

# Archiving Feminist Grassroots Media<sup>1</sup>

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## Introduction: Documenting women's history

Feminist archives have an important task in passing on women's history, particularly in documenting and increasing the visibility of the women's movement and lesbian history and politics. From the 1970s on, a broad infrastructure of feminist archives and libraries has emerged which were designed to be both centers for up-to-date information within the women's movement as well as an infrastructure to support academic feminist research.<sup>2</sup> To do this, feminist media, especially magazines, are an important part of the collections of feminist archives and libraries because they are a substantial and dynamic source of current issues, political practices, and theoretical discussions.

As staff members of STICHWORT – the Archives of Women's and Lesbians' Movements in Vienna, which manages an extensive collection of "independent" feminist media – we will provide an overview of feminist grassroots media in Austria, focusing in particular on the accessibility and preservation of feminist media in feminist archives. We will analyze structures and developments within feminist media production in Austria from its beginnings in the 1970s up to now and give an insight into the thematic developments of the first two decades of the women's movement. We will also set a special focus on lesbian media. As only a few distinctly lesbian magazines have been published in Austria over the years, we will consider a wider range of lesbian media from German-speaking countries.

## Feminist grassroots media in women's and lesbian archive collections

Feminist media, particularly magazines, are an important part of the collections of feminist archives and libraries. From the perspective of women's archives, feminist media are a substantial and dynamic source of informa-

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<sup>1</sup> An earlier and extended version of this paper has been published in *Interface: a journal for and about social movements*, volume 2 (2) (November 2010) in English and German ([www.interfacejournal.net](http://www.interfacejournal.net)). The data have been updated in 2011 for this article.

<sup>2</sup> The umbrella organization of women's/lesbian archives, libraries, and documentation centers, i.d.a <[www.ida-dachverband.de](http://www.ida-dachverband.de)>, provides an overview of these feminist archives and libraries, their special collections, and services.

tion on current issues, political practices, and theoretical discussions. They reflect the differentiation and developments of feminist movements, strategies, and concepts as well as the different societal, political, and cultural contexts. Because of this, feminist media are important as sources of up-to-date information in women's archives, on one hand, and as valuable historical resources for research on the Women's Movement on the other. Thus, their preservation and accessibility is a crucial task for feminist archives. (Geiger and Hauser 2008)

With the international abundance of feminist magazines and newsletters since the beginning of the second-wave women's movements, feminist movements have been forming spaces and structures of (counter) public spheres. Places for communication and action offer space for the unfolding of feminist discourses while building frameworks for discussions between women, for processing experiences and developing theories, for collective learning processes and self-directed development of feminist strategies and perspectives for action.<sup>3</sup> Feminist media serve as both a means to information, communication, and discussion within the movement, as well as a means to self-determined expression to the "outside."<sup>4</sup>

The diversity, difference, and international circulation of feminist print media make it difficult to establish a clear definition of the "feminist magazine" genre. The spectrum of feminist magazines reaches from the small group media of individual projects and initiatives for a limited target audience to feminist "mass media" with a relatively high circulation and a stronger commercial orientation (such as *Emma* in Germany or *Ms.* in the USA), from basic informational pamphlets to sophisticated magazines and extensive scholarly periodicals, from short-lived attempts lasting only a few issues to well-established magazines with over twenty years of history. It includes both the local women's newspaper and the international newsletter, thematically broad and specialist magazines with a narrow focus, and a wide array of lesbian media. In addition to that, newsletters distributed via e-mail – published solely online or in parallel to a print version – and online ezines have been included since the end of the nineties.

Their accessibility and preservation is essential to retracing feminist discourses and developments in the movement's history. At the same time, the documentation of feminist newspapers is highly demanding due to the magazines' diversity, decentralized organization, high fluctuation, and often independently organized production methods.

Only the larger Austrian feminist media – *AUF*, *An.schläge*, [*sic!*] – are archived at the national libraries, while smaller, regional pamphlets are often missing, despite the principle of legal deposit. Foreign feminist magazines, including "large" ones like *Emma*, *Courage*, or *Ms.*, are only sporadically present.<sup>5</sup> In Germany the situation appears to be slightly different.

