

**Women's Political Identity in Making:
Agency, Identity and Gender in Eastern Europe
2018/2019**

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What is Eastern Europe? Does specific "women's identity" exist in the region? What are the major debates and contentions about gender and emancipation in post-state socialism? This seminar will explore these diverse set of concerns by looking at the ongoing debates on gender, agency, equality citizenship, migration, women's activism in Eastern Europe and transnationally. In the midst of the recent 20th anniversaries of the fall of the Iron Curtain, women made a tremendous effort to incorporate gender aspects of transformation to the celebrations. Activists, politicians and feminist scholars managed to overcome the enduring tendency of the 1990s to see post-state socialist transitions as processes with no visible gender component or politics and to deconstruct a variety of misconceptions that suggested the marginality of women's contribution to social change or provided a distorted representation of post-transformation gender power dynamics. After the period of defeatism and self-doubt, eastern European feminisms are now emerging as diverse and multidimensional sites of political dialogue locally and globally.

At the time when globalization is set as a primary context for a dialogue between women from the south and the north, to reconstruct specific genealogies of the feminist struggles within the eastern European space and to deconstruct the homogenous representation of the "second world" women vis a vis "the west", emerges as a crucial task of appropriating the "politics of location" to the studies of post-state socialism. In this class we will ask what is the place of the post-state social women's movements within transnational feminist theory and practice. Transnational feminisms can provide a fruitful framework to examine complex intersectionalities of global forces and local legacies in the production feminist subjectivities. Bringing so called „second world” in to the transnational feminist debates can also allow us to further dismantle exiting hierarchical, binary frameworks perpetuated by the feminist scholarship focusing solely on the relationship between south and north.

Since 1957, when Article 119 was accepted as a part of the Treaty of Rome, the European Union commitment to women of member-states resulted in design and implementation of numerous gender related legislation, projects, lobbying, networking, training and other gender sensitive activities. These efforts focused, for example, on professional training, reconciliation of family and work responsibilities, questions of equality and equal treatment or provided support and benefits to lone mothers. As a result many of the EU members had to rethink and redefine their approaches and policies towards gender roles. The eastern enlargement of the EU forced new members' states to accept many of the EU gender priorities, standards, and policies. Yet, despite EU concerns with gender equality as far as "old" member-states were concerned, the politics of gender was clearly marginalized and rather limited in the EU's economically and politically charged debates on enlargement. In fact, gender neither played the determining and defining role in the past two waves of "eastern" enlargements, nor has it been situated as an important lens for the previous waves of the EU expansions. The question, which obviously emerges now, is what impact these expansions have on women in the new "enlarged" Europe: how the EU commitment to gender equality translates in the local context of Poland, (Czech Republic, Hungary, Bulgaria or Lithuania), but also how gender policies in the EU have evolved over time. What are the new challenges confronting women and how women mobilize in order to address them? As the impacts of the EU enlargement are not limited only to the EU members, we will also explore how changes within the EU affect gender roles and gender policy-making in other countries.

Requirements:

Requirements for this course include both the class participation (40%) and the final written assignment (60%). By participation, we mean, that you will come to class well prepared (you have thoroughly and thoughtfully read the assigned material), you will be ready to participate in the class discussion and you will facilitate such discussions at least once (this will depend on the number of students in the class). During each class, students will be asked to take a leading role in framing questions for class discussions. In addition, couple times you will be also asked to bring information about one of the Eastern European country on particular topic that will be discussed during our class session.

By facilitation we mean that you will prepare in advance questions and points of interest that the entire class may want to discuss and that during the class you will lead the discussion, synthesize and respond to the reactions of others, and offer your own points of view. ***We will ask that you do not provide long summaries of the readings as all students are expected to do readings in advance for each class.*** When preparing for the class you may try to address some of the following questions:

- What is the theoretical framework of this work? On what body of theory does the author build his/her arguments, what basic ideas does she/he use to frame/interpret the work?
- What topics/themes are being omitted and possibly why this is the case?
- How is diversity conceptualized? What is included and what remains excluded? Does this conceptualization apply to some women (selected groups), if yes to which?
- How social, cultural, economic and political circumstances can simultaneously open new opportunities and eliminate or minimize them? What influences the degree to which women can access/hold/exercise their power?
- What role different political actors do play - those who aim to advance women's rights as well as those who remain neutral or do aim to weaken these rights?

