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INTIMATE CITIZENSHIP AND GENDERED WELL-BEING:  
THE CLAIMS AND INTERVENTIONS OF WOMEN'S MOVEMENTS  
IN EUROPE

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## Chapter 12

### **Intimate Citizenship and Gendered Well-Being:**

#### **The claims and interventions of women's movements in Europe**

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#### **Introduction**

Over the past forty years women's movements have expanded the scope of the politics of well-being, bringing issues of intimate life into the realm of claims for citizenship. In using the concept of 'intimate citizenship', we are incorporating the central second wave feminist claim that 'the personal is political', that 'public' and 'private' are always mutually entangled. We draw, in particular, on the work of Ken Plummer (2003) who has developed the concept of intimate citizenship in preference to the rather narrower notion of *sexual citizenship* that has been used by a number of other sociologists (for instance, Evans, 1993; Weeks, 1998; Bell and Binnie, 2000; Richardson, 2000). Plummer suggests that the 'intimate citizenship project' looks at 'the decisions people have to make over the control (or not) over one's body, feelings, relationships; access (or not) to representations, relationships, public spaces, etc; and socially grounded choices (or not) about identities, gender experience; erotic experiences' (1995:151). It refers to the fact that, in the wake of the movements for gender and sexual equality and change, 'our intimacies are now thoroughly contested'

(2003:13). This means both that the realm of personal life and close relationships is an arena of public, politicized struggle to change law, policy, and culture, and that, as individuals, we face a ‘growing array of ‘choices’ in our personal life [...] concerning families, gender, bodies, identities and sexualities’ (2003:4).

Plummer is joined by Anthony Giddens, (1992), Ulrich Beck and Elisabeth Beck-Gernsheim (1995), Manuel Castells (1997), and Jeffrey Weeks (2007) in seeing the post 1960s women’s movement as a key driver in radical transformations in how we lead our intimate lives over recent decades. These writers suggest that processes of individualization, de-traditionalization, and increased self-reflexivity are fundamentally linked to feminist political projects, and have opened up new possibilities and expectations in personal relationships and family life. Although they differ in their normative assessments of the shifts in the ordering and experience of intimate life – from Giddens’ optimism about the increased democracy and freedom to be found in the ‘pure relationship’, to Beck and Beck-Gernsheim’s ambivalence about the ‘normal chaos’ and risk inherent in contemporary love relationships – these theorists share the belief that feminist mobilizations have played a significant role in bringing about these social and cultural changes.

However, it is not enough to simply assert the impact of women’s movements without detailed research on the claims and demands of these movements. Whilst there is substantial international research on women’s movements, surprisingly little focuses specifically on how women’s movements have addressed intimate citizenship. Moreover, the north-western European/ North American assumptions that undergird arguments about the influence of ‘second wave feminism’ should be interrogated. Transformations in the politicization and regulation of intimate life are not uniform

across Europe and beyond. Women's movements and feminism have taken different forms, with different focal issues, across the divisions which have characterized European nation-states and structured the map of the continent. Even within local and national contexts, movements have been internally conflicted and multi-winged (Gal and Kligman, 2000; Griffin and Braidotti, 2002; Gerhard, 2002; Christensen, Halsaa and Saarinen, 2004; Marx Ferree and Tripp, 2006). Understanding struggles around intimate citizenship must involve attention both to endogenous, path-dependent, culturally specific, national factors, political struggles and historical compromises, and to exogenous influences, exerted by processes of transnationalization, regionalization, and globalization (Roseneil, 2009). This chapter has a limited aim – to begin to develop an understanding of the ways in which women's movements might have made a difference to how intimacy can be lived, to how it is regulated, and hence to women's well-being.

### **The FEMCIT Intimate Citizenship Project**

This chapter is based on research carried out as part of the FEMCIT consortium, a European Union Framework 6 Integrated Project that investigates 'the impact of contemporary women's movements' on 'gendered citizenship in multicultural Europe'.<sup>1</sup> Employing the radically extended conceptualization of citizenship for which feminism has argued, the FEMCIT project explores six inter-related dimensions of citizenship – political, economic, social, religious/ ethnic, bodily and intimate citizenship. In studying intimate citizenship we are concerned with the relationship between women's movements and intimate citizenship, seeking to understand how women's movements might have contributed to the transformation of both law and policy (Roseneil, 2009),

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<sup>1</sup> See [www.femcit.org](http://www.femcit.org).

