

# Workshop – Call for contributions

26-27 March 2024

## **The trouble with identity and belonging:**

### **What do we talk about when we talk about identity?**

The relationship of identity and belonging has been discussed for a long time. This is true not only for (social) psychology but also for social and cultural studies. From a (social) psychological perspective, identity defines our existence as individual human beings (personal identity) but also as members of human collectives (social identity). According to this, our personal identity entails significant individual consequences, such as self-awareness, legal rights and responsibilities or moral commitments. On the other hand, our personal identity is inseparable from our being as members of societies and their various groups. In this view, personal and social identities are co-constitutive: identities are socially constructed, whereas social groups and categories cannot exist without individuals. According to many (e. g. post-structuralist) scholars, it is even impossible to forge a “true” sense of personal identity and individuality without simultaneously engaging in social interactions and acquiring a sense of social identity defined by our belonging to certain groups (cf. Butler 1990, Foucault 1978). Belonging relates to identity in various ways and can be analyzed on different levels, including social locations (constructed along multiple axes of difference), individuals’ identifications and personal attachments (including both emotional investments and behavioural practices), and ethical/political value systems with which people judge their own and others’ belonging(s) (cf. Yuval-Davis 2006, 2011). These are linked to legal forms of membership and recognition, privileges and disadvantages, inclusion and exclusion. Identity and belonging can be voluntary or forced, dynamic and contested, stable and transient, but are always intersectional.

While personal identity is a subject of long-term debates predominantly in philosophy, (social) psychology, pedagogics, political sciences and sociology as disciplines dominate the study of social identity. Other disciplines with different approaches, especially from the social sciences and humanities, illuminate various aspects of both social and personal identity by focusing on such aspects as cultural or political identity and processes of identification. This workshop aims to bring together representatives of various disciplines and approaches to engage in an inter-

or rather transdisciplinary dialogue on the question of identity and belonging and their relationship to each other. What do we talk about when we talk about identity within and across disciplines/approaches? How do various disciplines/approaches view the processes through which we simultaneously situate ourselves as unique individuals and forge our sense of belonging to various communities and groups? Regarding “identity politics”: What does it mean that more and more people fight for recognition of their ‘own’ identity? What is the meaning of “identity politics” and which types of identity politics are subject to which kinds of critique?

We are keen to hear from as many disciplines and approaches as possible, including those where identity is not necessarily a focal point of study but an important background element (e.g., law, history or geography), and invite different perspectives on the questions raised. The goal is to discuss concepts of identity and belonging through an equity lens, contributing to ENLIGHT’s flagship domain of equity. We welcome submissions from scholars of all career stages.

Please submit an abstract of 300 words accompanied by a 100 words bio in a single word document to [identityworkshop@uni-goettingen.de](mailto:identityworkshop@uni-goettingen.de) by 15 November 2023.

Decisions will be communicated by 20 January 2024.

The workshop is jointly organized by Prof Dr Andrea D. Bührmann and Elena Futter-Buck from the University of Göttingen and Dr Ekaterina Yahyaoui Krivenko from the University of Galway. We are seeking financial support for the workshop from ENLIGHT. If we succeed, there will be no fee for participating in the workshop, but we are unable to fund any travel-related expenses for participants. The workshop will be held in a hybrid format: in person in Göttingen and online. However, we strongly prefer in-person presence to facilitate discussion and dialogue.



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