

EMBODIED CITIZENSHIP: WOMEN, POLITICS AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT IN ROMANIA

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Embodied citizenship is a concept coined by the latest scholarship that started to examine more closely the ways in which citizenship is embodied, gendered, racialized, and sexualized. Emily Russell speaks about an “embodied citizenship” that “stands for the unacknowledged embodiment of all citizens, but more directly calls upon the ideological weight attached to bodily difference as the conditioning force of its own political participation” (Russell, 2007: 3). Rose and Novas (2008) discuss the concept of “biological citizenship” that pertains to the context of the latest progress in biomedicine and biotechnology, a context that is reshaping the biological, or even genetic, responsibilities of the individual. Robson and Kessler use the concept of “sexual citizenship”, starting from the critique of citizenship claims as based on heterosexual and male privilege. Cossman in particular is interested in the relationship between „legal regulations of sexuality: sexual practices, sexual speech, public entitlements (welfare), and marriage” and notions of social worth (Robson and Kessler, 2008). Plummer has coined the term „intimate citizenship”, where he looks at „an array of arenas in which we 'do' the personal life - doing body work, doing gender, doing relationships, doing eroticism, and doing identities” and how all of these are shaped by the requirements and rules of citizenship (Plummer, 2005: 79).

In the case of women and their political participation in Romania, one of the major implications of women’s communist “emancipation” for embodied citizenship would be not only how women themselves might have perceived reproduction and contraceptive practices as part of their gender role (and not necessarily as a double burden, as feminist literature has stressed), but also how women conceived their social, political and civic rights and their relationship to the state (with key impact on the reception of post-communist social policies). Penn and Massino have pointed out that “despite the fact that people in the region lacked political rights – and perhaps even because of it – their civic identities developed with respect to other rights, from guaranteed employment to a range of social welfare benefits, which they regarded as universal” (Penn and Massino, 2009: 3).

Jill Massino has noticed that, by inspecting closer how social policies during communism were lived in a daily context by citizens, “we may discover that the resurgence of what some have referred to as ‘communist nostalgia’ is rooted as much in the failures of the present as in the perceived successes of the past” (Massino, in Penn and Massino, 2009: 31). However, who, what and how remembers about communism is never an innocent labor. Lorena Anton has remarked the workings of a “politics of memory” that can dictate the flow and content of memory regarding a specific past. She proposes the concept of “low-remembering” to refer to those aspects of remembrance that are not necessarily part of the mainstream of public sphere, but do survive through social-communicative memory (Anton, 2009: 111). Some aspects (especially those related to material life or traumas) have been the focus of various projects of oral history, most of them ideologically-laden. There are still many facets of the communist life experience that have not yet been the object of mainstream public discourse. How women themselves narrate retrospectively their experience as communist citizens and objects of a “failed emancipation” and how they negotiate this heritage in the newly democratic context can be just the missing link explaining the “post” in post-communism. The papers in this collection bring together different perspectives on the same broad topic: women and civic engagement, in and out of communism.

Petruța Teampău is interested in the gendering of propaganda during communism; she investigates “Femeia” (1965-1980), the official media outlet of the National Council of Women during communism in order to frame the portrait of the “female leader”, the skills and qualities required, in the context of an intense politicized campaign of “promoting women” in the public life.

Daniela Anghi examines the differences in participation and political involvement between men and women in the case of Romania, showing that on one hand women are less participatory as men, on the other hand they tend to assess in a similar manner the attributes of a good citizen and the effectiveness of specific forms of political action.

Sorana Constantinescu takes on the recent political initiative of improving women’s participation in politics through the implementation of gender quotas for party-nominated candidates. Her paper reviews the most

relevant arguments pro and against gender quotas, as well as the types of gender quota policies, with their particular strengths and weaknesses.

Helamia Mihali focuses on college students' perceptions of gender stereotypes and gender inequalities; her analysis shows a tendency of family members to share most of the activities and, on a positive note, the fact that women's role is no longer seen as traditional as it used to be.

In her paper, **Miruna Pantel** analyses the concept of *care* and draws attention to the difficulty of applying western-developed concepts and theories to eastern-specific contexts, by discussing these theories and their efficiency in explaining the lack of care on the political agenda, in post-communist Romania.

Toma Burean's work in progress connects gender social representation and issue congruence. The main claim is that issue congruence between representatives and women is lower and did not improve from 1997 to 2011, despite the fact that the presence of women in politics has increased. He tests this gap with mass elite surveys in Poland from 1997 to 2011.

In her review of the volume *Life Writing and Politics of Memory in Eastern Europe*, **Andrada Fătu-Tutoveanu** discusses the concept of collective memory and the manners in which a community – in this case the post-communist Eastern European countries – deals with the issue of (traumatic) memory and remembrance.

Finally, although not explicitly linked to the topic of our special issues, the contributions of **Georgiana Turculeț** and **Esmā Baycan** provide a valuable addition to our discussions, by conveying the focus on an acute problem that deals with and constructs another vulnerable category of people: refugees.

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