

Reviews

Marta Kolářová: Protest against Globalization: Gender and Feminist Critique

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There are relatively few original works published in the Czech Republic or Slovakia that would be dedicated to globalization processes and their research and theory. Published dissertation by Marta Kolářová from the Institute of Sociology of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, the Centre of Global Studies at the Faculty of Philosophy at Charles University in Prague and the Faculty of Arts at the Charles University in Prague explores globalization from the perspective of feministic criticism and approaches the hardly to seize concept of globalization in a rather negative way. As a matter of fact, she explores the protests against the globalization, in particular those that had taken place in Prague in 2000.

The book is divided into three main parts: Anti-globalization Movement Abroad and in the Czech Republic, Globalization and Protests from Gender Perspective and Social Movements from Gender Perspective on the Example of Czech Anti-globalization Movement. Work's structure reflects an assumption that readers have low knowledge of the history of transnational anti-globalization movement and gender as the axis organizing social relationships determined by the globalization processes. At the same time, she critically sums up current discussion on globalization, gender and social movements particularly in Anglo-American environment and formulates her own contribution. Mostly, this questions the position of the so called "Second World" (that is neither the "First World" of post-industrial economies, nor the "Third World" of the "developing" countries) on the map of transnational anti-globalization activism, then arguments for the synthetic theory of social movements and particularly thorough analysis of the "work of gender" in the anti-globalization movement in the Czech Republic.

Feminists might not be the only ones, who could find it interesting to observe how Kolářová deals with a bundle of issues fastened in the "globalization and gender". She does not perceive this theoretical term as a supplement that would make the globalization processes appear more attractive or that would be applied in a "add women to the x topic (here globalization) and mix" style. Gender is the key term of one empirical (7) and three theoretical (3, 4, 5) chapters.

Summarization of the feministic criticism of globalization (chapter 3) shows that gender is a factor globally co-determining inequality. More precisely, what operates in the globalization processes is the gender division of productive and reproductive work on a number of levels. Programmes of structural changes enforced by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank throughout the Second and the Third Worlds have been removing a lot of public services relying on these to become part of women's unpaid work. Besides insisting on the

observance of fiscal “discipline” the preceding four decades have been marked by the shift of the capital from the Global North to the states of the Global South, which has become part of the neoliberal politics. According to Kolářová “finances and the capital can freely float around the world, but the flow of human labour is restricted”. (p. 86) In the early 90's the mobility of a young 20 year old woman might have been delineated by the northern Mexican border with the United States of America, whose companies were massively investing into building and running the so called maquiladoras as part of the industrial zones producing goods for export. Her femininity might have become an attribute of her working skills. Her „dexterous fingers“, assumed discipline, uncertainty of a young woman in a new environment far away from home, sexualisation of her body easily accessible to harassment all making the factory not just a place of capital production, but of a production of gender, too.

Kolářová does not only identify globalized femininity, but masculinity, too. She takes over Connel's description of neoliberal masculinity as calculating egocentrism without responsibility and adds double typology of masculinities by Danner and Young as “a Davos man” and “a big brother” symbolizing global elite of business men on the one hand and military and controlling masculinity on the other. Even though it may seem like men are the ones solely identified as the oppressing maintainers of the global order it is not like that – they are also heroised players of the resistance to the neoliberal globalization (in chapters 5 and 6). This is what makes Kolářová's research so outstanding. She uses gender also to distinguish the relationship between various groups of men as well as between various groups of women. If for example Czech political and social philosopher Hana Havelková claims that “the majority of research keeps on researching stereotypes, but does not make a research of new modifications or breaking of these stereotypes. There is one formula what is feminine and what masculine and that's what is being searched for in those analyses”¹ then the Protest against Globalization does not belong to this category of analyses. She also refers to a new global division of reproduction work among women when the care for children, elderly members of the family or household care does not divide between the woman and the man living the household, but particularly in the Global North these are performed by illegal women workers of the Global South or the “Second” post-communist world for a minimum wage.