3 See: Gruppe feministischer Öffentlichkeit 1992, Klaus 1994, Geiger 2002a.

4 On the functions of feminist magazines see Geiger 2001, 2002b, Sussemichel et al. 2008.

5 The situation of scholarly periodicals is different; here the university establishment of women's and gender research has also been reflected in the acquisition policy of academic libraries.

Smaller local media from the autonomous women's movement are at least partially included in German university libraries. Feminist archives and libraries, however, map the entire spectrum of women's and lesbian movement magazine production in German-speaking countries in their holdings and also maintain the most important titles from other countries.

STICHWORT maintains the most extensive collection of independent women's and lesbian magazines in Austria. The archive of the women's and lesbian movement currently encompasses a total of over 730 titles and over 60 current subscriptions. The goal of the collection is to maintain the most complete documentation possible of independent feminist magazine production in Austria from the beginning of the 1970s to the present. This also includes small informational pamphlets and periodicals of which only one issue was published. Presently the index holds 204 Austrian titles, 49 of which are current. The international collection (more than 500 titles from 47 countries, 200 of which are from German-speaking countries) provides insight into the diversity of feminist and lesbian magazine production worldwide, in spite of its necessarily cursory character. Gaps in the collection are constantly being filled through active exchange between feminist archives and private donations. One of the special characteristics of the STICHWORT collection, as well as independent feminist archives in general, lies in the value attributed to "small" media. In order to maintain the most complete movement documentation possible, spontaneous publications and those produced with simple means are also documented. As many of them were published by short-lived women's groups active in a small field, they may have only come out once or twice. *Significance* is defined here through the focus on movement documentation according to criteria different from that of the state facilities.

Other feminist publication collectors in Austria are the *AUF* magazine archives (with almost 50 titles, about half of which are in German, including many older collections), the *ArchFem* archives in Innsbruck, and the *FEMAIL* archives in Feldkirch, all of which are limited to Austrian and German-language titles. The *AEP* library in Innsbruck and *DOKU Graz* maintain smaller collections.<sup>6</sup> *Frauensolidarität* has been collecting and documenting magazines and newsletters as a library and documentation center for women and the "third world" since 1993–94. It primarily focuses on countries in the global south, with more publications being produced in Asia and Latin America than in Africa, but also material from the "north" that deals with issues relating to women from the south and international women's issues. They are recorded in an online database ([www.centrum3.at/bibliothek/](http://www.centrum3.at/bibliothek/)) and also partially in the catalogue of the Österreichische Bibliotheksverbund, a network of Austrian libraries.

The larger Austrian feminist magazines, such as *AUF*, *an.schläge*, [sic!], *Frauensolidarität* or *fiber* are also found in feminist archives outside the country.

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6 In 2011 the *AUF* magazine archive was given to STICHWORT; the magazine collections of *ArchFem* and *DOKU Graz* went to STICHWORT and other (feminist) archives and libraries at the end of 2011.

The largest collections of feminist publications in Germany are at the *Women's Research, Education, and Information Center – FFBIZ* in Berlin (with 924 titles), the *Archiv der deutschen Frauenbewegung* in Kassel (1,140), the *FrauenMediaTurm* in Cologne (976), the feminist archive *ausZeiten* in Bochum (816), and the *Spinnboden* in Berlin (over 1,600), which is focused on lesbian publications. In Switzerland the *schema* f library in Zurich holds the most significant collection. *Cid-femmes* in Luxembourg possesses all of the country-specific and regional titles.<sup>7</sup>

In order to make magazine collections of the lesbian/women's archives and libraries in German-speaking countries visible and also to document them in traditional catalogues, the data are being gradually entered into the ZDB, the world's largest magazine database, located at the Berlin State Library, through a collaborative project from *i.d.a. Dachverband*.<sup>8</sup> Many titles are being introduced to a broader public for the first time through this. At the same time, attention is being drawn to feminist archives and libraries as collection centers. In October 2009 more than 2,000 different feminist titles from the first-wave and second-wave women's movements were recorded in the ZDB, including both grassroots and scholarly publications. Currently over half of the magazine collections from the 20 facilities participating in the project have been documented in the ZDB.

The plan for the future is that all magazine titles in the *i.d.a.* facilities will be presented together on the organization's website. No solution is currently in sight to deal with the growing importance of online media and web 2.0 technologies; both the personnel and technological resources of these feminist archives have failed to meet this challenge. In this field, the central national libraries have to take the lead.

