

CALL FOR PAPERS

Contested Democracies – Gender Studies as Studies of Democracy (Special Issue 7)

Liberal democracy is, by now, widely diagnosed as being in profound political crisis. The impossible-to-ignore rise of right-wing authoritarian forces has prompted calls from civil society and institutions alike to defend and protect democracy. From the perspective of (intersectional) gender studies, this prompts a series of questions: What does democracy actually mean across different contexts? Which democracy should be defended, by whom, and under what conditions? After all, the idea and practice of democratic social organization have always been contested. The democratic ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity have never been applied to everyone and are still shaped by structural power relations rooted, for example, in patriarchal, colonial, racist, anti-Semitic and capitalist rationalities. Right-wing authoritarian forces can thus make use of the inequalities and relations of domination inherent in liberal democracies.

Against this backdrop, this special issue explores ways to revitalize and democratize democratic systems, examining the specific contribution that (intersectional) gender studies can provide. In doing so, the special issue also asks what democracy itself might come to mean when approached from this perspective. We welcome both theory-based and empirical contributions to this issue.

Possible questions/research topics in detail

- Historical or contemporary examples of the (de)democratization of gender and sexual policies.
- Intersectional analyses of anti-democratic media and communication strategies, as well as counterstrategies.
- The impact of current anti-democratic tendencies in educational contexts, civil society and professional practices, and ways of addressing them.
- Conceptual or empirically based studies that highlight emancipatory potential beyond the mere defence of what has already been achieved, e.g.:
 - in the (everyday) lives of those who have been under attack by anti-democratic, anti-feminist and authoritarian forces;
 - in struggles over the social and material conditions of democratic participation, or in concepts and practices of historical and political education.
- Discussion of pre-figurative trans* and/or queer and/or feminist practices, ways of relating, and concrete utopias as a democratization of the possibilities for gendered and sexual ways of being, loving and desiring.
- Analysis of the gaps and ambivalences in concepts of democracy (and democratic theory), such as equality or democratic protest, caused by colonialism, patriarchy, etc.
- A democratic and gender-based synthesis of concepts and practices such as care, social rights, the commons, and sustainability.

Procedure and timetable

- Please submit a one- to two-page abstract by **18 October 2026**. Non-German speakers are welcome to submit their articles in English.
- Please send your proposal as well as your manuscript as Word file to: manuskripte@gender-zeitschrift.de (subject: **Special issue „Contested Democracies“**).
- Once your abstract has been assessed and judged suitable for this issue, you will receive an invitation to submit. Notifications of acceptance will be sent by **1 November 2026**. The deadline for submission of the final manuscript is **4 April 2027**.
- Manuscripts must not exceed **50,000 characters (including space characters)**. A style sheet for authors is available at www.gender-zeitschrift.de/en/manuscripts.

All submissions will be reviewed in our double-blind peer review process based on which the final selection of contributions to be published will be made. The editors may give instructions to revise the contribution, which is the rule rather than the exception. In case of a high number of positively peer-reviewed contributions, the Editorial Department reserves the right to make a final selection of articles and to publish some contributions in a later issue.

About GENDER. Journal for Gender, Culture and Society

GENDER. Journal for Gender, Culture and Society was founded in 2009 as a journal on women and gender studies. The journal aims to cover a wide range of topics and academic disciplines in which gender issues are reflected. Given the journal's multi-disciplinary setting, we welcome analyses from, for instance, sociology, educational science, political science, cultural science and history which correspond to the interdisciplinary nature of gender studies. GENDER is published in three issues a year. Contributions to the free section are always welcome, irrespective of the focus of the special issue.

Do you have any questions?

For further topic-related information please contact the editors of the special issue: **Prof. Dr. Christina Brüning** (brueninc@uni-marburg.de) **Dr. Funda Hülagü** (funda.huelaguedemirbilek@staff.uni-marburg.de) **Prof. Dr. Mike Laufenberg** (mike.laufenberg@sw.hs-fulda.de), **Dr. phil. Johanna Leinius** (leinius@em.uni-frankfurt.de), and **Dr. Inga Nüthen** (nuethen@uni-kassel.de).

For questions on formal issues and work flow please contact the editorial team of GENDER (redaktion@gender-zeitschrift.de).

Please note: Manuscript submissions only via manuskripte@gender-zeitschrift.de