The research has been carried out in national contexts which differ in terms of contemporary and historical gender and welfare regimes, state/ market relationship, dominant and minority religions and ethnic groups and patterns of im/migration. The four chosen national contexts are: Bulgaria, a former state socialist country; Norway, a Nordic ‘woman-friendly’ (Hernes, 1987) welfare state; Portugal, a southern European country, which has relatively recently transitioned from dictatorship to democracy; and the United Kingdom, a north-western European (neo)liberal democratic welfare state.

In the discussion that follows, we first present a brief overview of the history of women’s movements in our four case study countries, and then we explore how the claims and interventions of women’s movements contribute to a notion of intimate citizenship which serves to expand understandings of well-being.

#### **Four National Women’s Movements and Intimate Citizenship**

Although there were ‘first wave’ feminist demands around the ‘classic’ feminist issues of political and economic citizenship in all four countries, both Norway and the UK also had first wave feminist concern with issues of intimate citizenship and women’s well-being. Campaigns focused, for example, on male violence and prostitution, contraception, abortion and sex education, divorce and marriage law reform, child custody, and the social conditions facing single women (e.g. Hellesund, 2003; Hamilton, 1981; Bland, 2001; Vicinius, 1983). Between the 1920s and the late 1960s Norwegian and UK women’s movements were largely in abeyance, emerging again in vibrant new forms in the context of the cultural shifts and transnational political stirrings of the post-68 New Left and student movements. The 1970s saw a number of autonomous feminist groups with broad-ranging agendas formed across Norway, many with a particular focus on intimate citizenship issues, demanding change to the

institutions of marriage, the end of violence against women, access to abortion, and sexual liberation and sexual pleasure for women (Hellesund, 2009).<sup>2</sup> In the 1980s there was a move toward single issue NGOs and professionally-run organisations engaging with state policy, and in the 1990s the appearance of a ‘third wave’ of feminism. In the UK, between 1968 and 1970, many small women’s liberation groups were spontaneously formed around the country (Coppock, Haydon et al. 1995), coming together for the first time in 1970 as ‘the Women’s Liberation Movement’ (Pugh 2000; Rowbotham 1972; 1989). As in Norway, the 1970s were years of autonomous feminist activism in which issues of intimate citizenship featured prominently amongst the seven demands of the WLM, which were: contraception and abortion; childcare; legal and financial independence; an end to discrimination against lesbians; freedom from violence and sexual coercion and an end to male violence, dominance and men’s aggression towards women). The 1980s saw a move towards increasing engagement with the state, particularly local government. Since the 1990s, UK feminism has been characterized by a multiplicity of single-issue organisations, and the growth of internet-based activism (Crowhurst, 2009).

In Bulgaria and Portugal the trajectory of women’s movements has been tied to political regime change. In Bulgaria, the various women’s organizations which existed when the socialist government came to power in 1945 were unified into a single organisation, the Bulgarian Public’s Women’s Union. In 1950 this Union was merged into the Fatherland Front (Bulgarian Public’s Women’s Union (BPWU), 1950;

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<sup>2</sup> *Nyfeministene* (The New Feminists) in 1970, *Kvinnefronten* (The Women’s Front) in 1972, *Lesbisk bevegelse* (The Lesbian Movement) in 1974/75 and *Brød og roser* (*Bread and Roses*) in 1976 (Haukaa 1982:26-28).

Bulgarian Association of University Women (BAUW), 2008). 1968 saw the formation of the Committee of Bulgarian Women, still under the auspices of the Fatherland Front (Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party (CC of BCP), 1968). This granted a highly circumscribed form of autonomy to ‘organised women’, rather than constituting a ‘women’s movement’ (Stoilova, 2009). It was only after 1989 that independent women’s organizations began to emerge, with a significant spurt in the development of NGO-led feminism from the late 1990s (Daskalova, 2000). Women’s NGOs addressed a range of social issues that concerned women, including education and culture, political decision-making, employment, healthcare, and the environment (Daskalova, 2000; Daskalova and Filipova, 2003). More recently, the focus of women’s organizations has been on gender equality in economic, social, and political citizenship, and, to a lesser extent on issues related to intimate citizenship (Stoilova, 2009).