Chapter 4 on women's and feminist initiatives against globalization deals mainly with a description of localized resistance movements, and autonomous activism of women. Additionally, it also analyses networking of transnational women's and feminist movement. Here, the author introduces an issue (not widely discussed in Slovakia and Czech Republic) of the relationship of the

¹ Vodrážka, M. (2009). Gender se u nás točí v kruhu... (Gender in a Vicious Circle...): Second of a series of dialogues on the issue Crisis of Gender, Mirek Vodrážka questioning Hana Havelková, who teaches at the Department of Gender Studies FHS UK.. GITA – Gender information and publishing agency, (27. 07. 2009). Retrieved from <http://www.ta-gita.cz/kriticke-reflexe/gender-se-u-nas-to-ci-v-kruhu/>

institutionalized and non-institutionalized activism. The umbrella term “global feminism” is to great extent result of the worldwide OSN conferences on women (the fourth and the last one took place in 1995 in Peking and its action platform has become a political document used ever since) and transnational networks, where global institutions try to lobby and cooperate with them on strong and stable basis. On the other hand, there are countless women's movements, which are sometimes instrumentalised by such institutionalized movement. A dialogue between these two kinds of women's movements is rather complicated. Kolářová shows where their political frames meet and where they miss each other. Based on the criticism of campaigns against child labour in Bangladesh (by Ethel Brooks, who is a sociology and gender studies professor at the Rutgers University in USA, where Kolářová spend her study visit supported by the Fulbright Program), she recommends the transnational women's movements and campaigns that “autonomy of the workers and their own activity to improve their status is vital. Activists coming from the North or from transnational networks should be acquainted with local initiatives and the impacts of transnational activism on local conditions.” (p. 116)

Core of the book is formed by its third part. In her study of anti-globalization movements and its gender aspect in the Czech Republic between 2000 and 2004 she combined various research methods (involved observation, in-depth and informal discussions, internet discussions, content analysis of alternative media of anarchist, socialist and feminist movements) and tried to build a dialogue between the gathered data and the existing sociological knowledge (research method is thoroughly dealt with in the chapter 6). Anti-globalization movement in the Czech Republic had consolidated during the protests preparation against the meeting of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank in September 2000 in Prague. Globally, after the protests in the Seattle in 1999, which were often considered as the beginning of the anti-globalization movement (by the way, Kolářová disputes this thesis convincingly) the anti-globalization movement had found itself in a very active stage. Kolářová describes the intersection of anti-capitalist, radical, leftist and anarchist movement in the Czech Republic with transnational anti-globalization movement as a diffusion of transnational impulses which later on internalized and externalized.

Author observes that gender played a vital role in this process and “influences the recruitment and mobilisation of social movements, its roles and activities, and also the strategies of resistance, organizational structures, importance and impact of social movements”. (p. 132) While before Prague 2000 girls and women entered the anti-capitalist movement in the Czech Republic mainly as girlfriends or partners of the activists, the mass mobilization, opening up of the movement, that was necessary for a successful organization of big protests in 2000 enabled them to enter regardless of intimate relationships or affiliation to a closed group of friends. From those, who were just folding the printed activists newspaper A-Kontra for distribution or as one activist puts it, from women who were just accompanying the

men they were becoming speakers of the Initiative against Economic Globalization (INPEG) that was organizing the protests in Prague, or activists, who were critically reflecting their gender roles at the demonstrations or in alternative periodical editorial boards. Thus the author reveals gender bias of the milieu of the political activism, which is often defined as anti-hierarchical and anti-authoritarian. Nevertheless, this environment mainly appreciates the heroism of the “black block” members who are ready for direct contact with the police at the demonstrations. The activism of women adjusts to the dominant value frame and as a result women are found on the posts of activist health care. Kolářová questions the apparently stereotyped division of roles by pointing to the shift of power between the nursed and the nursing one or to physical and mental demanding character of such work. However, she also studies, why women and men find the peaceful “fluffy” tactics of the “Pink” or “Pink and Silver Block” so unattractive despite the fact that the strategic results they bring are often significant. For example in Prague, 2000, the Pink Samba Block was the only one able to get to the Congress Centre, where the meeting of the representatives of the IMF and WB was taking place. They were able to block the building; the representative couldn’t leave, which then contributed to the ending of the session one day earlier.

