sociology of Knowledge Section

CAU
Kiel University
Christian-Albrechts-Universität zu Kiel



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CALL FOR PAPERS

“Diversity” as a rallying buzzword crops up today in greatly varying contexts: to describe relations within societies, as a part of government programs and political manifestos, or as everyday practice in organizations. Referring to diversity is often intended to communicate a certain “openness” to categories of difference. Diverse actors positively reevaluate difference and distinctiveness, in processes where market interests and neoliberal programs also play crucial roles.

Diversity characterizes societies of the present. Some fight using the slogans “We’ll come united”, “Leave no one behind,” “Black lives matter”, and “Trans rights”. Others, however, experience diversity as a loss of control, which they counter with defense mechanisms, including an “us” versus “them” mindset.

Accordingly, demands for inclusion and integration are often interwoven with diffuse fears of “new identities” (Hall 1991), for example of refugees and migrants, but also of queer persons and queer ways of life. In turn, demarcation struggles and identitarian divisions with in social groups can arise from emphasizing difference, and can lead to “positional fundamentalism” (Villa-Braslavsky 2020).

The conference „Diversity and Difference – Studies in Subjectivation“ selects these points of departure to enquire about subjectivation, i.e., about processes of socialization and of “becoming a subject”. “Being a subject” requires a confrontation between “self” and “world”, a relation that is constituted from materialities and organizations, sensualities and discourses, collectivizations and individualizations. They flag up the fact that subjects are in themselves incomplete, non-uniform and fragile — and yet remain subject to demands for authenticity, coherence, and continuity.

Subjectivation research in this context can be understood as an analysis of society (Bosančić et al. 2022), with primacy given to questions of being governed, questions of power relations and exclusion mechanisms, questions of resistance, subversion and agency, and questions of participation and recognition. Within the context of diversity and difference, these foci raise perspectives regarding social inequalities, intersectional interweavings, privileges and disadvantages, discrimination and racism.

The conference “Diversity and Difference — Studies in Subjectivation” uses subjectivation research’s theoretical vocabulary and empirical approaches to investigate diversity and difference. How can perspectives on subjects and subjectivation, biographies and discourses, articulations and re-articulations, positionings and re-positionings become fruitful for critical social analysis in the context of diversity and difference?

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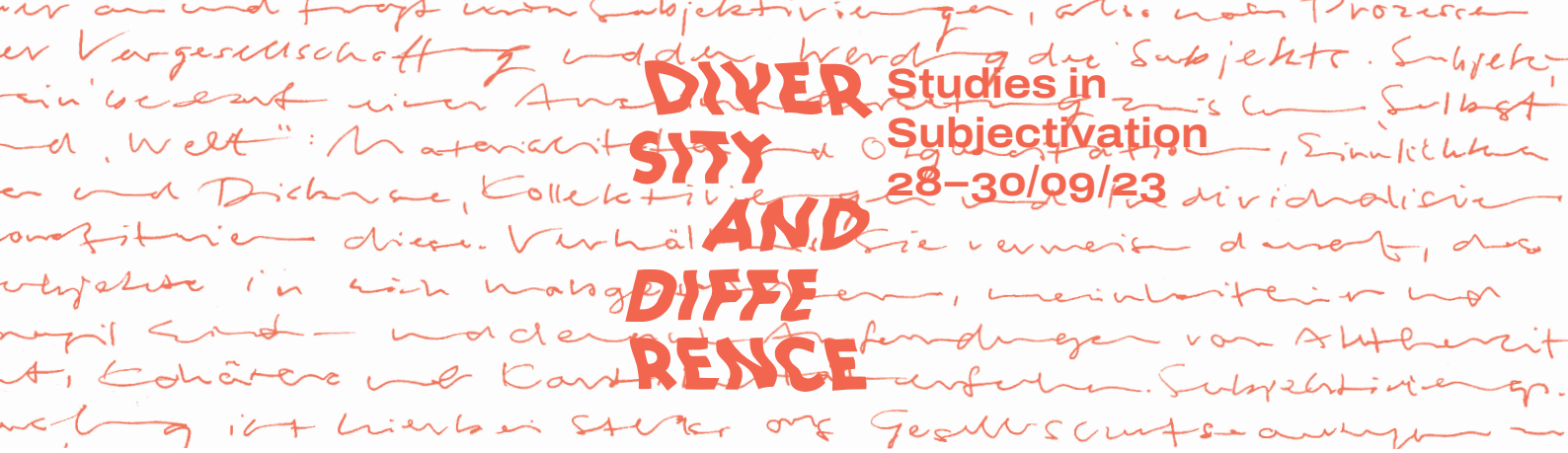

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We particularly encourage contributions containing feminist, post-/decolonial, diversity-sensitive perspectives on subjectivation research, alongside critiques of ableism and racism. We look forward to contributions ...

... that explore subjectivation(s) theoretically, analytically, and methodologically, **and which, in so doing, contribute to current societal developments.**

... that discuss the concept of the subject in the context of diversity. **Which tendencies towards appropriating and rejecting diversity can we observe? How can we cognize a resistant and subversive subject, capable of action? How does this relate to a post-identitarian subject? And how can we connect such an understanding of the subject with other scholarship on hegemony, performativity, and normality?**

... that deal with the incompleteness and non-uniformity of subjects **and simultaneously account for demands of authenticity, biographicity and coherence.**

... that explore the perspective of subjectivation regarding interpretative methods, **or which enquire into possible perspectives and extensions of interpretative research in the context of subjectivation, so as to explore diversity and difference and to avoid othering in the research process.**

... presenting empirical results and thereby indicating fields of research and policies **in which subjectivation research can provide transversal and subversive insights, which are critical of racism and ableism. In which relations of domination and solidarity are subjects located, and how are they integrated into these relations? What role do institutions, "normalizing" social and political orders, and knowledge about "the others" play in this context?**

› We invite you to submit **abstracts of max. 500 words** in German or in English. Please state which language or languages you would like to present your paper in. Please send your abstract including a short **biographical note** (max. 100 words) and **contact information** in a **PDF attachment by January 31th, 2023** to: *diversity-and-difference@email.uni-kiel.de*

› There will be **childcare** available during the conference. When submitting your abstract, please indicate whether you would like to take advantage of this.

› The conference should be as accessible as possible to people with disabilities. Please let us know **your requirements** so that we can take them into account.

Contact persons before and during the conference:

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