## Feminist grassroots media in Austria: Structures and developments

STICHWORT'S extensive publication database allows a detailed look at the structures and developments in Austria's feminist magazine landscape. The database includes (as of late 2010) 198 Austrian magazine titles that were founded after 1970, the beginning of the second-wave women's movement in Austria, which thereby form the basis for the analysis that follows.<sup>9</sup> Originally a collection of print media, today the database also comprises electronic newsletters. In addition to collection data, the database also includes information on the periodicals' founding and in some cases discontinuation, publishers, former names, publishing location, frequency of publication, thematic focus, and type of magazine. However, not all details

7 Links to the aforementioned facilities can be found at: [www.ida-dachverband.de](http://www.ida-dachverband.de).

8 [www.zdb-opac.de](http://www.zdb-opac.de). The holdings can be searched by individual archive in the ZDB under interlibrary loan region "ida".

9 Six older titles not included here are magazines with a long history published by political or church-related women's organizations.

are available for all titles; for example, the exact duration of publication is only known for 88 titles. This should be considered below.

The first independent feminist magazines begin in the 1970s as organs of the first working groups on women's liberation and autonomous women's organizations in Austria. The two oldest feminist magazines in German-speaking countries that still exist in 2010, both founded in 1974, should be highlighted here: *AUF – Eine Frauenzeitschrift* in Vienna<sup>10</sup> and *AEP Informationen* in Innsbruck, Tyrol. Altogether these beginnings of feminist media production in Austria are still very modest with an average of five titles published simultaneously per year and one to two new publications annually, most of which only existed for one to two years.

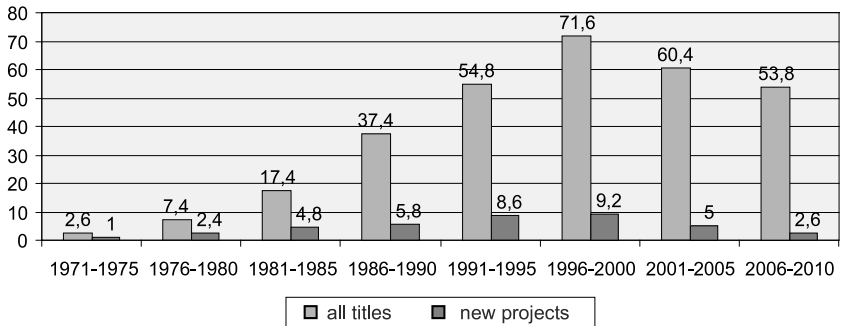
It is only in the 1980s, as the women's movement spread and the first women's projects were founded, that the continuous development of a feminist (print) media landscape in Austria began, lasting until the turn of the century. The number of new projects grew annually from five in the 1980s to more than eight in the 1990s; the number of existing titles increased from an average of 17 in the first half of the 1980s to an average of 72 in the second half of the 1990s. The high point was reached in 1997 with 76 documented magazine titles (Figure 1). As of 2000 the total number and the annual number of new projects receded again, leveling out at around 50 titles and three to four new projects per year. At the end of 2010 the STICHWORT magazine collection documented 46 current titles. Whether this slight recent decline indicates further reductions in the feminist media landscape or just illustrates delays in the archive's collection process will become clear in due course. In any case, an exact determination of the current number is difficult due to rapid changes and occasionally unclear classifications.<sup>11</sup> However, it is worrying that in recent years the balance between new projects and discontinuations was mostly negative, while in the 1980s and 90s an average of two new titles emerged for each existing title that was discontinued.

The expansion was accompanied by an internal differentiation of the magazine landscape, as shown in Figure 2, in which title development is broken down according to the type of publication. The development of titles is relatively stable for general feminist magazines directed toward "all" feminist/lesbian readers with broad subject matter; these play an important role in cross-group multidisciplinary feminist discussion. After the

<sup>10</sup> *AUF* was discontinued in 2011.