In Portugal, feminist activism in the early years of the twentieth century had played an important role in overturning the monarchy in 1910 (Esteves, 2001), but during the dictatorship (1926 –1974) Portugal experienced a ‘feminism interrupted’, when women’s rights were suppressed and collective action was prohibited (Pimentel, 2001; Rosas, 1994).<sup>3</sup> In 1973, the prosecution of feminist writers, ‘the Three Marias’ for publishing *The New Portuguese Letters*, deemed by the regime to be immoral, catalysed both international feminist support and solidarity and the formation of the Women’s Liberation Movement. The movement grew gradually after the fall of the dictatorship. There was a mobilization in the late 1970s and 1980s around literacy campaigns, and a number of intimate citizenship issues, including sex education, maternity and paternity rights, free contraception and, above all, abortion rights. Later

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<sup>3</sup> As established by law-decree n. 22468, 11 April 1933.



on, women's organizations focused on economic citizenship, offering information about cooperatives and micro-credit, and campaigning against sexual harassment, poor working conditions and breaches of workers' rights. In common with the other three countries, the 1990s saw increasing formalization and institutionalization of women's organizations. They traded autonomy for closer involvement with the state, and shifted the national feminist agenda towards issues promoted by the EU, such as parity, work/family balance and gender mainstreaming.

### **Areas and Issues of Intimate Citizenship Claim-Making**

We identify four interrelated areas of claim-making and intervention by women's movements in the domain of intimate citizenship: partnership, reproductive rights and parenting, sexual identities and practices; and gender and sexual violence. The kinds of issues raised under each area of claim-making can be seen in the following table. Not every issue has been taken up in every country, and their salience has waxed and waned. Moreover some of the issues have been keenly contested within national women's movements. We have chosen a case study from each country to illustrate how issues of intimate citizenship have been politicized and redefined in different settings, thereby extending the meaning of well-being. We decided which area to discuss for each country on the basis of the relative salience and centrality of the areas to the national women's movements. It was clear that for Portugal reproductive rights and parenting was the most significant of the four areas. For Bulgaria we have chosen to focus on gender and sexual violence, as this was the area most prominent in the women's movement/ NGO action post 1989. For both the Norwegian and British women's movements, all four areas were of significance, and the decision to focus here on sexual practices and identities in Norway, and parenting in the UK, was made to

offer a counterpoint to the extensive academic discussion of parenting and child care in Norway, by highlighting the under-recognized politicization of sexuality in Norway, in comparison to the UK, where there has been greater attention to sexuality in histories of women's movements.

*Areas and Issues of Intimate Citizenship Claim-Making and Intervention*

Partnership (Case from the UK)

Marriage  
 Divorce  
 Non-marital heterosexual relationships - cohabitation  
 Same-sex partnership recognition  
 Selfhood, financial autonomy, independence within relationships  
 Immigration and partnership, family reunion etc  
 Non-monogamy/ polyamory  
 Single people and solo living  
 'Care' and partnership

Reproductive Rights and Parenting (Case from Portugal)

Contraception  
 Abortion  
 Assisted conception/ reproductive technologies  
 Motherhood, fatherhood, parenting  
 Adoption rights  
 Lesbians and reproduction and parenting  
 'Care' and parenting

Sexual Identities and Practices (Case from Norway)

Women's sexual pleasure  
 The regulation of sexual practice  
 Lesbianism, lesbian rights and recognition  
 Homosexuality and anti-discrimination  
 Pornography<sup>4</sup>  
 Prostitution  
 Sado-masochism  
 Sex education

Gender and Sexual Violence (Case from Bulgaria)

Domestic/ intimate partner violence  
 Rape and sexual assault  
 Prostitution  
 Pornography  
 Trafficking  
 Homophobic and trans-phobic violence

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<sup>4</sup> Where an issue appears under more than one heading, it has been framed in alternative, and contested, ways within women's movements.

