

Call for Paper for a thematic issue of the Österreichische Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaften (OeZG)

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Women's Movements and Formations of Knowledge – Political and Epistemic Practices

Feminism as a widely used term of the late 20th century refers to both a political agenda and a formation of knowledge. This multiple meaning is not least due to the dynamic connection between the burgeoning women's movements and the establishment of women's and gender studies as an academic discipline. Researchers of the field repeatedly commented on the productive, if conflictive, character of this relationship. Historically, however, these closely entangled political and epistemic practices are not a new phenomenon. Rather, they can also be shown in the context of the women's movements of various political orientations emerging and gaining public attention in many industrialised countries and in a number of countries of the global South in the late 19th century. Many of their protagonists regarded the practice of producing and circulating differentiated corpora of knowledge (e.g. on the living conditions of women from different classes, on gender-specific laws, but also regarding movements in other countries) as an important means of political struggle.

The tension between the political aims of a movement and academic claims to validity can also be demonstrated for women's movements around 1900, although their knowledge was mainly produced outside academia, from which women were excluded. Thus, conflicting dynamics between political demands and knowledge practices have characterised the strategies of women's movements to frame and launch various social and political issues since the late 19th century. In disputes about positions, strategies and claims, self-historicisation also often becomes a strategic tool.

The relationship between science and politics has long been a topic of research. However, diachronic narratives and national histories of liberation and professionalisation have often dominated the analysis, and references to political structures and events often only served as additional information. This not only promotes a problematic methodological nationalism, but can also lead to teleological, immanent narratives lacking synchronic and transnational context. Although the interconnections between political strategies and knowledge production strategies are mentioned quite frequently, they rarely become the main object of research. Therefore, we believe the particular relationships and connections between history, knowledge, and science to be worthy of further and close analysis.

The OeZG issue on the entanglements between political strategies and epistemic interconnections plans to combine and reassess earlier approaches to knowledge formations and politics by concentrating on the case of women's movements and feminisms in the 19th and 20th centuries. Exemplary studies that also include transnational, imperial and colonial contexts should open up new perspectives on parallel developments and historical backgrounds and help analyse interrelations between political contexts, knowledge production and circulation, and the inclusion of knowledge corpora into political discourses. Among other things, this will offer a fresh look at the connections between the introduction of empirical social studies, the establishment of sociology as a discipline, und transnational feminist engagement.

Two goals are linked to this approach: first the inside views of diachronic movement histories should be differentiated synchronically and linked to transnational networks. This will, secondly, allow a fuller integration of women's movement histories into political histories and histories of

knowledge. We are looking forward to proposals for articles on interdependencies between knowledge practices and political practices, e. g. one of the following questions and related topics:

Synchronic relationships between academia and politics – what were the particular reference points between feminist engagement, the contemporary production of knowledge, and political events?

Intertextual relationships between various historiographies on women's movements – how did the authors produce and present this knowledge, what academic and journalistic epistemes did they use?

History as a resource of movements – which practices of historicisation did political activists use?

Length of contributions: 55.000 characters (including spaces and footnotes).
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