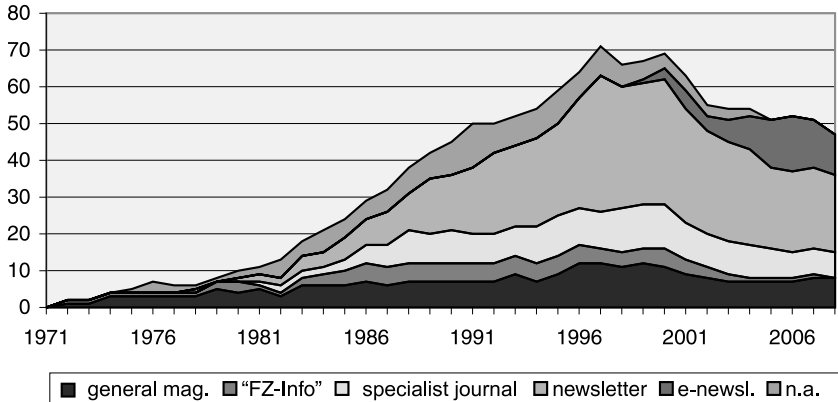
<sup>11</sup> Thus *AUF* is still included among the current magazines because it only discontinued its publication in 2011, whereas *LesbenFrauenNachrichten* and [*sic!*] *Forum für feministische Gartengarten* are not included. Neither of these has announced an official halt to publication, but their most recent issues appeared in 2007 and 2009, respectively. For technical archiving reasons, electronic newsletters (eight current titles) are included in the database, but online news portals like *ceiberweiber.at* (since 1999) or *die.Standard.at* (since 2000) are not. For comparison, using a very narrow definition of independent feminist magazines, Horak (2003) arrives at 18 current titles; Well (2007) lists 44 media in her work, applying a broad definition that includes online media and titles associated with institutions and political parties.

Figure 1: Feminist grassroots media in Austria 1970–2010:  
Title development (all titles/new projects – average)



Source: STICHWORT database, authors' statistics

Figure 2: Title development according to type of publication



Source: STICHWORT database, authors' statistics

modest start in the 1970s, their number fluctuates between six and twelve titles. The general growth in titles is mainly due to the increasing number of newsletters, which have accompanied the expansion of the broader infrastructure of specialized women's projects as well as the facilities and mergers of women's and gender research since the 1980s. Since 2000 these have been increasingly in electronic form. The number of newsletters has escalated from an average of seven in the 1980s to 30 in the 90s and an average of 39 in the 2000s. The latter rise is mainly due to electronic newsletters, whereas the number of printed newsletters has sunk slightly, most recently to just 24 titles.

The emergence of the first specialist journals in the 1980s was connected to the thematic specialization and differentiation of activities in the women's movement. This type of magazine has been represented by an average of nine titles since the 1990s, for example the art magazine *Eva & Co* (Graz,

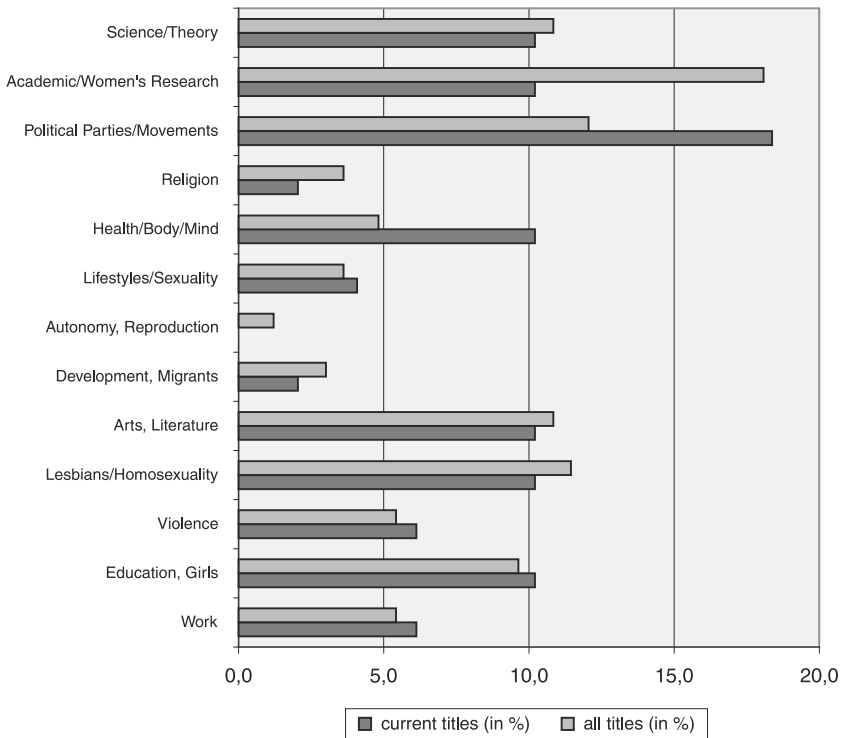
1981–1992); the development policy magazine *Frauensolidarität* (Vienna, 1982–present), which still exists today and is also widely received in other German-speaking countries; the newsletter of the Austrian Women’s Forum for Feminist Theology, *Der Apfel* (Vienna, 1986–present); *Koryphäe. Medium für feministische Naturwissenschaften und Technik* (Vienna, 1986–2008); the literary studies magazine for the Alps-Adriatic region *Script* (Klagenfurt, 1992–2001); or the most well-established academic magazine, *L’Homme. Zeitschrift für feministische Geschichtswissenschaft* (Vienna, 1990–present).

