ABSTRACT

GENDER (IN)EQUALITY IN THE POST-SOCIALIST ROMANIA

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This paper views gender (in)equality as a central aspect of the post-socialist reconstruction of the social and cultural order, implicitly of the emergence, formation and consolidation of new inequalities between and within men and women of different ethnicity and social position. It also addresses it as a phenomenon composed of material and social practices, mechanisms and processes, but as well as of classificatory systems and underlying cultural concepts; and, further on, it considers (in)equality a social and cultural construct which has diverse but as well shared meanings for different people at various walks of a particular society at certain moments of their life.

Based on the empirical case study done in the multiethnic city of Cluj (situated in Transylvania, the Western part of Romania), my paper exposes the differences and similarities between the gender orders characteristic of Romanian, Hungarian and Roma families. The statistical data resulted from the survey and the stories collected by the means of life narrative interviews and group interviews reflect the ways in which people create, accommodate to, resist and eventually change the patriarchal gender order. But they also disclose the social inequalities produced at the crossroads of ethnicity and gender. At the same time they prove that the nature and dynamics of the patriarchal gender regime, but as well as of women’s emancipation acquire features and meanings according to the broader social order in which they are embedded.

On the other hand, my paper aims to prove the theoretical and critical potential of feminism in understanding and deconstructing both the socialist/paternalist type of gender-consciousness and the post-socialist patriarchal gender-blindness.

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