

Socially responsible and close to civil society: research project on the social history of supervision has started

Supervision has a varied history, which has clearly left its mark on it. In fact supervision developed in the context of country-specific, social, economic and political situations and changes, so that there are different paths of development, for example, in the USA and Germany. It is surprising that research into the history of supervision in Germany has been conducted, until now, primarily from operational perspectives (the history of theory, concepts and methods) rather than in the social and political context. This situation has prompted the DGSv, together with the Sigmund Freud Institute in Frankfurt am Main, to carry out a [research project on the social history of supervision](#) in Germany, beginning in April 2013.

The starting point for the project is that the development of supervision cannot be understood outside social and political processes, but is rather a part of such processes. This applies not only to early supervision, in the context of the allies' work towards democratisation, but also to later developments in the 1960s, 1970s, 1980s and 1990s, which need to be seen in the framework of cultural, social, political and economic changes during those years: what is the significance, for example, of the various protest movements in the 1960s and 1970s, processes of intrastate armament (internal security, professional bans, ...), a growth in ecological consciousness, globalisation and neo-liberalism for the (further) development of supervision?

Conversely, the project also asks how supervision, as a reflective social practice, has itself contributed to social change on micro and meso levels. This research project looks into the development of supervision in Germany from the participating actors' point of view: on the basis of interviews with supervisors (oral history, narrative interviews) as well as the analysis of everyday documents drawn up during the institutionalization and professionalization of supervision, it is possible to reconstruct the social history of supervision *from below* and from a perspective close to everyday events. The goal of the project is thus to reveal the social significance and responsibility of supervision on a historical basis.