The women’s center newsletters (“FrauenZentrums[FZ]-Infos”) were of great importance to the feminist information exchange, particularly during the 1980s and 90s. Published by the women’s culture and communication centers and ranging from informational pamphlets to general feminist magazines, publications like *Zyklotron* in Innsbruck (1983–2003), *Infam* in Linz (1984–2000), *Zarah lustra* in Salzburg (1985–2001) and *Belladonna* in Klagenfurt (1986–1996) contributed to the decentralization of the media landscape. All in all, feminist magazine production is heavily concentrated in Vienna. About two thirds of both the total titles and the currently published titles are based in Vienna. State capitals are the other “centers,” especially Graz and Innsbruck with more than ten titles each. Less than 5% of all documented titles are published outside of these urban centers.

When looking at feminist magazine production in terms of length of existence and frequency of publication, a high level of fluctuation can be seen. Almost a fifth of the titles exist for only one to two years, a further 14% last between three and five years, and almost a quarter of the titles are published irregularly or only once. On the one hand, this structure is surely a result of the difficult production circumstances of independent feminist media due to limited resources. However, the large rate of fluctuation also expresses how dynamic and lively grassroots, self-organized media production can be. Despite difficult conditions (only a few of the feminist magazine editorial departments are adequately financed or even have paid positions; see Geiger 1996, Horak 2003, Well 2007) many of the media projects nevertheless have managed to maintain an impressive continuity. Over a quarter of the current magazines have been in existence for more than 20 years, and 35% between 10 and 20 years. In other words, 63% of the current magazines and 43% of the total documented titles have been published for at least ten years.

However, limitations in the issue frequency can affect the timeliness of the information. Only 15% of the current titles are published more than six times a year. Currently these publications are *Laufschritte* (Graz, 1986–present) and *Insel Zeitung* (Scharnstein 1992–present) as well as the electronic publications *Fiftitu%-Newsletter* and *AEP-Newsletter. an.schläge* (Vienna, 1983–present) is the only magazine that has been published monthly since 1994 (with two double issues). Before that it appeared quarterly, like the bulk of feminist media. In total, one third of the documented feminist titles and half of the general feminist magazines are published three to six times per year. The preferred publication schedule for specialist journals is one to three times per year, whereas newsletters often appear irregularly.

*Figure 3: Thematic orientation and fields of activity of Austrian feminist grassroots media (n = 150; multiple selections)*



Source: STICHWORT database, authors' statistics

Figure 3 provides an overview of the thematic orientation of the publications. In such a predominately sophisticated and thematically specialized infrastructure as the women's movement, three quarters of the recorded titles (over 80% of current publications) fall into one or two subject areas or fields of activity. One focus is clearly academic and scientific, which make up over 15% of the current publications. Included under university and women's research are mainly student media and information from coordination centers and project centers for women's and gender research at Austrian universities.<sup>12</sup> In addition to general gender theory titles, the fields of history, natural science/technology, philosophy, and law are represented.<sup>13</sup> The media represented heavily among political parties or movements include the activities of institutionalized gender equality policy and

<sup>12</sup> The noticeable decline in current publications may be due to the fact that the material from women and gender-specific courses in the Austrian states included here is only sporadically accounted for.

