

Andrea Spehar (2007) *How Women's Movements Matter. Women's Movements' Strategies and Influence on Gender Policy Formation in Post-communist Croatia and Slovenia*. English text. Göteborg Studies in Politics 106. Department of Political Science, Box 711, 405 30 Göteborg, Sweden. Göteborg 2007. 294 pages. ISBN 13: 978-91-89246-31-7, ISSN 0346-5942

Women have a long tradition of organising to resist oppression and expand their rights as women and citizens through the advocacy of national gender policies. This dissertation addresses the central strategic problem of such influence: how women's movements should be positioned relative to policy-makers. Should women's movements representatives be incorporated into state institutions or is outsider status more effective for promoting gender equality?

The aim with this dissertation is twofold. First, by analyzing women's movements policy agency in Croatia and Slovenia the author aims to contribute knowledge about the role which women's movements have played in Eastern Europe during its transition period. Second, by analyzing the strategies and the influence of the Croatian and Slovenian women's movements the author wished to develop theoretical understandings about the effectiveness of different strategies of the women's movement.

The author details the strategies of women's movements attempting to influence four gender policy areas: violence against women, anti-discrimination policy, parental leave and pension reform. Process tracing is the basic method for exploring the potential policy influence. Empirical data includes primary and secondary textual documents as well as interviews with representatives from women's movements, governments and other important actors involved in different policy processes. The evidence gathered from interviews is based on the women's movements' representatives self-assessment of their influence (ego perception) and the assessments by the targets of their influence, the governmental representatives (alter perception). To verify knowledge gathered from the alter and ego perceptions and confirm whether women's movements indeed caused specific effects on policy outcomes, an analysis of the policy process is employed (supra analysis).

The results show that women's movements in Croatia and Slovenia played an important role in the formation of gender policy during the transition period. As well as being influential in bringing gender equality issues to public attention, the women's movements were influential in the actual formation of gender policies. Furthermore, it is found that the strategies are not crucial to the ability of women's movements to exert influence on gender policy formation. Women's movements in Croatia and Slovenia were using and combining different strategies depending on the nature of the policy issues and the characteristics of the political context which were dominant in different policy processes. The experiences of the Croatian and Slovenian women's movements tell us that the relationship between women working outside and inside state institutions changes over policy cases and policy segments; that it is interactive and dynamic, rather than predictable and permanent. As a result, it is not possible to make emphatic claims about certain strategies being more or less beneficial for women's movements.

**Key words:** women's movements, policy influence, post-communism, transition, gender equality, gender policy, Croatia, Slovenia, Process tracing, strategy, civil society, pension reform, violence against women, parental leave, gender equality law.