In terms of the final written assignment, you will have certain degree of flexibility in choosing the topic. You may want to investigate one aspect of the gender politics of the eastern Europe, you may want to look more specifically at the implications for women of the enlarged European Union, or you may want to address your chosen topic within the context of one specific country. Your paper can be theoretical in nature (e.g. explore the ongoing shift from nation-state to supranational level and its implications for role of state in advancing women's rights or gender sensitive policies) and/or you can attempt to show how feminist practices have challenged theoretical debates and how, in turn, theory has molded feminist practices.

The two-page outline of the final paper (2 pages) with selected bibliography (1 page) will be due by **January 16th**, The final paper will be due at **the end of the semester**.

You can contact us via email : magdagrabowska@yahoo.com

Class Schedule and Readings

Class 1. Introduction (November 6, Magdalena Grabowska)

Belonging and identity: Who are we? Where do we belong? What shapes our identity(ies)?

Readings:

- Bunch, Charlotte. 1979. "Not by Degrees: Feminist Theory and Education".

Class 2. "Gender", "Identity" and "Agency": Various Definitions and applications (November 13, Magdalena Grabowska)

Readings:

- Ahearn Laura M. "Language and Agency", in: *Annual Review Anthropology* 2001, 30:109-3
- Joan Scott "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis. Joan W. Scott. *The American Historical Review*, Volume 91, Issue 5 (Dec, 1986), 1053-105. <http://xroads.virginia.edu/~DRBR2/jscott.pdf>
- Audre Lorde "Age Class and Sex", *Women Redefining Difference*, Paper delivered at the Copeland Colloquium, Amherst College, April 1980, Reproduced in: *Sister Outsider* Crossing Press, California 1984

Additional reading:

Joan Scott "The Evidence of Experience". in: *Critical Inquiry* 17/4 (1991): 773-797

Class 3. Gender and Postcolonial (November 20, Magdalena Grabowska)

Readings:

- Edward Said "Orientalism", introduction.
- Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. 1988. *Can the Subaltern Speak?* In: *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*. Ed. C. Nelson & L. Grossberg. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, pp. 271-313.
- Mohanty, Chandra Talpade. 1988: 'Under the Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses'. *Feminist Review* 30: 61-88.
- Uma Narayan 2000. 'Undoing the "Package Picture" of Cultures'. *Signs* 25(4): 1083-1086.

Barabara Ehrenreich and Arlie Russell Hochschild's **Global Woman** : Nannies, Maids, and Sex Workers in the New Economy by Owl **Books**, 2002.

Class 4. Postcoloniality and studies of studies Eastern Europe: "Second world" women's movement and the politics of representation (November 27)

Readings:

- Wolff, Larry. 1994. *Inventing Eastern Europe. The Map of Civilization on the Mind if the Enlightenment*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, introduction
- Cavanagh, Clare. 2004. "Postcolonial Poland." *Common Knowledge* 10 (1): 82–92.
- Magdalena Grabowska "Bringing the Second World In: Conservative Revolution(s), Socialist Legacies and Transnational Silences in the Trajectories of Polish Feminism"

Class 5. Women and state socialism in Eastern Europe (December 4, Magdalena Grabowska)

Readings:

- Barbara Evans Clements „Daughters of Revolution. A History of Women in the U.S.S.R.” Chapter 2
- Ingrid. Sharp, The Sexual Unification of Germany, in: Journal of the History of Sexuality - Volume 13, Number 3, July 2004, pp. 348-365
- Nanette Funk, “A Very Tangled Knot: Official State Socialist Women’s Organizations, Women’s Agency and Feminism in Eastern European State Socialism,” European Journal of Women’s Studies 21, no. 4 (2014): 344–360.
- Aspasia Forum: “Ten Years After Communism and Feminism Revisited, Edited by Francisca de Haan, aspasia Volume 10, 2016: 102–168

Additional readings:

