

Neoconservative Mobilizations in Croatia – the Influence on Gender Policies and Women’s Movement

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Abstract

This research analyzed the reach of neoconservative activism in Croatia by providing a causal analysis of intersection of the three actors – the state, neoconservatives and feminists. Relying on the media excerpts, organizational web pages, institutional documents and interviews with feminist activists, the research question that guided the analysis investigated the changes that have occurred in gender equality field since the neoconservative mobilization. The research offered several findings. First, the neoconservatives did not fully manage to influence the backsliding of gender policies because they failed to align the state completely to their side, as visible in concurrence of both progress and backsliding of gender policies. Instead, the neoconservative efforts to reverse the progress of gender policies have resulted with de-democratization processes and erosion of democratic procedures. Second, the activity of neoconservatives has demonstrated the shifting position or maneuvering of the state between the neoconservative and feminist actors, depending on the wider political context. Third, the influence of neoconservative activism on women’s movement has revealed generational issue within the movement as well as creation of wide coalitions and alliances as the main reaction strategy. Finally, the post-EU entering context that facilitated neoconservative activism has also demonstrated spilling over of gender issues from their previous frames into other social domains.