

Book Review-Women in New Migrations

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**Die polnische Wende
1989 in der DDR-Presse.
Eine Quellensammlung**

**The Polish Political Change 1989
Reflected in the GDR Press.
A Collection of Sources**

By **Tytus Jaskułowski**

Osteuropa-Zentrum Berlin, Berlin, 2007
(in German)

This book is a source of the East German press publications from the 1989-1990, which had dealt with the origins, causes and effects of the peaceful revolution in Poland (January - Dezember 1989).

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Krystyna Slany, Maria Kantos, Maria Liapi (eds.), *Women in New Migrations: Current Debates in European Societies*. Kraków: Jagiellonian University Press, 2010, pp. 329.
ISBN: 978-83-233-2473

Keywords: migration; integration; women; intersectionality.

Women in New Migration consists of ten chapters depicting the state of research on female migrants in eleven European countries (the paper written by Giovanna Campani covers two countries: Spain and Italy).

In the book, “new migrations” stand for migrations taking place after 1990. Changes in geopolitical situation following the decline of communist system has led to massive changes in migration movements but also—as authors of the book claim—to increase of visibility of women as migrants. This latter phenomenon is sometimes referred to as feminisation of migration. This process is one of the central issues in the book. On the one hand, the authors of the ‘national’ chapters make an inquiry into how the migration processes in these particular research settings are becoming feminised. On the other hand, they also question whether the new phenomenon we are dealing with is the migration of women or rather the increased visibility of the gender dimension as such. In this sense, ‘feminisation of migration’ pertains to changes of role played by women-migrants. According to the authors, they become autonomous labour migrants and not only family members who follow their spouses migrating to new workplaces. Therefore, one cannot read the book without a wider perspective on gender awareness in the social sciences.

The notion organizing the idea of the book is the “intersectionality”—i.e. gender processes cannot be understood without taking into account that they intersect with class, race/ethnicity and immigrant status. Noteworthy, Floya Anthias—one of the co-authors of the chapter *Gender, Migration and Work: Perspectives and Debates in the UK*—is the founder of the concept of ‘intersectionality’. She has introduced the term in her 1980s studies of Greek Cypriot migrants in Great Britain.

The book is divided into three parts. “Old Immigration Countries in Northern Europe” offers treatments of United Kingdom, France, Germany and Sweden. These substantial contributions notwithstanding, one could only regret that there is no chapter dealing with the Netherlands. This is not only one of the most interesting immigration countries, but also a source of highly developed and influential migration studies

within the field of European scientific discourses on integration, multiculturalism etc. The fact that Dutch researchers have not taken part in the research team explains the lack of this theoretical analysis. “New Immigration Countries in Southern Europe” consists of chapters about Italy, Spain, Portugal, Greece and Cyprus. Eventually, “New Immigrations in Transformation Societies” discusses Poland and Slovenia.

The chapters certainly qualify as very useful guides to national literatures on migrations of women. It should be expected that following scholars who take up new research on gender dimension of migration in one of the countries covered by the book, should refer to these monographs that give a full account of what has already been researched, of which theoretical angle has been employed and of what kind of research is still lacking. In this sense, *Women in New Migration* serves as a good hint for young researchers regarding what kind of strategic research sites are waiting for further inquiry. The book could be also read as a literature reviewed from the point of the research program of intersectionality—here gender is regarded as one of the three most important elements of research. Authors’ repeated comments that the approaches under analyses have not applied the intersectionality as to give a broader gender perspective, show that this is the case.

Another paradox of the book stems from its overall construction and tension between national and international processes of migration. The chapters view the state of the art in particular scientific and research fields on migration. Accordingly, this endeavor is motivated by the fact that “women’s lives and gender relations embedded in the national contexts and shaped by their cultural social and economic conditions strongly influence research on female migrants” (10–11). Still, the emerging thesis of the book is that “scientific debates are mostly not nationally limited.” Throughout the chapters one can find manifestations of similar processes and—even more interesting—of different stages of them, depending on the time when a given country started receiving immigrants. Yet, due to the lack of a concluding final chapter the issue of a general (European) perspective or tendency—and maybe even pattern—is not being addressed. A seven pages long introduction is not enough to broadly discuss this issue and the editors did not have this ambition.

Reviewing the book we should differentiate between the chapters which advance a review of national literature solely, and those which do more than this. In my opinion, the most interesting chapter of the book is the one written by Mirjana Morokvasic and Christine Catarino on “Women, Gender, Transnational Migrations and Mobility in France.” The two authors criticize ritualistic discovering of women in migrations and do not agree that feminisation of migration is a new phenomenon. Accordingly, such framing lead to asymmetries in research such as concentrating on women migrating alone while women migrating with families become underresearched (Morokvasic and Catarino claim that these constitute 82% of migrant women in France), or on transnational motherhood at the expense of transnational fatherhood or of other forms of transnational household experience or of women’s contribution to remittances.

Obviously, it is a ‘privilege’ for authors from countries of long immigration tradition to be able to discuss more complicated theoretical issues and implementations of analytical models. Observably, the newer the phenomenon of immigration to a given

country, the more the paper resembles ‘archaeology of knowledge’. The authors extract the knowledge on women migrants from studies which are not gender oriented and cover the issue of immigration from other perspectives. These papers—the one on Poland (Krystyna Slany, Agnieszka Małek and Magdalena Ślusarczyk) and Slovenia (Veronika Bajt, Mojca Pajnik)—are interesting because they evidence the potential and skills of authors being able to give a picture of women in migrations in countries where the topic was hardly analyzed as such, because of the fact that the migration studies have barely started the transition from an exploratory phase to an explanatory one.

To conclude, *Women in New Migrations* is an important publication for researchers who wish to have an insight in the state of the art of gender oriented studies of migrations. Unfortunately, the book was designed in such a way that it did not envisage any room for a more encompassing discussion or for drawing a general profile. It should be also mentioned that the work is the fruit of the international research project “Integration of Female Immigrants in Labour Market and Society. Policy Assessment and Policy Recommendations” (acronym: FeMiPol). Given that the project had wider scientific goals than the ones depicted in the book as such, I hope it is just a matter of time that the international team will supplement the theoretical review with the empirical findings of their fieldwork.

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