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KATALIN FÁBIÁN AND ELŻBIETA KOROLCZUK (EDS.), *REBELLIOUS PARENTS: PARENTAL MOVEMENTS IN CENTRAL-EASTERN EUROPE AND RUSSIA*, INDIANA UNIVERSITY PRESS, BLOOMINGTON, 2017.

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The book of essays *Rebellious Parents: Parental Movements in Central-Eastern Europe and Russia* brings together researchers from various disciplines to undertake a systematic and meticulous insight into the parental movements in this part of Europe and Russia over the past two decades. It aims to propose new conceptualization of civil society and civic activism and to fill existing gaps in the Civil Society Studies. Since this is the first book exploring parental movements in Central-Eastern Europe and Russia, it opens with a discussion on conceptual and theoretical limitations of existing models of civil society. The reader will be able to discover that the absence of studies on parental movements in the post-communist European region thus far is caused, in great part, by the application of the Western-centric idealized model of civil society onto the completely different, post-communist experience of social activism.

Although they are embedded in the context of local civil societies, all examined parental movements are actually transnational phenomenon since they link national ideological rhetoric with an illiberal transnational ideological standpoint. As such, conceptualization

of parental movements and activism given in this book, may be applied in other geographical contexts and serve as a model for examining specific types of societal actions that do not fit the liberal (Western) vision of civil society. In addition, the contribution to the Civil Society Studies is also seen in the examination of the set of ambiguities concerning the activists' relationship toward the State, the West, and Gender Equality, which highlights the heterogeneity of activism as it is. Although most of the surveyed parents distance themselves from the state, criticizing the control and authority of legal institutions or health care professionals, as well as gender experts (in matters such as mandatory vaccination of children, natural childbirth or the rights of the fathers' groups), some of the activists (such as parents with children with disabilities in the Baltic states) try to collaborate with the State in order to ensure the success of their actions. Essays in this volume also examine how parental movements respond, as well as influence modern socio-historical and policy changes, while emphasizing the influence of long-lasting legacy of communist systems on examined issues. Despite the anti-Western

stance and arguments of some parental movements in the region, there are visible connections between them and other parental activists from Western Europe. Actually, some of the movements from Eastern Europe and Russia rely on material, cultural and human resources from Western Europe and other regions (for example, anti-vaccination parental movement in the Czech Republic has a world-wide support). The authors point out that the common place of the examined parental movements is conservative response to the changes that come from the modern understanding of family and parenting, especially their gender aspects, and it is based “on the rejection of what the activists see as “rampant individualism” of modern world” (p. 4). However, some of the examined parental movements, such as home-birth movement in Hungary, have based their arguments on the combination of both rising conservatism (manifested mostly in the visual self-representation of the movement) and the influence of feminism (argued as the right of woman to choose place and method of giving birth).

Given that the volume is widely comprehensive in its content in order to comment on all the texts in this format, I would like to point out three main themes, that is, the three segments of the book resulting from it, as another valuable contribution. Parental mobilization explored here focuses on three important issues: 1) conservative nationalist trends, 2) changes concerning the status and social perception of fatherhood and gender equality, and 3) health-related issues and policies. Conservative mobilizations are examined and interpreted in texts by: Tova Höjdestrand (on grassroots mobilization in defense of “family values” in Russia), Olena Strelnyk (on conservative parents’ mobilization in Ukraine) and Ina Dimitrova (on constructing parenthood and nation in Bulgaria through

new reproductive technologies). The activism of fathers’ groups is the topic of texts by: Elżbieta Korolczuk and Renata E. Hryciuk (on fathers’ activism in contemporary Poland), Pelle Åberg and Johnny Rodin (on fatherhood in Russia examined through “daddy-schools” in Saint Petersburg), Iman Karzabi (on fathers’ activism in Ukraine) and Steven Saxonberg (on fathers’ activism in the Czech Republic examined through the main Czech discussion forum for fathers). Health-related concerns are the topic of the texts by: Jaroslava Hasmanová Marhánková (on mandatory vaccination in the Czech Republic), Egle Sumskiene (on advocacy for children with intellectual disabilities in the Baltic states), Ema Hrešanová (on the natural childbirth movement in the Czech Republic) and Katalin Fábíán (on Hungarian home-birth movement). Introduction and concluding section of the book are signed by the editors Katalin Fábíán and Elżbieta Korolczuk. The first thematic part of the book gives analysis of parental movements as locally enrooted phenomenon that are part of a broader trends of conservative mobilization. This thematic block emphasizes the first specificity of parental movements in Eastern Europe and Russia i. e. intertwining of gendered nationalism and anti-Western arguments when it comes to the parenthood and children’s welfare issues in the post-communist context. The second section gives contribution, in the first place, to the studies on masculinities that are represented in this book through studies of fathers’ activism so rarely explored in this part of Europe and Russia. Texts on mothers’ activism reveal the gender problematic of parental movements, since mothers will rather refer to themselves as ‘parents’ rather than ‘mothers’ (which is not the case with activists fathers), which actually camouflages the empirical reality and leaves the question on how much different family issues are really

supported by men in post-communist societies. The third section of the book explores how changes in parental attitudes towards their own health and health of their children, as well as how the development of medical sciences, influence and are influenced by parental movements. The texts in this section of the book highlight the concept of responsible parenting that is independent of the authority and control of the State.

To conclude, rooted in everyday local context but having broader agendas and support, the conceptualization of

parental movements in this book include formal, as well as informal networks and online initiatives that mobilize parents in their goal to achieve socio-political changes in wide-range of parental issues, mostly from the anti-individualistic ideological standpoint. Therefore, this conceptualization without any doubt questions and redefines what civil society and civic engagement mean in the post-communist context. This book is useful both for professionals interested in parenting and researchers in the field of Civil Society Studies.