### **Claims and Interventions around Partnership in the UK**

The question of women's well-being within and outside heterosexual intimate partnerships was prominent on the agendas of the first and second waves of the UK women's movement. The first wave movement campaigned for women's rights within marriage, for married women's independent legal personhood, for their property rights, and for access of divorce on equitable terms. In *Married Life* (1918), Marie Stopes argued for a more equal distribution of labour in the household, and encouraged marriage as a companion-based relationship (Pugh 2000). Other feminists, however, were critical of the institution of marriage, which they saw as a form of sex-slavery. Some made the political choice to remain celibate, forming their intimate lives with other women (Somerville 2000; Bruley 1999; Hamilton 1909/1981).

In the early 1970s, the women's liberation movement developed a critique of monogamous marriage and the family. It denounced marriage as 'bourgeois', and the nuclear family as repressive and fostering neuroses (Lovenduski and Randall 1993). Socialist feminists focussed on the family, sanctioned by marriage, as exploiting women's domestic labour for the reproduction of capitalism (Mitchell 1974; Rowbotham 1972). Radical feminists saw marriage as a patriarchal institution, one of the major sources of women's oppression and the basis of men's power over women (Bouchier 1983; Delphy and Leonard, 1992). Addressing both civil society and men as a social group in particular, the movement problematized the unequal division of labour and care within heterosexual partnerships, and men's lack of engagement with the emotional and practical tasks of maintaining their intimate relationships. One of the founding principles of the British welfare state, that a wife and husband are a single

economic unit, in which ‘married women are occupied in work which is vital though unpaid, without which their husbands could not do their paid work and without which the nation could not continue’ (Beveridge 1942: 50; quoted in LWLC, 1979: 20) came under significant attack in the 1970s. ‘Legal and financial independence for women’ was adopted as the fifth of the seven demands of the women’s liberation movement at the 1974 Women’s Liberation Conference. The *London Women's Liberation Campaign for Legal and Financial Independence* (the 5<sup>th</sup> Demand Group) was set up to address ‘tax, benefit and pension policies that treated husband and wife as a breadwinner-dependent couple with no need of separate incomes’ (McIntosh 2001: 147). It also campaigned around the so-called ‘cohabitation rule’, which assumed that a woman who cohabited with a man was financially dependent upon him, and was thus ineligible for social security benefits in her own right. In 1977 the 5<sup>th</sup> Demand Group launched the ‘YBA wife’ campaign, and in 1981, ‘Don’t Do It, Di’ badges were ubiquitous amongst feminists when Lady Diana and Prince Charles’s engagement was announced. *Rights of Women* (RoW), a group formed primarily of women legal-workers, was created in 1975 to campaign for ‘the rights of all women – married, single, cohabiting or not — to an independent income’ (LWLC 1979: 29).

Many of the formal inequalities targeted by the WLM in relation to law and policy around partnership had been redressed by the early 2000s, but *RoW* continued its policy work, and the newer *Women’s Budget Group* (WBG) operates in the gender mainstreaming tradition ‘to expand understanding among policy makers and opinion formers of the gender implications of economic policy and the use of gender budget analysis’ (WBG 2005). In terms of intimate citizenship, the WBG continues the WLM

concern with women's unpaid caring work in intimate relationships, focusing on raising awareness of the consequences for women of the unequal burden of care.

Black and minority ethnic women's organizations in the UK have engaged politically around issues of partnership rather differently from the majority white women's movement. Many black women saw white feminism's uncompromising anti-family stance of the 1970s and 80s as not applicable to their own lives (Carby 1982; Bhavnani and Coulson, 1986), as they were often the main, or only, breadwinners. Further, in the context of the widespread pathologization of black families in public discourse (McGee 2005), the family has served as a vital source of support and resistance to racism. Minority women's organizations have instead campaigned to reform immigration and family reunification laws, which prevented the reunification of intimate partners, and have worked to ameliorate negative impacts on migrant women (Griffin 1995; Siddiqui 2000). The distinction between forced and arranged marriages, alongside campaigning against forced marriage and violence within intimate partnerships has been a concern of organizations such as Southall Black Sisters. Over the past decade issues concerning partnership and diversity have become one of the most important areas of women's movement activism in the UK.