<sup>13</sup> For scholarly periodicals in German-speaking countries, see Hauser and Geiger, 2008.



several titles associated with political parties (such as *Brot & Rosen* from Vienna's Green Party). Women's counseling centers and counseling centers specializing in health, education, work, or violence are very active in media, especially with printed or electronic newsletters and occasionally professional journals. It is striking that migrant (counseling) projects are scarcely represented. The topic of development policy is almost exclusively covered by the magazine *Frauensolidarität*. The subject areas of art and literature are significantly represented. In addition to the aforementioned art magazine *Eva & Co* and the literary magazine *Entladungen* (Vienna, 1985–present), the pop culture magazine projects from recent years such as *female sequences* (Vienna, 1999–2002), *nylon* (Vienna, 2000–2001), and *fiber* (Vienna, 2002–present) particularly stand out. Lesbian or gay and lesbian publications make up 10% of the total.

## Looking back: Feminist discussions and issue development in the 1970s and 80s

As part of the research project *Die neue Frauenbewegung im Spiegel ihrer Medien* (1990, Geiger et al. 1992), the first two decades of feminist media production (newspapers, flyers, and posters) in Austria were analyzed by means of the STICHWORT archive holdings. This allows a detailed look at the developments in the thematic structure of feminist publications and medial discussions of the second-wave women's movement in Austria from 1972 to 1990, because the individual articles were entered into a database and indexed according to the STICHWORT system.<sup>14</sup>

A comparison of the structure and development of issues in the independent women's and lesbian publications in Austria during that period with the current thematic orientations of publications reveals both similarities and shifts. In the 1970s and 80s the key issues were coverage of the women's movement, literature and language, art, work, and violence against women, followed by the subject areas of political parties and movements, lesbians and the lesbian movement, and reproduction policy/abortion. The issues of bodies, environment, religion, sexuality, and theory were at the lower end of the scale.

The fact that communication within the movement (coverage of the women's movement in a narrow sense) is decentralized, and not institutionally or hierarchically organized, is key to the women's and lesbian movement. Therefore, it is the task of movement media to guarantee a self-determined (self-)portrayal and a constant exchange of information and experiences, and to convey a cross-regional discussion on the movement's organization, structure, and strategy. Conversely, movement media are received in order to learn the news about groups, activities, and dis-

<sup>14</sup> The data pool comprises 4,800 articles and is accessible online through the STICHWORT website, [www.stichwort.or.at](http://www.stichwort.or.at). Unfortunately, a lack of resources has impeded the continuation of this bibliographical and systematic indexing.

cussions, as well as the latest gossip. (Geiger 1987: 380 ff., 351 ff.) Content covers events, conferences, operations, demonstrations, and other activities. Self-criticism and conflicts within the movement are frequent issues and reached an initial peak at the end of the 1970s; discussions on political strategies and programs are less frequent, and utopian plans and visions are extremely rare. Instead, the image cultivation of individual groups and projects dominate coverage of the movement. Reporting on group activities and events is still important today and mainly occurs through the growing number of newsletters from individual women's organizations.

The thematic focus of the publications shifted noticeably from the 1970s to the 80s. In the beginning, abortion issues and violence against women were in the forefront; by the end of the 80s cultural issues took the lead. As in other countries, the fight to legalize abortion played an important role in Austria at the beginning of the second-wave women's movement. After the legalization of abortion within the first twelve weeks in 1975 the issue quickly lost importance. The issue of violence was dealt with differently. Triggered by an international tribunal on violence against women (1976 in Brussels) as well as the fight for the first women's shelters, concern over sexual assault and domestic violence moved into the spotlight in the middle of the seventies. The issue remains relevant but subsequently became less important. In the mid 1990s the discussion partially moved over to specialized media and newsletters from the facilities providing protection against violence (*Gewaltlos*, a leaflet from the Austrian women's shelters since 1995, or *Zeitung der Plattform gegen die Gewalt in der Familie*, since 1998).<sup>15</sup>

It was only at the end of the 1970s that the surprisingly minimal debate on sexuality in Austrian feminist media reached a small peak, focusing on gynecological self-help as a means to the re-appropriation of one's own body. Traditional women's issues like health or religion were also hardly raised in the period before 1990. Interestingly enough, the psychology boom and the turn toward spirituality in the 1980s are only visible in a few select publications. However, the field of health/body/mind is of growing importance in the current media (about 6% of current publications are dedicated to the subject). The field of reproduction – i. e. heterosexual relationships and marriage, family and children, which are classic issues for conventional women's magazines – occupied little space in feminist magazines during the first two decades. Readers who were mothers, when surveyed during the 1980s, definitely considered this a deficit (Geiger 1987). In the second half of the 1990s one initiative attempted to take the matter into its own hands with the publication *Mutter.mund* (Vienna, 1996–1999).