According to the author, there are two masculinities that meet in the anti-globalization struggle – a dominant and a resistant one. Such defined political conflict restricts significantly the level of feminization in the protest anti-globalization movement. So even though “pink rules” for example in representation tactics or as one of the constituents of a demonstration still nonviolence, lampooning, game or carnival as “fluffy spectacle” give preference if not to a fighting activist, then at least to the fighters always ready to fight.

It would be interesting to further work on the examples of the efforts of men to marginalize the actions of women or even exclude them from public life, which appears in the last chapter. Although the consent with the experience of a Slovak activist in Genoa in 2001 in the magazine *Antifašistická akcia* (Antifascist action) (“after the breakfast, we left the girls at the car on a beach to get their tan and we went to town to look for the heart of resistance”) reminds us of a cheap macho talk of a vacationer in Italy, it is in fact an episode of a depolitisation of the actions of women in the anti-globalization movement.

The book *Protest against Globalization: Gender and Feministic Critique* is thematically wide. She approached the complicating links between gender, globalization, feminism, anti-capitalism and social movements rather well mainly in the first five chapters and succeeded in making it so comprehensible that it can be used as study material in bachelor or master courses of many disciplines – gender studies, sociology, philosophy, journalism, media studies and in political science. The book also describes the story of the leftist activism in the Czech Republic. Unlike other summary publications² it provides us with an insight into

² Tomek, V. – Slačálek, O. (2006). *Anarchism: Freedom against Power* (Anarchismus: svoboda proti moci). Praha: Vyšehrad.

the leftist scene at the beginning of the 3rd millennium enabling to understand better its structure and cooperation in terms of ideology and strategy.

As I have mentioned in the introduction, book's undeniable contribution is the issue of locating the Czech Republic into the "Second World". This is reflected in the extent of the heteronomy and autonomy that Kolářová ascribes to anti-globalization movement. On the one hand, movement is clearly determined by the globalization processes and neoliberal politics, but on the other it is also independent of the globalization processes: "however, what is autonomous and independent directly of the globalization processes are from my point of view movement's tactics since these are more related to earlier methods of the movement that is trying to think of innovative forms. Thus, the feeling of newness does not come from the globalization, but rather from an earlier experience and from the development of the leftist movements." (p. 49) The book describes and analyses the intermingling of experience and development of the movement in the Czech Republic with the diffusion of foreign influence in a convincing manner. She also formulates the impacts of the fact that thanks to the historical burden of a post-communist country the issues of work, economic, class and ethnic inequalities are not described by the concepts of leftist theory and practice. On the other hand however, she says that there is a hope at least for gender studies as a branch and that "the incorporation of global dimension into Czech gender studies may inspire to study yet another dimension of inequality in the study of differences between men and women and that of class and ethnic inequalities". (p. 81)

I hope that Marta Kolářová's book *Protest against Globalization* will become if not a crossroads for further feminist criticism study of globalization and social movements then will at least serve as a reference for anybody who would like to deal with the intricacies of gender aspects of the globalization in Slovak academic, semi-academic or activist environment. Lack of theory and the use of concepts in a number of lately published research reports is not easy to understand. I have observed the fact while reading the extraordinarily interesting publications of the Institute for Public Affairs³ and taking into account translations of the book *The Globalized Woman* by Christa Wichterich (ProFem, Praha 2000) and studies of world feminist economists, philosophers, sociologists and activists mainly in the feminist cultural magazine *Aspekt* (Aspect) and the webzine *AspektIn* (Maria Mies, Vandana Shiva, Silvia Federici, Heidi Hartmann etc.). It would be splendid if the book's erudition and keen approach to a complicated issue of globalization inspired more researchers, activists and students.

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³ E.g. Bútorová, Z. (ed.). (2007). *Here and Now: Probes into the Lives of Women 45+ (Tu a teraz : sondy do života žien 45+)*. Bratislava: The Institute for Public Affairs. Review was published in the journal *Sociológia* – see Porubánová, S. (2008). Zora Bútorová (ed.): *Tu a teraz: sondy do života žien 45+ Sociológia* (2), 167-170.