#### **Claims and Interventions around Reproductive Rights and Parenting in Portugal**

The struggle for women to exercise control over reproduction – [above all the struggle for abortion rights](#) - has been *the* central issue of feminist intimate citizenship activism in Portugal. In 1975, shortly after the fall of the dictatorship, the Movement for Free Contraception and Abortion (MCALG) was created demanding 'the abolition of the fascist abortion law; free contraception and abortion' (Tavares, 2000: 46). Invoking a language of freedom and choice, the Women's Liberation Movement (MLM) gathered

thousands of signatures on a petition calling for the decriminalization of abortion in 1977. In 1979 there were two criminal prosecutions relating to abortion, one concerning the journalist, Maria Antónia Palla, who had written about clandestine abortion and was accused of inciting a crime, and the other a young woman, prosecuted for having an abortion. These cases galvanised public demonstrations and interventions in Parliament. The National Campaign for Abortion and Contraception (CNAC) was created around this time, including several women's groups and left-wing political parties. With the slogan 'contraception to avoid abortion, abortion to avoid death', the CNAC also called for sex education in schools. In 1979, CNAC organised the 'We had an abortion' petition, signed by more than 2,000 women who publicly declared they had had an abortion at least once. Some success was achieved in 1984 with the approval of laws on sex education and legal exceptions allowing some abortions, and the issue faded from the political agenda.

In 1990 the Opinion Movement for the Decriminalisation of Abortion in Portugal (MODAP) raised the issue again. This gathered several women's organisations, political parties, trade unions, and the Family Planning Association (APF) and they hosted a range of initiatives, including debates, press conferences, demonstrations and petitions. In 1998 a law decriminalising abortion was finally approved in Parliament. However, the socialist Prime Minister, who personally opposed abortion, decided that there would be a referendum on the law – the first referendum in Portugal. The 1998 abortion referendum campaign, 'Yes for Tolerance', was a crucial moment for feminist collective action. Faced with the weight of the Catholic Church, it focused on women's health, the danger of mortality from illegal abortions, and the right

to choose. Feminist mobilisation withered when a low turnout gave a small majority to the anti-abortion forces.

After 1998, a new generation of grassroots activists came to the fore, with a more radical, direct action approach to the issue (Alves et al, 2009). In 2001 the first court case of women accused of having illegal abortions took place in Maia, in northern Portugal. Feminist organisations demonstrated their support for the seventeen women and one nurse and their indignation against the law, both inside and outside the court. Similar court cases followed in 2001, 2003 and 2005, and again, women's organisations demonstrated. Amidst this upsurge in prosecutions, feminist organizations invited the international abortion campaign boat *Women on Waves*<sup>5</sup> to Portugal. The 'Making Waves' campaign aimed both to help women have abortions legally and safely, and to re-launch the debate about the abortion law. The language used foregrounded women's health, alongside women's right to choose, and represented Portuguese laws as absurd and obsolete. The government responded by preventing the ship from entering harbour. Perhaps partly because of this reaction, the 'Making Waves' campaign succeeded in placing abortion back at the centre of public debate.

The women's movement's strategy at the time of the second referendum on abortion, in 2007, was to focus on the punitive consequences of a restrictive law, with a particular emphasis on court cases, shame, imprisonment and unsafe illegal abortion (Alves *et al* 2009; Whitten, 2008). This less militant approach presented women as victims whose well-being was suffering, rather than as empowered subjects. It was accompanied by a strategic diversification of allies, campaign outlets and actions. Allies

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<sup>5</sup> More information available at Women On Waves (2004) and <http://www.womenonwaves.org/set-210-en.html> (accessed 16/02/10).



ranged from pro-choice Catholics to pro-choice doctors, intellectuals, singers and actors. There was a greater investment in combating abstention, and a central strategy was to mobilise young people to vote. The outcome was a victory for the movement, and decades of restrictive abortion laws were overturned.

