Call for Papers

Pass on. Generational transfers of wealth from the 16th to the 20th century

Bolzano/Bozen, 26–28 October 2023

Since the debate on social inequality has again intensified during recent years, the question of wealth transfer from one generation to another has become even more contested. Inheritance in particular has gained in topicality as a socially relevant issue and is also intensively discussed in the historical sciences: in historical kinship and family research, gender history, social history and material culture research.

The conference takes up this thread of discussion and assumes that access to and disposal of property and wealth were fundamental factors of economic and social positioning. These positionings, the opportunities and perspectives associated with them, but also restrictions, burdens and obligations were largely passed on within the family. Generational transfers of wealth were therefore not private transactions but were framed politically and legally and played a significant role in shaping social power relations, especially gender relations.

The conference focuses on the legal and practical implications of generational wealth transfers and broadens the view in several respects: firstly, all forms of generational wealth transfer are of interest: Inheritance, transfer *inter vivos*, donation, inheritance ab intestato or by means of a will, transfer of rights of use, management functions, guardianships, leases and fiefdoms, but also intra-family purchases and sales. Attention will be paid to the different types of property, ranging from a prayer book or jewellery, houses/farms and land ownership to entailed estates and entire territories. In particular, the interplay of different generational modes of transfer will be discussed.

The transmission of wealth between generations not only affects and models the relationship between parents and children but also that between siblings. Therefore, secondly, it is necessary to examine competitions and alliances as well as the intertwining of vertical and horizontal logics and related family configurations. Thirdly, inheritance law is specifically related to the respective marital property law, which must also be taken into account in order to understand intra-family property transfers in their complexity.

Legal possibilities, the question of who was able to use them and how, and how the law was circumvented or instrumentalised in order to enforce particular interests always takes centre stage. In addition to legal foundations, which could differ depending on the type of property, the focus is on the

practices and strategies implemented in the families. In order to be able to transfer assets, one had to have the power of disposal over them, and this was very often disputed. Unsuccessful transfers of assets can also be a topic, as can conflicts, challenges and settlements. The exploration of repertoires of action and potential for conflict, as well as conflicts that were actually fought out and the search for strategies to solve them, reveal the social and life-world logics and spaces for action of historical actors.

The conference is organised in conjunction with the international network "Gender Differences in the History of European Legal Cultures" and in the context of the research project "Noble Siblings. Wealth Arrangements and Social Configurations".

Organisers:

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26-28 October 2023, Free University of Bozen-Bolzano

Deadline: 31 March 2023

Conference languages are German, English and Italian with simultaneous translation into English.

Please send a topic proposal (1 page/300 words) and a short CV in the chosen conference language by 31 March 2023 to:

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