University of Crete
Department of Philosophy and Social Studies, Department of Sociology, Gender Lab

Workshop : "Women's Social and Political experiences in Modern and Contemporary Balkans"

Rethymno, 10 June 2015, Room "Micheli", 15.00- 20.00

Abstracts

To Have and to Hold: Gender Regimes and Women's Property Rights in Modern Romania.

Maria Bucur-Deckard, Indiana University, US

How have legislative changes over the twentieth century in the area of property rights opened up (or limited) women's access to and control over economic power, especially moving from the pre-communist to the communist eras. More than anywhere else in Europe, and possibly in the world, over the twentieth century the legal framework that defined property rights along gender lines shifted dramatically with the political regimes in power. My essay follows these changes and analyzes their impact on the extent to which women could legally act as autonomous individuals on behalf of their economic self-interest. More details: The work I'd like to present has to do with property regimes in the modern period and gender roles. I will present a paper about the evolution of the legislation and what that meant for women as citizens starting in the nineteenth century and moving to 1990. It is part of the argument that Mihaela Miroiu and I developed about the birth of democratic citizenship in easter Europe.

Feminists despite themselves

Krassimira Daskalova, University of Sofia, Bulgaria

This presentation is an attempt to bring more light into the topic of state socialist feminism in Eastern Europe, using part of the biography of one of the most visible women's activists and political functionaries in Bulgaria after 1944 – Tsola Dragoicheva. It should be considered as a contribution to the ongoing debate regarding the character of state socialist measures towards women and the "gender contract" in the countries from Central, Eastern and Southeastern Europe between 1944 and 1989. It does not pretend, however, to cover and evaluate the whole life of Dragoicheva (or to like everything she did), nor to create an exhaustive picture of state socialist measures towards women in Bulgaria; it just pays attention to some facts and procedures dealing with "women's issues" which have been vaguely covered by the researchers so far. My study is based on various archival materials from Bulgarian and international archives (among them minutes of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party), on periodical press from the period into consideration, scholarly publications relevant to this topic and oral history interviews.

Women in Red: Communist Mass Women's Organizations and International Feminism during the Cold War

Kristen Ghodsee,Bowdoin College, US

Women in Red: Communist Mass Women's Organizations and International Feminism during the Cold War is a book-length manuscript examining the connections between women from the former Eastern Bloc countries and women's movements in Africa. Using ethnographic interviews and archival research, the project is an interdisciplinary exploration of the forgotten links between Africa and Eastern Europe through the lens of women's organizing. Using the case study of the Committee for the Bulgarian Women's Movement (CBWM), the book recuperates the history of international socialist women's activism during the United Nations Decade for Women (1975-1985). By mobilizing women from the developing world, women from the Eastern Bloc may have instigated Cold War competition over which economic system could provide more de facto and de jure equality to women. This rivalry benefitted all women in the long run, whether they lived in the communist, capitalist, or developing worlds.

Facing Capitalism and Building Democracy: Women's Political Experiences after 1989

Mihaela Miroiu, National School of Political Studies and Public Administration, Romania

My paper is based on a qualitative research I have conducted with Maria Bucur (3 focus-groups and 110 interviews with women form Hunedoara region, Romania, Transylvania). It is a possible answer to the question why women's political representation is placing Romania on the 91 place (or less) in the *Global Gender Gap Report*. Women consider themselves part of a political contract which they respect in many ways: working, even more than men and sometimes in their place; paying taxes to national and local budgets; volunteering for their communities; voting even when they are excluded, marginalized or ghettoized; doing politics along men. They seem naïve in their preponderantly ethic judgments of political behavior. After a more in-depth analysis, it becomes clear that women's insistence on ethical judgments is tied to their desire for democracy and the rule of law to strengthen, to become "real." Our respondents have an average and sometimes a beyond average democratic culture. None of them conveyed extremist opinions; none of them denied the virtues of democratic pluralism. Women's political disappointments generally have the following sources: capitalism slowly reaching their area and especially in a ruthless form, and not in an welfare one. The electoral promises are systematically breached. As the public budget priorities are completely different than women's priorities, governments are rather inefficient. The selection of politicians is bad and has counterproductive results. Although women consider themselves very prepared to organize, administer and lead, they are kept aside by the formulation of public politics, enactment, and budget in a context where the considerable reduction of the patriarchal state has not led to the reduction of gender patriarchal regime. However, as they belong to the EU, women express lucid optimism, especially, regarding their children's future in an open world and a justly competitive society.

Feminisms in Ottoman context: Anti-emancipation Discourses in the Ottoman Greek Women's Press(1880-1914)

Katerina Dalakoura, University of Crete, Greece

The presentation intends to contribute in the discussion on the "feminisms" in the south Eastern Europe, by presenting women's discourses on the "emancipation/anti-emancipation" issue which emerged within Ottoman Empire. More precisely it will

present the discourses on the issue emerged in the Ottoman Greek women's press from 1880s until the 2nd decade of the 20th century, focusing on the anti-emancipation discourses which surfaced the Ottoman Greek women's Journals of the period (in contrast with the Muslim ones and the journals published within the newly established Balkan states). It will try to trace the uses/meanings of the concept(s), emphasizing the plurality of women's voices reflected on women's publications. The "empire" context will be taking strongly into consideration in the approach and analysis of the topic. The study is based on the following periodicals, all published during the aforementioned period: *Ladys' Almanac (1888-1889),* edited by A. Papadopoulou and X. Korakidou, *Bosporis (1899-1906),* edited by Kornelia Preveziotou, *The Hpeirous* (Alamanac) *(1910*), edited by M. Maytokordatou, the *"Ladys' Newspaper: (1909-1911)*, edited by Charikleia Melandinou, *the Mikrasiatikon Himerologion (Alamanac) (1906-1918)* edited by Eleni Svoronou, and '*The Spark" (1902),* edited by Artemisia Landraki. All periodicals but the latter two ones (which were published in the islands of Samos and Crete, respectively) were published in Istanbul.

Gender and the economic crisis

Yota Papageorgiou, University of Crete

The purpose of this paper is to show the effects of the current economic crisis on gender relations in Greece, in terms of employment, family responsibilities, state and social policy, and social and personal issues. It is based on a qualitative research carried out in Greece during the Summer of 2013-and Spring 2014. The paper is divided in two parts. The first part offers an overview of the status of Greek women as well as the austerity policies forced on them by the state and assesses its effects. It argues that the state rearranged its priorities leaving gender rights last in terms of national importance. The second part of the paper discusses how some Greek women cope with their reduced benefits and how gender equality is affecting their everyday life, based on in-depth interviews, using snowballing sample of 28 women, collected in Athens metropolitan area.