

GENDER AT THE BORDER: ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN RURAL POST-SOCIALIST HUNGARY, By Janet Henshall Momsen with Iren Kukorelli Szorenyi and Judit Timar. Hampshire, England: Ashgate, 2005.

The research in this book is a critical analysis of the transition process in Hungary's border region from a post-communist era into the globalization era. It looks into the impact of the expansion of globalization and neo liberal economic policies as they have been affected by the accession of Hungary to the European Union in May 2004.

In terms of geopolitical changes and local perceptions in the eastern frontiers of Hungary, the change in the political regime was accompanied by privatization and the imposition of rules on the market economy. This has led to enormous social ruptures, especially in the borderlands. Globalization allowed for flows of people and goods, but in doing so it brought in new crises, caused in part by the presence of foreigners. This was particularly apparent in Hungary, having previously been very ethnically homogenous. However, the western borders of Central and Eastern Europe are perceived as zones of opportunity and as victors in the process of transition, while rural eastern areas remain unchanged and stable.

The research sheds light on the spatial pattern of unbalanced development as it occurred in Hungary, and on how border changes have approximated western opportunities which have become valorized, especially in the local mindscape.

"Self employment allows people to have the freedom to take advantage of entitlement and capabilities," says Amartya Sen. "This indeed was the method initiated as a result of frictions in our case study." The geopolitical changes which followed the accession of Hungary to the EU brought new opportunities. The conditions for agricultural production have changed and new entrepreneurs began coping with difficulties caused by the changes in the border areas. Rural labor markets provided fewer opportunities due to sparse population and spatial constraints on travel. New survival strategies developed, especially amongst women, who combined household consumption as well as new sources of income. Women in North-West Hungary developed micro-business type entrepreneurship, instead of migrating, which is typical to young people.

The research found that while the eastern rural areas remained largely agricultural, the west was rapidly transitioning. The western border zone quickly became a post-productivist rural area where tourism was becoming increasingly important. Opportunities for small business became more plentiful in the west, and less so in the east. The research indicates that the western borderlands have become a dynamic area of innovation, with a flexible and mobile workforce because of its proximity to the European Union.

Of special interest is the fact that the overall pattern is gendered. Under socialism, the available maternity and childcare allowances made women responsible for children and so reinforced gendered division of labor. Today, the discarding of such

stereotypes on men and women provides new opportunities, as well as an increased friction between the genders. Sexism is found to be a factor which is increasingly being used to prevent women from moving into better jobs or to areas with better economic opportunities. Hence gender relations are one of the factors behind the major labor market changes addressed in this case study. As women started to take initiative, changes occurred, such as: increased flexibility of labor; a widening wage gap including marked polarization of incomes; instability in labor markets; a greater dependence on contingent work; and less social protection.

The research showed that male and female entrepreneurs have different attitudes towards their work. On the whole, male entrepreneurs went into business to make money. Women went into business either because they chose to become self-employed or were forced into it by economic necessity. The latter group saw entrepreneurship as a means of family survival and as supporting their spouse, while those choosing to become self-employed saw their business in terms of self-fulfillment. Thus entrepreneurship both reinforced the dominant patriarchal culture and created a counter-cultural discourse on women's roles in civil society.

Women showed greater adaptability in their business, such as learning new languages. They also had the ability to run their business from home so as to be with their children. The success of many women entrepreneurs led to increased relationship problems within families. Changes in lifestyle brought friction into many entrepreneurial homes, as well as increased rates of divorce among such families.

These frictions and increased divorce rates did not prevent women in these regions from choosing self-employment, even in higher-risk fields. Most of the entrepreneurs were involved in micro-enterprises with no or very few employees. Many did not want to expand as it would mean adding employees and taking on the extra unwanted paperwork required. Despite the uncertainties involved in some of the businesses, the women saw these new economic opportunities as exciting and enjoyable.

Another interesting finding of this study showed differences in attitudes amongst women entrepreneurs. These differences were reflected by varied levels of living between the eastern and western borders. There were increased levels of depression and general poor health in the east, due to the stress of poverty, unemployment and the lack of job security. Men were more inclined than women to take disability retirement, in order to reduce or avoid the stigma of unemployment.

Not only family and gender relationships are influenced by such economic changes, but also the community fabric. Former community relationships were broken up by the regime change. Most strongly influential upon women was the new focus on employment competition. Entrepreneurs were envious of their neighbors, but women often felt that they had achieved social inclusion through participation in community organizations. Nevertheless, it may be concluded that feelings of well-being and autonomy developed through successful business that can be the basis for social inclusion as well as for building social capital.

In terms of cultural change for both eastern and western borders, this research presents the growing regional trans-national identity, as well as the feeling of regions in flux where the threat and the possibility of challenging local norms exist. Attitudes and beliefs influence behavior as much as the material realities. Reactions to the local impact of global change differ markedly on the two borders examined in this research.

In particular, memories of old borders seem to be stronger in the east than in the west. Border changes were more recent in the east and there is still a strong feeling of loss and anger at those changes which led to a disconnection from their previous urban centers as well as their current isolation. In the west, Burgenland belonged to the Hungarian part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and was poorer there than it is under Hungary today. Burgenland is now more prosperous than rural western Hungary. History plays little role in the mindscape of those in western Hungary and there is often little interest in contact between villages on either side of the border. These villages must learn that they are now all part of the European Union.

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CULTURE, URBANISM AND PLANNING, Edited by Javier Monclus and Manuel Guardia, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006.

The book brings together the three concepts that according to the editors represent main trends in urban planning during the last 15 years. Globalization and Post-modern ideas led to new ways of thinking about cities and their destiny in the global competition they are forced into. They argue that while urban planning up to the late 1960s was dominated by an enlightenment worldview, new trends are emerging during the last years concerning the ways in which cultural considerations are introduced into urban planning and how time is perceived both as a source of legitimizing urban planning and as a source of planning ideas. The new paradigm is strongly associated with the idea of the compact city. This idea seeks to revive inner cities' environments with new definitions of culture that abolish distinctions between high and everyday life cultures and develop sensitivities to cultural divergence. Under the enlightenment worldview, culture was perceived in terms of high culture being dealt separately from the city of daily life, which was planned according to economic considerations. Under globalization, culture is recruited for the project of inner city revitalization as well as for other spectacular projects, but economic considerations continually are considered through introducing the idea of cultural economics.

The book brings together 15 urban historians who try to unravel different aspects of the changes in urban planning since the 1970s. They demonstrate their arguments with more than a dozen of cities from Europe, North America and Latin