The focus of the debate on party politics regarding women's issues in the beginning of the 1980s was the ambivalent relationship of the independent women's movement to the new State Secretariat for Women's Issues<sup>16</sup>.

<sup>15</sup> For more on the violence debate in the media, see Geiger 2008.

<sup>16</sup> Established in 1979. State Secretary Johanna Dohnal was promoted to Minister of Women's Affairs in 1990. Austria has had a Minister of Women's Affairs since then, with interruptions.

At the same time, the failing economy and rising unemployment led to a focus on the subject of work. Budget cuts and slashed social services beginning in the mid 80s pushed the debate on social and labor market policy and the growing poverty among women.

The development of women's research within and outside of universities and the differentiated women's culture and art scene in Vienna, in particular, pushed new issues into the forefront. In the mid 1980s a significant growth in book reviews and the subjects of literature and language, art, education, history, feminist research, and the critique of science becomes visible. This new focus is still seen today in numerous publications from the field.

In the mid 1980s, lesbian issues also become more present; one third of this presence is borne by *Lesbenrundbrief* (1983–1993). The subject appears to be non-existent for the western Austrian publications *Orgon* and *AEP Informationen*; Viennese titles are in the middle of the scale. Above average numbers appear in the publications of some women's centers, thanks to a strong local lesbian presence.

## Lesbian publications

The term "lesbian publications" includes magazines that are clearly directed toward a lesbian readership and those that define their target group as "gay-lesbian" or feminist with a lesbian slant.<sup>17</sup> "Queer" titles also belong to this group. STICHWORT verifies 21 titles for Austria, five of which are current. Because this is a relatively low number, and German and Swiss lesbian magazines were and continue to be of great importance to Austrian readers, we include them in this section.

It is not possible to determine the total number of lesbian magazines in German-speaking countries – at least at this point. The holdings of the *i.d.a.* facilities, searchable through ZDB, can be consulted for an overview of the German speaking countries.<sup>18</sup> At present, there are about 150 lesbian magazines included, but data from archives with large holdings, for example the lesbian archive in Berlin, *Spinnboden*, are still largely missing. Furthermore, magazine data in the ZDB often lacks the magazines' exact publishing duration due to incomplete records. An additional problem is that only an extremely limited amount of electronic media, most of which are irregular e-mail newsletters, appears in the ZDB, because they are hardly archived in any facility.

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<sup>17</sup> Beginning in the mid 1980s, terms like "FrauenLesben" (WomenLesbians) were common in the course of the discussion on the perception of lesbians in feminist contexts. This was also expressed with a conjunction or slash and in many other provocative and humorous heavily debated forms, for example, "women and other lesbians". Around 1990, Austrian groups and periodicals underwent some name changes. One example is the magazine *Frauen-Nachrichten des Frauenzentrums Wien*, which was called *Lesben/Frauen-Nachrichten* as of the issue 13/1993.

<sup>18</sup> Magazines that do not include lesbians in their titles were added from STICHWORT data as much as possible to provide a better overview.

The following can be deduced from the available data: Most of the magazines were started between 1986 and 2000, when the direction shifted from “lesbian” to “gay and lesbian”. Approximately three quarters of the lesbian magazines have a regional focus (62% for Austria); lesbian magazines and gay and lesbian magazines are equally represented among the cross-regional publications. Of the former, we include titles such as *Lesbenpresse*, *Lesbenfront/Frau ohne Herz/Die.Lesbenzeitschrift*, *Lesbenstich*, *Ihrrsinn*, *Unsere kleine Zeitung (UKZ)*, the Austrian *Lesbenrundbrief*, *Infoblatt des Deutschen Lesbenring e. V.* and others.