With abortion rights such a dominant issue, campaigns around other aspects of reproductive rights and parenting have had rather less prominence. During the 1970s childcare was an important issue, with women's organisations demanding more nurseries, maternity leave, and free maternal health care. From the 1990s, work-family balance issues have been on the political agenda, particularly within the remit of state feminism. In 2007, the 3<sup>rd</sup> National Plan for Equality made this issue a priority (resolution n. 82/2007, 22/06/2007). In terms of the redefinition of gendered well-being, the notion of work-family balance is being expanded to involve a more gender-balanced approach. The recently elected Equality Secretary, Elza Pais, has recognised the importance of facilitating work-family balance for both women and men.<sup>6</sup>

#### **Claims and Interventions around Sexual Identities and Practices in Norway**

Issues of choice, self-determination and pleasure for women in the realm of sexuality played an important and, at times highly contested, role in the Norwegian women's movement. When, in the early 1900s, family planning activists started to campaign for sex education, contraception and abortion as part of the struggle to improve women's position in society, they were strongly opposed by other feminists who saw these goals as opening up opportunities for men to gain greater power over women. An intense cultural battle between the old 'Victorian' sexual politics and the new 'liberated' ones took place in the years after WWI. The first wave feminists lost this battle. The sexual liberation movement that campaigned for contraception, abortion

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<sup>6</sup> Available at [http://195.23.38.178/cig/portal/bo/portal.pl?pag=cig\\_noticias\\_detalhe&id=333](http://195.23.38.178/cig/portal/bo/portal.pl?pag=cig_noticias_detalhe&id=333)

and sexual freedom during inter-war years exerted a tremendous influence within Norwegian society, with key individuals in the movement taking up crucial posts within the welfare state. The Norwegian pioneers of birth control and sexual education of this period wanted to teach the population about sex to promote healthier sex lives, and thus individual and social well-being. Physician, psychoanalyst, feminist and socialist Nic Waal, a central actor in the inter-war era, 'promoted intercourse as the ultimate source of sexual happiness' (Danielsen 2009). Despite the normative focus on intercourse and vaginal orgasm, the aim of sexual liberationists was to break the bond between sexuality and reproduction, and to give women as well as men the knowledge they needed to reach optimum sexual happiness and health. Sexual health was seen as crucial for a healthy and happy society (Hellesund 2003:195-202).

This exclusive focus on penetrative sex and the vaginal orgasm was heavily criticized in the Norwegian women's movement in the 1970s (Danielsen 2009). The movement engaged in lively discussions about how to create new forms of female sexual subjectivity, and about the transformation of sexual relations between women and men (Clod 1977). However, the issue of the position and experience of lesbians within the movement became a great source of contention. Although several women's movement publications were careful to stress their recognition of lesbian readers, the main focus of the sexual politics in the 1970s was on heterosexual women. Particularly in Oslo, a conflict developed between those who wanted to protect feminists from being labelled ugly, man-hating and lesbian and those who actively chose a more

confrontational line, and wanted to promote *lesbianism as feminism*.<sup>7</sup> Whilst some lesbians argued that they should stay and fight for recognition and space within the mainstream women's movement (Bjerck 1983), others felt that the marginalization of lesbianism within the movement, alongside the silencing of feminism within the major gay organization, DNF-48 (Andersen 1975), was so problematic that they founded *Lesbisk bevegelse* in 1975 (Haukaa 1982:131-133).

The issue of pornography, and debates about male sexuality and sexual violence, came to occupy a central space in part of the Norwegian women's movement towards the end of the 1970s. While the majority of active Norwegian feminists saw the focus on sexual violence as a new unifying cause, there were opposing voices. One of the editors of the feminist magazine *Sirene*, Ida Lou Larsen, argued that a hatred of men had developed in the feminist movement from 1978 onwards, and that the focus on sexual violence contributed to a problematic theory of all men as potential perpetrators, and all women as victims. Larsen stated that the idea that men hate women was a lesbian theory that can never be a base for 'the other, broad part of the women's movement' (Larsen 1983:37-38), and she opposed the 'systematic suspicion of men's sexuality that will confine heterosexual women's erotic freedom and lead to a new Puritanism' (Larsen 1983:35-36). Although Larsen and others were not representative voices, they illustrate a more widely existing antagonism between different feminist positions and between lesbian and heterosexual feminists.

