

**Fábián, Katalin. *Contemporary Women's Movements in Hungary: Globalization, Democracy and Gender Equality*. The Woodrow Wilson Center Press, Washington, D.C.: 2009. 396 pp., Illus.**

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Katalin Fábián has written a persuasive examination that demonstrates how democracy and globalization influenced and continue to shape the formation, existence, and future of women's groups in Hungary since the fall of Communism in 1989. It is not an easy task due to the lack of easy to evaluate datasets to prove progress, but the author's dedication to a thorough analysis and explanation of the interconnected nature of the material proves that Women's Movements exist in Hungary. Furthermore, these groups provide beneficial services by helping to facilitate the changes hastened by the arrival of democracy and globalization.

Fábián begins by outlining and explaining her expertise which arose from extensive research of many activists and groups between 1989 and 2008. It is in this analysis of her study that the effects of the new realities of the post-communist era are clearest. Her outline and desired path through the vast amount of material is clearly defined from the outset including quantitative analysis of how gender inequality "has changed since 1989 and assessments of whether, and, if so, how women bear the burden of the new allocation of resources and duties by comparing them to the relatively unchanged gender regime in West Europe" (16) and personal interviews with many activists in the organizations. In addition, twenty-eight figures and tables within and seventy-nine additional pages of appendices, notes, and references accompany this volume.

It is through this layered approach that Fábián's analytical narrative shines and the reader is presented with a clear picture of the direction these groups are taking and the potential long term influence they will have on their newly democratic and increasingly globalized country. In each chapter, she presents the pieces which when woven together provide a detailed view of the state of Hungarian women's groups. The text begins with the rise of contemporary women's movements and explains the newfound significance of gender and the disparity of gender in the political and economic developments in post-communist Central and Eastern Europe. Upon this base of political and economic change, the organizational characteristics of the groups are examined in light of traditional and phoenix groups and the challenges they face in the new democracy. Furthermore, the organizational structure guides the discussion about beliefs on gender equality and politics and the impact the groups have along the democratic continuum. Lastly, Fábián explores the rise of dialog and action across the public/private divide and what is being accomplished to combat violence against women.

Globalization is an issue that drives much of the text, from the challenge of interpreting and growing beyond the disregard of Western feminist organizations because of how they disliked the value Hungarian women placed on family (118) to how the groups are trying to balance the deep gender divide through political quotas. Additionally the groups faced linguistic challenges when faced with Western terms translated into Hungarian culture. For example, the struggle for "sameness" is not the focus of women's political agendas as it may be in the West. There is a desire instead for "equal rank", as the image of a woman doing a man's work is the emotional and physical devastating picture of a now defunct long-standing dysfunctional platform of Communism (137).

The rise of domestic violence awareness is a concept that was taboo under the Communist regime, and faces additional challenges in Hungary. What term does one use? Many of the terms used in Western discourse are gender-centric and the terminology was changed in an effort to engage policy makers and thus many specific terms specifying violence to a specific individual in a specific place were discarded. Furthermore, “[w]ith cohabiting and divorce rates in Central and Eastern Europe reaching record highs, the traditional approach of limiting domestic violence to married partners living at the same address was not tenable. The obvious alternative to wife abuse would have been ‘partner violence,’ but this can also infer homosexual relationships, and legitimating homosexual partnerships even in such a backhanded way would be an unwelcome task for most politicians” (232). Once terminology was settled upon there was the historical cultural difficulty of having the police take action in the private sphere.

Are there women’s groups in Hungary? Yes. Have they struggled through the economic, political, social changes since 1989? Yes. Do they face challenges to achieve meaningful democratization? Yes. Through this strongly woven narrative, Fábíán highlights the importance of these issues to contemporary Hungary and brings focus to the challenges women’s groups face in proving the importance in their impact of on life in Hungary today.