The first lesbian magazines after the beginning of the second-wave women’s movement appeared in 1975: *Lesbenfront* (Zurich), *Lesbenpresse*, *Partnerin* and *Unsere kleine Zeitung* (all in Berlin). By the end of the 70s, eight more distinctly lesbian magazines had started; these are joined by a gay and lesbian title, *Rosa Revue*, from Hamburg. Most of the distinctly lesbian magazines emerged in the second half of the 1990s (10); a total of 47 lesbian-focused titles were found. In Austria there are only four: *Lesbenrundbrief*, which was published from 1983 to 1993 by different groups; *Lila Schriften* (1995–1999); the magazine from the lesbian student organization at the University of Graz *Sappho*, which has been documented from 1996 to 1998; and the e-mail newsletter *Lebenszeichen* (2001–2008).

In 1984 the term “Women/Lesbians” appeared, both in the magazine title and the name of the publishing group. Efforts toward the integration of lesbian perspectives and content into the feminist debate are reflected in this name choice. These politics are visible in the available data on new publications prior to the year 2000; after that, no new titles with such names are found. It is assumed that after that point, lesbian-focused material was still being integrated into the magazines’ editorial concepts, but no longer named as such. The Austrian magazines [*sic!*]. *Forum für feministische Gangarten* and *an.schläge* are examples of this.

In the first half of the 1980s an increased number of magazines defining their target group as “gay and lesbian” can be found. The number of newly founded publications jumped from five in the early 1980s to 21 in the first half of the 90s. With a total of 71, the number of gay and lesbian titles is approximately as high as the categories of lesbian and women/lesbians combined. In Austria these include *Lambda-Nachrichten* from HOSI Vienna, *Pride* from HOSI Linz, *RosaLila Buschtrommel* from Graz and the gay and lesbian scene publication *Bussi*. The balance between the representation of gay and lesbian issues present in these magazines as well as the degree of divergence between the editorial stance and the perception of the lesbian audiences of feeling spoken to could be the subject of further research.

The Zurich lesbian magazine serves as an example of the changes in political orientation and aesthetic design, and thereby also as an illustration of three decades of lesbian feminism. Founded in 1975 as *Lesbenfront*, typeset and illustrated with drawings and some photos, it provided typical content for self-organized magazines, such as reports on events and political activities, copies of leaflets, open letters and other political texts, field reports, interviews with authors and activists, and reviews. From the 4/1977

issue it was also distributed in Germany by the Frauenbuchvertrieb in Berlin. In 1985 the name was changed to *Frau ohne Herz. Zeitschrift für Frauen und andere Lesben* (Woman without a heart. Magazine for women and other lesbians). Over the course of its ten-year existence, it became increasingly “professional” in its design, for example, regarding typesetting and continuous use of photos as well as paper quality and, lastly, color covers. A complete relaunch took place in 1996 when its name was changed to *die. Lesbenzeitschrift*. The new version was introduced with the line, “The era of the woman without a heart is over.”<sup>19</sup> The literary content became more important. In 2004 it was replaced by *Skipper*, which, as a *magazine for lesbian vitality*, served the queer generation with its association to recreation, sports, and games and a seriously questionable image of women – after all, “Skipper” is Barbie’s little sister. This was clearly meant to reach the “young lesbians”; reports on gay and lesbian events, organizations, and other matters (e. g. partnerships) were in the forefront of the lifestyle and gossip sections. The individual articles did not extend beyond a double-page spread and were heavily illustrated. *Skipper* was discontinued after only three issues.

## Conclusion: The feminist (print) media landscape

In summary, a vivid feminist media landscape is as important for the information needs of all actually interested and engaged in feminist debates and activism as their accessibility and preservation is for historical research. Feminist archives guarantee this accessibility through their collecting and their background knowledge of the movement. The heyday of independent feminist (print) media seems to have ended with the millennium – the discontinuation of one of the oldest existing independent feminist magazines, *AUF*, in 2011 may be considered as symptomatic – but the quality of the current media shows that there is still a readership. Furthermore, new media projects are currently being planned, as represented by the Austrian *Platform 20,000women*, which, inspired by the centennial anniversary of the International Women’s Day, initiated new feminist politicization and networking processes. Finally, the future feminist media landscape will depend on the further development of feminist activities as well as the local and global politics and challenges.

*Translation: Emily Lemon*

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