



FRI Schweizerisches Institut
für feministische Rechtswissenschaft
und Gender Law

FRI institut suisse d'études
juridiques féministes et gender law

FRI istituto svizzero per scienze
giuridiche femministe e gender law

FRI Swiss institute for feminist legal
studies and gender law

* Call for papers *

The FRI invites you to submit a contribution for presentation at the conference

Wom*n's suffrage and democracy: mechanisms of (in)justice

Conference for Gender Law 2021

9-10 September 2021, University of Fribourg

In 2021, Swiss women can look back on 50 years of political rights. This act of democracy is an opportunity for celebration. The history of the injustice perpetrated towards women has to be analysed and interrogated. We are interested in the legal, political and societal mechanisms that held back the introduction of women's suffrage at national level for so long.

Embedded in a broad democracy discourse, this anniversary conference in 2021 aims to celebrate the more democratic Switzerland and at the same time provide an appropriate account from feminist and gender studies perspective of past infringements of rights. In addition, we wish to address current questions concerning the impact of absent or existing political rights (e.g. voting rights for foreigners, right to vote from the age of 16) and open the room up for utopian, activist or international models.

The legal exclusion of women was accompanied by numerous forms of paternalism (for example, in marriage and employment), pathologisation or criminalisation. The path to legal equality of the sexes in Switzerland was and remains difficult. Only today, we have to take a closer look. For example, in Swiss migration policy, what counts are high levels of qualification (and the corresponding professional experience in higher positions), financial resources and mobility. Or, in employment, it is evident that there is intersectional discrimination of women with disabilities or who are Muslim. These are all areas in which women continue to be structurally disadvantaged. Equality irrespective of origin, race, sex, age, language, social position, family form, religious, philosophical or political belief as well as irrespective of sexual orientation and gender identity and physical, mental or psychological disability is often absent.

Call

For your contribution you can choose between the following presentation formats:

- Paper
- Panel input (15 minutes & participation in public discussion)
- Poster

Please send us **an abstract of no more than 2000 characters by 30 November 2020** together with the following information

- Presentation format (e.g. panel input, poster & paper or paper / poster only)
- Panel theme
- Title of your contribution
- Name(s) of contributor(s)
- Your institution or field of work

to: fri.conference@genderlaw.ch

The FRI's *Grouped Meteor* (board) will make its selection on the basis of the abstracts submitted and contact you by mid-December 2020. Panel inputs and posters must be submitted by 15 August 2021. These are needed to prepare the conference panels and, if you wish to be included, also the 2021 anniversary publication. Final versions of contributions for publication must be submitted by 15 December 2021. You are welcome to combine different forms of contribution (e.g. panel input and paper).

Conference languages

You can choose between German, French and English.

Law and other disciplines

The conference intends to focus on legal issues. Contributions will be accepted from all disciplines which address examples, findings and mechanisms of (in)justice.¹

We welcome contributions from academics, practitioners and activists from around the world. In particular, we wish to encourage **individuals at the start of their career** to submit a contribution.

Four thematic panels

We have organised the conference around four specific themes and have invited a keynote speaker for each one. The invitees have all agreed to speak. We are therefore interested in panel inputs, contributions for publication or poster presentations in the following four areas.

¹ The FRI conference was developed in cooperation with the Swiss Association for Gender Studies (SAGS) which is holding a conference on 26-27 November 2021 at the University of Zurich entitled "Wom*n's suffrage and democracy: critique, memory, visions". The FRI and SAGS conferences complement each other but have their own specific thematic emphases.

1) 50 years of political wom*n's rights in Switzerland

Keynote: [Professor Emeritus Brigitte Studer](#), [Professor Judith Wyttenbach](#) and [University of Bern](#)

*Authors of a new study on the issue of the history of wom*n's suffrage in Switzerland (in progress), commissioned by the FRI.*

The first panel is dedicated to critical analyses from legal and historical perspectives of the lengthy refusal of wom*n's political rights in Switzerland. Questions to be examined include:

- Why did it take so long in Switzerland for women to acquire the right to vote and be elected?
- What was different in other countries?
- Are there historically interesting examples of (legal) activism or prominent actors in wom*n's rights issues?
- Are there particular differences between the progressive cantons of French-speaking Switzerland and the cantons of central Switzerland that were particularly backward on this issue?
- How can the legal and political exclusions of wom*n in Switzerland and worldwide be understood as injustice?
- What political and societal mechanisms of legal exclusion can be historically discerned and be seen to repeat themselves?

2) From wom*n's rights to intersectionality

Keynote: [Carmen Diop](#), PhD candidate, [University of Paris 8](#)

"North/South power relations reinforce relations of gender, class and even caste". Carmen Diop's research is dedicated to the self-image and career paths of black women and investigates the complexity of hidden dimensions to their societal and professional experiences.

The second panel is dedicated to critical analyses from legal, social and historical perspectives of the lengthy refusal of wom*n's political rights. Questions to be examined include:

- What developments have feminist, queer, intersectional and postcolonial perspectives initiated?
- What are the central issues that remain?
- What role does intersectionality play in feminism in Switzerland and worldwide?
- Are there examples of successful intersectional solutions to legal problems?
- Black women's studies are more important than ever - is that a step back or a step forward?
- What happens if we dispense with the category of "sex" in law?
- How can the environment, future generations and non-human life be included, alongside self-determined work and fair economic structures, in political visions of democracy?

3) Gender rights from the perspective of legal and democratic theory

Keynote: [Professor Elisabeth Holzleithner, University of Vienna, Institute for Legal Philosophy](#)

Author of the standard text introducing legal gender studies "Recht Macht Geschlecht" (2002)

The third panel is dedicated to the legal theory and philosophical discourses by which wom*n's political rights were refused, in particular the discourse of democracy. Questions to be examined include:

- How was and is the political exclusion or inclusion of wom*n in the 20th century analysed and reflected in legal theory?
- What developments have feminist, queer, intersectional and postcolonial perspectives initiated?
- How can the legal and political exclusion of wom*n in Switzerland and worldwide be understood as injustice?
- Is it not a step backwards to return to a discourse of injustice?
- What understanding of democracy can be developed through critical perspectives on historical and current exclusions?
- And what are the utopias of political participation and exclusion?
- What roles are played in this democracy discourse by newer issues such as the environment, animal rights or intergenerational justice?

4) Exclusion and activism

Keynote: [Dr Sara R. Farris, senior lecturer, Goldsmiths \(London\)](#)

Author of "In the Name of Women's Rights: The Rise of Femonationalism" (2017)

The fourth panel is dedicated to current legal exclusions and activist approaches. Questions to be examined include:

- What legal exclusions are the burning issues of today and what are the parallels and intersections with the exclusion of wom*n?
- How have protest forms changed through feminism? What movements have remained (e.g. strikes) and why?
- To what extent do paternalism and criminalisation still function today as classic power instruments? (e.g. rules on prostitution)
- Is a right to vote for foreigners a utopia in Switzerland? In what countries does this right already exist?
- What legal and political approaches exist for dealing with hetero-cis-sexism?
- What is happening with burka prohibitions and compulsory masks in times of corona?
- Phenomena such as rainbow cities or the marche mondiale are also of interest.