'The broad part of the Norwegian women's movement', in Larsen's terms, never engaged with the specificities of lesbian relationships, regarding them as lesbian

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<sup>7</sup> This seem to have been a common conflict across north-western European and north American women's movements (cf. Brown 2008, Scharff 2008), and the fear of being stigmatized as man-hating and unfeminine is something that has haunted the Norwegian women's movement from its start in the 1880s (Hellesund 2003).

issues rather than as women's issues. When the debate on domestic partnership for lesbians/gays emerged around 1990, *Lesbisk bevegelse* no longer existed, and the women's movement was not part of the public debate around formalized same-sex relationships and gender neutral marriage.

### **Claims and Interventions around Gender and Sexual Violence in Bulgaria**

Issues of gender and sexual violence came to be central to women's activism in post-socialist Bulgaria. Under socialism, the Committee of Bulgarian Women saw violence against women as the consequence of alcohol abuse, and as the 'remains of the barbarian past' (*Today's Woman*, 1965a) rather than as a problem of gender. The Committee appealed for a public debate about the problem, and for administrative, economic and other measures. It criticised men for failing to change and advised women to leave violent husbands (*Today's Woman*, 1965a). Similarly, forced marriages were portrayed as outdated. In the past 'marriages happened without love' but, under socialism, love and marriage were supposed to go hand-in-hand (*Today's Woman*, 1965b).

The framing of the problem of violence against women as one of gender violence, and the extension of its scope to include sexual violence, in the form of trafficking and prostitution, took place after the fall of the socialist regime. A number of NGOs began tackling these issues in the context of exposure to transnational feminist approaches to violence and under the influence of the Open Society Institute and the Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights.

Women's organizations' first interventions around gender and sexual violence have been directed at attempting to 'break the silence' that exists around intimate partner violence, rape and sexual assault. They have loudly asserted that such violence

is not a private but public matter. They have also focused on trafficking, representing it as closely related to the overall socio-economic situation, and arguing for improvements in living conditions as a way of preventing trafficking. Initial NGO actions argued for the need for protective legislation on domestic violence and trafficking of women and children, and demanded support and legal aid for women victims. These initiatives took place in a context where domestic violence was a 'serious and pervasive problem in Bulgaria' (Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights, 1996: 5), where neither the police, law regulations, court procedures or government policies offered effective protection against or prevention of domestic violence (Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights, 1996: 5) and there was no separate government policy on trafficking outside actions against organised crime (Stoykova, 2007).

Gender and sexual violence became the primary focus of women's NGO initiatives in the 2000s. A network of women's organisations established in 2002 'put violence against women on the public agenda' (WAD, 2000) and instigated the drafting of laws against trafficking in human beings, and on protection against domestic violence (Tisheva, 2005; Stoykova, 2007). Their campaigns paralleled pressure about trafficking from international bodies, including the European Commission and International Organisation of Migration (Stoykova, 2007: 57). After trafficking was defined as criminal offence against the person in the Penal Code (2002) and a separate law on countering trafficking was adopted (2003) (Stoykova, 2007: 57), NGOs turned their attention to the sexual exploitation of children and more recently to debating the legalisation of prostitution. Women's NGOs have sought to address wider gendered social problems which they see as indirect causes of prostitution and trafficking. They have demanded a national strategy focusing on socio-economic rights, education,

employment, healthcare, economic opportunities, the minimisation of poverty, and special measures for members of vulnerable groups (National Network for Equal Opportunities, 2004; Bulgarian Gender Research Foundation (BGRF), 2008).