- Małgorzata Fidelis „Visions of Equality: The State, the Church and Women’s Sections” w: Women, Communism, and Industrialization in Postwar Poland, Cambridge, 2010
- Hrycak A., “From Mothers’ Rights to Equal Rights. Post-Soviet Grassroots Women’s Associations”, in: “Women’s Activism and Globalization. Linking Local Struggles and Transnational Politics”, ch.5, 64-83

Class 6. “Solidarity According to Women”. Gender emancipation and women in the opposition movement (December 11)

- Penn, Shana. 1994. “The National Secret.” Journal of Women's History 5(3), 55-69.
- Movie” Solidarity According to Women” dir. Marta Dzido, Piotr Śliwowski

Class 7. “Why there is no Feminism after Communism?” Women's activism during transformation, From service activism to “ngoization”: local and global aspects (December 18, Magdalena Grabowska).

Readings:

- Goldfarb, Jeff. 1997. “Why there is no feminism after communism?” Social Research, 64 (2):235-278.
- Kristen Ghodsee “Feminism-by-Design: Emerging Capitalisms, Cultural, Feminism, and Women’s Nongovernmental, Organizations in Postsocialist Eastern Europe”, at http://scholar.harvard.edu/files/kristenghodsee/files/signs_article.pdf
- Agnieszka Graff „Lost between the Waves? The Paradoxes of Feminist Chronology and Activism in Contemporary Poland”.
- Regulska Joanna, Magdalena Grabowska 2013 “Social Justice, Hegemony and Women’s Mobilizations” in: Hegemony and Social Movements: Views from East/Central Europe and Eurasia, Jan Kubik and Amy Linch, (red.), New York University Press.

Class 8. Transnational aspects of gender policies: the European Union, UN and grassroots mobilizations of women (January 8 , TBA)

Readings:

- Regulska, J. Lukic, J. and D. Zavirsek, (2006). "Introduction", in J. Lukic, J. Regulska, and D. Zavirsek (eds). *Women and Citizenship in Central and East Europe*, Ashgate Publisher, pp. 1-20.
- Elman, R. A. 2004. "Testing the Limits of European Citizenship: Ethnic Hatred and Male Violence", in *Feminist Politics, Activism and Vision*, L. Ricciutelli, A. Miles, M. H. McFadden (eds). Zed Books. Pp. 329-347.
- Einhorn, B. "Citizenship in an Enlarging Europe: Contested strategies", *Sociologicky ustav AVCR*, vol41, No.6. 1023-1039.

Other Suggested Readings:

Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action 1995

<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/pdf/BDPfA%20E.pdf>

Convention of the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women 1985

<http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/ProfessionalInterest/cedaw.pdf>

Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention) 2011

Class 9. "Gender as a symbolic glue?" Recent instances of "gender wars" and gender mobilizations in in the region (January 15, Magdalena Grabowska)

Readings:

- "Anti-Gender Movements on the Rise? Strategizing for Gender Equality in Central and Eastern Europe Edited by the Heinrich Böll Foundation, PUBLICATION SERIES ON DEMOCRACY VOLUME 38, April 2015 <https://www.boell.de/en/2015/04/21/anti-gender-movements-rise>
- *Gender as symbolic glue. THE POSITION AND ROLE OF CONSERVATIVE. AND FAR RIGHT PARTIES IN THE. ANTI-GENDER MOBILIZATIONS IN EUROPE* (exerts TBA) <http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/budapest/11382.pdf>
- Weronika Grzebalska "Resistance and Liberation Movements" Weronika Grzebalska PhD Candidate in Sociology Graduate School for Social Research Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw Weronika Grzebalska, "In Central Europe, militarised societies are on the march" <https://theconversation.com/in-central-europe-militarised-societies-are-on-the-march-84164>
- "Poland for Beginners: Explaining Black Protests", article on the 27 April, 2017 meeting with Elżbieta Korolczuk, Ph.D., sociologist, activist, and commentator, to talk about why Polish women mobilized in such large numbers in 2016 organized by Krytyka Polityczna, <http://politicalcritique.org/cee/poland/2017/poland-beginners-black-protests-2/>

Class 10. Overview of final essay projects/ current activities of women's groups in Eastern Europe, (January 22 Magdalena Grabowska)