

## [The Emergence of Gendered Power Structures since Early Modern Times: Practices, Norms, Media](#)

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Call for Papers

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### **International, interdisciplinary conference at Philipps-University, Marburg/Germany, November 23 to 25, 2022**

The conference aims at analyzing configurations of gendered power relations from the early modern era to the present from an interdisciplinary perspective. The focus will be on these relations' transformations and how they have been renegotiated and revised regarding the interwoven analytical levels of medialization, normative frames, and social practices. Correlations between transformation and change will be examined as well as formations of traditions and the development of historicizing narratives employed to legitimize gendered relations of power, including the justification of state power through naturalizing gender discourses.

Since the late 15<sup>th</sup> century, discursive and social practices as well as media representations of power, sovereignty, and gender can be observed in relation to contemporary processes of early state formation, which aim at a specific consolidation and expansion of hierarchical gender orders. Throughout the centuries, strategies to legitimize specific power relations have employed above all historically grown traditions in their argumentation, the powerful impact of which allegedly shows in the *longue durée*. An analytical focus on continuities, however, threatens to obscure historical ruptures as well as reinterpretations and reframings of earlier media representations. Inconsistencies and conflicts between norms and social practices are also likely to fall from view. Therefore, the interdisciplinary research network »Gender, Power Relations, and the State« in cooperation with the Center for Gender Studies and Feminist Future Studies (UMR) and the Center for Media and Interactivity (JLU Gießen) will host an international and interdisciplinary two-day conference in Marburg/Germany on November 23-25, 2022, to examine the power relations at work in the construction, dissemination, and persistence of such narratives and to analyze their interrelations with social practices, processes of standardization, and media representations.

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Titled »The Emergence of Gendered Power Structures since Early Modern Times: Practices, Norms, Media«, the conference aims to study the interdependent web of tensions between gender, power relations, and the state across centuries. Transformations, renegotiations, and revisionings in specific configurations of gendered power will be brought into focus. The intersection of institutionalizations of state power with naturalizing gender discourses specific to the respective epochs will be problematized from the angles of manifold disciplinary approaches to gender studies. In doing so, a progress- and modernization-oriented master narrative of increasing gender equality will be confronted with the limitations and closures of a scope of opportunities and possibilities to women through processes of formalization and legalization in the course of state formation until the twenty-first century. Such an interdisciplinary and transepochal merging and further developing of existing analytical approaches and perspectives has not yet been attempted. The organizers assume that such an interdisciplinary and historically profound synopsis along the analytical levels of social practices, normative frames, and medializations will bring to light distinct continuities, either in the form of an 'invention of tradition' (Hobsbawm 2019) which facilitates the legitimization of (transformed) social practices, or in the form of constructions of continuities on the level of media representations of gendered power relations.

On November 23, 2022, the conference opens with an evening lecture by the Alice H. Cook Professor of Sociology and member of the Gender and Women's Studies Department, Myra Marx Ferree (University of Wisconsin/Madison). On November 24 and 25, three sessions of three panels each are scheduled to respectively highlight the leading categories of gender, power relations, and state. Each session will open with one keynote. Helen Watanabe O'Kelly (Oxford), Claudia Ulbrich (FU Berlin), and Birgit Sauer (Vienna) have already confirmed their participation.

We invite proposals from various disciplines from the humanities and social sciences for 20-minute papers, which look at the intersections of social practices, normative frames, and medializations at work in the formation of gendered power structures and their embeddedness in historically specific dynamics and constellations, with a particular view on Europe and North America. Papers may focus on one of the periods set above (e.g., the early modern era or the nineteenth to the twenty-first centuries) or adopt a transepochal approach. Intersectional, transcultural, and postcolonial perspectives are particularly welcome. Proposals might deal with but are not limited to the following questions:

- How are gender, power, and/or state conceptualized in historically specific constellations? And how do contemporary theoretical approaches relate to these conceptions?
- How are gendered power relations represented in literature and art?
- Can tensions and discrepancies (e.g., in the case of female rulers) be observed between self-fashioning and ascriptions based on time-specific conceptions of gender?
- How do social and political changes emerge from the interplays of social practices,

normative frames, and media representations?

- Are conceptions of state and statehood explicitly or implicitly contingent on time-specific knowledge about gender?
- Are revolutions and processes of governmental transformation accompanied or paralleled by changes in gender relations?
- Can recurrences of early modern configurations of gendered power relations or their media representations be detected in present culture, politics, literature, and art?
- Where, in what form, and to what end is the history of gender staged as a history of progress? How can those narratives be challenged critically?
- How can those gender relations prone to violence be analyzed as manifestations of cultural habits derived from collective patterns of thought and behavior?

Please submit a 300-word abstract and a short biographical note to [gms@uni-marburg.de](mailto:gms@uni-marburg.de) by **January 15, 2022**. Notifications will be sent by early February 2022. The conference organizers intend to grant travel allowances; applications for funding are pending.

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