With the achievement of the 'Law on Protection against Domestic Violence' in 2005, women's organisations turned their attention to the implementation of the law, and to providing services to victims of violence. There has been a particular emphasis on promoting 'non-victimising attitudes towards victims' (Anumus Association, 2008) and on increasing public awareness of domestic violence through media campaigns featuring messages of women's empowerment (Women's Alliance for Development (WAD), 2003: 3). Campaigns have also sought to raise awareness of the needs of different groups of victims of domestic violence, such as Roma women (Association Alternativa 55, 2008), those within 'non-formal families' (SOS Families in Risk, no date), and, very occasionally, men (BGRF, 2000), and organizations have addressed the problem of gender violence at work (Women's Association 'Ekaterina Karavelova', 2001).

In the struggle against gender and sexual violence, women's NGOs often work in collaboration with the government and other relevant authorities. They increasingly 'play an important role' in drafting and designing laws and policies on gender and sexual violence (Open Society, 2007: 34). However, in their attempts to combat violence, NGOs in Bulgaria often have to grapple with serious underfunding (Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights, 2008: 54) which affects the services and assistance they are able to offer to victims. The lack of funding is 'most evident in the dearth of shelters in Bulgaria' (Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights, 2008: 51), and in the very limited material assistance for victims.

## **Concluding remarks**

We have explored four areas of claim-making about intimate citizenship through cases that show how different national women's movements have engaged and changed debates. How does this expand our understanding of the role of women's movements in gendering approaches to human well-being? First and foremost it points to the extent to which women's movements have radically extended the scope of the politics of well-being by drawing attention to the gender inequalities and oppressions that impact upon women's lives. In the British case study we saw that they politicized the interpersonal power relations and inequalities that exist between intimate partners, and drew attention to the laws and policies that regulate marriage, partnership and cohabitation, all of which have systematically favoured men's interests over women's. The case of Portugal illustrated how women's movements have demanded the most basic liberal right of bodily integrity - that women should be able to exercise control over reproduction, to choose whether and when to have children, and not to have to deal with childcare alone. Norway showed how women's movements have argued that women should have access to sexual pleasure - that sex should not just be on men's terms. They have struggled to liberate women from sexual shame, to enable the freer exploration of sexual desire, with men, and, in parts of the movements, at least, with women. Finally the Bulgarian case drew attention to the pervasiveness of gender and sexual violence, to the ways it shapes, constrains, and sometimes destroys, the lives of women and children. Movements there have tried to reduce its prevalence and ameliorate its impacts. Across the four countries, activists have, to varying degrees at different times, challenged the ways in which socio-economic conditions and inequalities, anti-lesbianism, racism and processes of minoritization impact upon women's intimate lives.

These interventions in intimate citizenship have taken discursive and practical form. They have changed understandings and ways of thinking, as well as transforming everyday practices and the policies and laws that govern them. In developing a set of claims and demands around intimate citizenship, women's movements have addressed the state and civil society, individual men, and men as a social group, as well as women's own deeply engrained patterns of thought and behaviour, their intimate selves and subjectivities. They have made the case that ways of living gender in intimate life need to change in fundamental ways in order for women to flourish as human beings. In terms of Martha Nussbaum's (2006) theorisation of "the central human capabilities", women's movements' intimate citizenship claims can be seen to have contributed to the extension of entitlements to many human capabilities, particularly those of *bodily health* and *bodily integrity* (through demands for reproductive rights, and for an end of gender and sexual violence), *emotions* (through struggles around sexual identities and practices), *affiliation* (through seeking to transform partnership as a more equal relationship, and to recognise the validity of non-heterosexual lives), *play* (through demanding access for women to sexual pleasure) and *control over one's material environment* (through claims around financial equality and autonomy within partnerships).

Women's movements in different countries, emerging out of different historical contexts and political regimes, facing different political opportunity structures and gender and welfare regimes, have constructed agendas around intimate citizenship with differing emphases, and subject to different internal debates and conflicts. Yet, the movements we have studied have shared a determination to combat the systematic privileging of men's interests and needs in both everyday intimate life and in the laws



and policies that regulate intimate life. They have asserted the interests and needs of women as a diverse social group. They have struggled for equality, justice and self-determination for women in intimate life, arguing that bodily sexual difference must be recognized and that autonomy is always relational. The cases presented here demonstrate convincingly that modern women's movements have transformed the very conceptualization of both intimate citizenship and gendered well-being.

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