

Mobilizing for Policy Change. Women's Movements in Central and Eastern European Domestic Violence Policy Struggles

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The aim of the book edited by Andrea Krizsan with the help of Raluca Popa is the analysis of women's movement for domestic violence policy changes in four Central and Eastern European countries: Bulgaria, Croatia, Poland and Romania. The purpose of the analysis is to demonstrate that women's movements are the main actors in policy change mainly in anti-domestic violence policies.

Gender policies were adopted in all countries, though their implementation is still inadequately even today, several years after their adoption. The reasons for adopting such policies are diverse therefore it happened either on international pressure (outside influence) or because of the women's movements voice (internal contribution), but the authors intend to demonstrate that the main actor in policy change is women's movement.

Krizsan and Popa follow the policy output in four countries (Bulgaria, Croatia, Poland and Romania) evaluating several indicators like the adoption of laws and policies, the availability of shelters, raising awareness and organizing trainings. They observe that there are differences in linking domestic violence to gender equality and women's rights. The gender equality component of policy output is very important as it has both substantive (referring to the content of laws and policies) and procedural elements (regarding procedures that represent women's interest). For verifying this component, the authors look at policies framing as well as to the inclusiveness of women from agenda setting to implementation and evaluation of the policy.

Moreover, Krizsan and Popa explain the model that will be used in the following case studies of the four CEE countries: *the critical institutionalization*. For understanding the influence of women's movements, we need to look at three factors: the movement's

capacity of mobilizing and its *resources*, the *strategies and alliances* of women's groups and the *framing and voice* of the issue. The authors offer this instrument as they consider that institutionalization of a movement does not exclude its autonomy.

During the whole volume, critical institutionalization is used by Marya P. Ivancheva, Sanja Kajinic, Dominika Gruziel and Raluca Popa as a method of describing the situation in their countries: Bulgaria, Croatia, Poland and Romania. There are similarities, but also differences between all these countries and the authors emphasize them. For example, Bulgaria, Croatia and Poland framed domestic violence as a matter of individual rights, while Romania considered it an issue regarding family protection at first and only later framed it in the manner of other countries. The framing of the implementation strategy was gender equality in Bulgaria and Croatia, gender neutral in Poland and individual and children rights for Romania with roles and funding given either to women's organizations or to actors contesting gender equality. Even though the agenda setting stage included women in all cases, the process of policy adoption was gendered in some cases or it contained strong standing against gender equality.

Ivancheva's argument is that even though Bulgarian movement was one of the most successful in term of lobby and legislation, it has impeded the development of a strong feminist movement since the movement has feminist points of view, but the frames that it uses are non-feminist.

Kajinic argues that changing in strategies and framing of violence against women happens when new recruits enter the field and the opportunities in politics are changed. The continuity of the movement in Croatia happened because of the commitment of long-term activists and that is the reason why she decided to have a generational approach that allows a continuous analysis.

Gruziel amends the critical institutionalization model. She considers that not only the movement's voice is influenced by discourses that are already present in society, but also the organizational form and strategies are directed by a "collective social memory of successful strategies for addressing the state" (Gruziel, 2015).

In the case of Romania, Popa discusses the structures that the movement wants to challenge for setting the scene for women activists. She argues that the changes in the periods that she treats in her analysis are due to the multi-level interactions between domestic, regional and international actors and factors.

At the end of the case studies, we discover that what these four countries have in common is that they crossed a more than 20 years period of transition at the end of which we can see more mature, more diverse and more or less aggregated women's movement. Even though the international influence was prominent, the changes in these countries were carried on by domestic actors which were either feminists or non-feminists groups. These groups used diverse strategies from more institutionalized ones as lobby, litigation or consultancy, to more disruptive practices like protests, campaigning or petitioning.

The conclusion shows that patterns of women's movement influence were diverse, even inside the countries, across time. Moreover, the volume aims to explain that certain patterns of movement are more favorable to progress than others and shows the risks of leaving apart critical action in the process of development towards a highly institutionalized state.

This book serves as an overview through the history of women's organizations in the four CEE countries. In line with Raluca Popa, I consider the method of critical institutionalization to be rather analytical than explanatory as the understanding of how changes come requires examination of other factors also.

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