

UNIVERSITY OF  
LUCERNE

FACULTY OF LAW

INSTITUTE FOR INTERDISCIPLINARY  
LEGAL STUDIES – LUCERNAIURIS

LABORATORIUM LUCERNAIURIS

# WOMEN AND THE JUDICIARY: FROM EUROPEAN HISTORIOGRAPHY TO THE SWISS CASE

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ORGANISED WITH THE OBWALDNER  
INSTITUT FÜR JUSTIZFORSCHUNG  
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IMAGE: FRANCESCO NETTI, IN THE SUPREME COURT OF JUSTICE (1892).  
DETAIL: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS.

# Women and the Judiciary: From European Historiography to the Swiss Case

This talk will explore women's access to the judiciary in Switzerland from a gendered and historiographical perspective. It will place the Swiss experience within the broader European trajectory that shaped women's entry into positions of legal responsibility during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The first part of the talk will reconstruct the European context and examine the institutional and discursive mechanisms that either supported or opposed women's integration into the magistracy. Here, particular attention will be given to gendered notions of authority, competence, and professional suitability that influenced political and legal debates about their exclusion from – or admission to – judicial roles. The second part will turn to the Swiss case and highlight how cantonal dynamics and institutional arrangements framed women's opportunities to serve as judges. Drawing on archival sources and selected biographical case studies, the talk will analyse the conditions that enabled their gradual emergence within the Swiss judiciary. More broadly, it aims to shed new light on how European societies negotiated women's entry into high-level legal professions in contemporary history.

**Lidia Celli** holds a PhD in Contemporary History from the University of Urbino (2023). Her research lies at the intersection of political and institutional history, gender history, and cultural studies, with a focus on transitional justice, marginality, and deviance in twentieth-century Italy. Her doctoral dissertation explored penal and social judgments directed at female collaborators and women partisans in the aftermath of the Second World War (1944–1955). She held a research fellowship at the University of Padua (2024–2025) within the PRIN project *Mobility Without Borders: People, Geographies, and the Courts of Italian Military Justice in the 20th Century. The Case of Turin*. Her previous research experience includes collaborations with the Istituto Piemontese per la Storia della Resistenza and the Istituto di Storia Contemporanea di Pesaro. Celli is the author of two monographs: *Donne di partito* (Metauro, 2024) and *Giudicare, punire, normalizzare* (Viella, 2025), the latter awarded the Pavone Prize. In 2026, Lidia is a Visiting Fellow at the Institute for Interdisciplinary Legal Studies - *lucernaiuris* in Lucerne, where she is working on her project *Judicial Power and Gender Boundaries: The Case of Swiss Women Magistrates*.

The lecture is free and open to all. Registration is not required.