

Women and Gender in German and Austrian Environmental Movements

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The focus of this study is on women's environmental histories – more specifically, on women and gender in the (conservation and) environmental movements from the 19th century to the present. Spatially, the study focuses on the German-speaking world, where the role of women in the environmental movement from a historical perspective has been a major research gap so far.

The study focuses primarily on women, but placed in a gendered context. The project aims at a broader, non-binary view on the relations between women and men, sexualities, and the dynamics of gender. In this way, the research project fits into the field of the “Frauen- und Geschlechtergeschichte” (Engl. “Women’s and Gender History”).

It is thus a central goal of this research project to locate women and their biographies as actors in European, specifically German-speaking, environmental history and to give them a voice in the form of a collective biographical approach.

It is a study, which takes in view women with different (social, economic, ethnic, cultural, etc.) backgrounds. For a comprehensive history of the environmental movements, it is therefore indispensable to foreground the significance of still often unmentioned women and at the same time to ask about the significance and intersections of diverse variables such as gender, class, education, etc. in their lives and achievements. Thus, adding value to both women's and environmental history.

For environmental history, this study is a necessary and enriching research that can contribute to a fuller understanding of the history of environmental movements, which up to now has been a male-dominated one. In this way, gaps and blind spots can be illuminated, and the unperceived made visible.

Furthermore, it seems worthwhile for contemporary debates as well as for the historically comprehensive reappraisal of environmental protection movements and their political development (e.g., EU politics) to systematically examine them from a transregional and transnational perspective – with a specifically European location in a global dimension.