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Where to? Gender studies, epistemic injustice and the politics of de-democratization in Romania

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This article examines the 2020 attempt to ban gender studies in Romania, where we played key roles in resistance efforts and were directly targeted by anti-gender activists. We address two research questions: first, 'How can researchers' positionality be conceptualized when the authors are targets?'; and, second, 'How can we integrate our dual roles as researchers and activists in the production of knowledge while also exploring the nature and impact of these attacks?'. We introduce a novel epistemological and ethical framework that integrates reflection on researchers' positionality and emotions. We conceptualize researchers' positionality as 'outsiders within' in social and academic contexts and epistemic agents at the intersection of research and activism. Using feminist autoethnography, we complement traditional methodologies in studying anti-gender campaigns and far-right mobilizations. This approach allows us to better understand de-democratization dynamics and highlight the persistent epistemic injustices and normalization of violence that these movements perpetuate.



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