

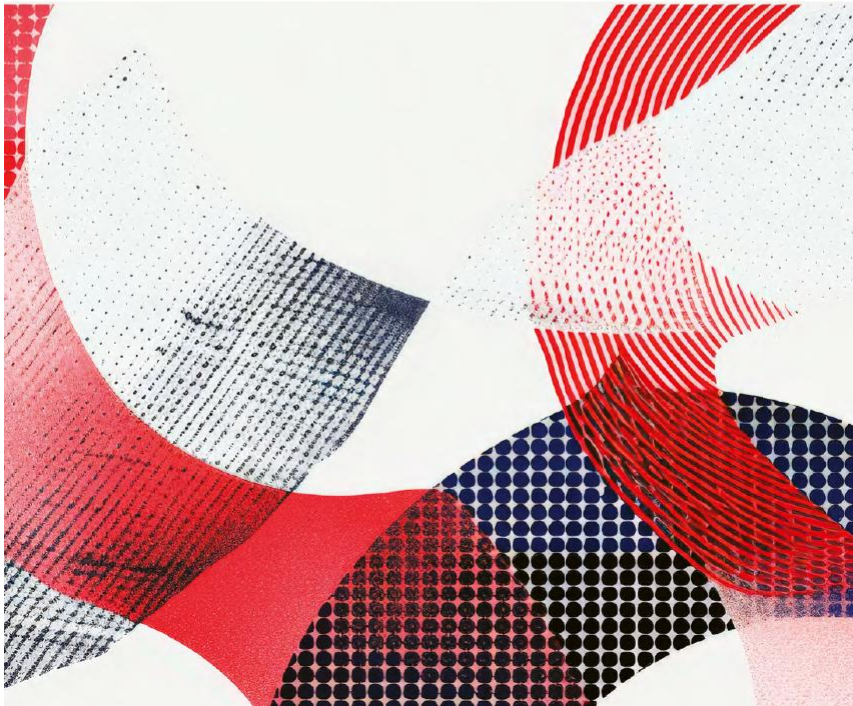
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GENDER EQUALITY IN THE POST-YUGOSLAV SPACE:

Challenges, Policies, and Perspectives

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Dijana Vukomanović*

RE-CONCEPTUALIZING GENDER EQUALITY AS A CORE DEMOCRATIC RESILIENCE PROCESS

Gender equality in the post-Yugoslav area has been perceived as a linear trajectory of harmonization with the EU acquis, which included the adoption of EU gender related guidelines and directives, CEDAW obligations and the adoption of national laws, strategies and action plans. Emerging hybrid gender-oriented policies in the post-Yugoslav societies have been fragile and fragmented, framed by inherited political cultures, ideological resistance and scarce resources. Clustering of academic research around recurring themes of representation quotas, anti-discrimination laws and institutional gender mainstreaming has resulted in perceiving women as a homogeneous category. On the contrary, the gender equality should be understood as a heterogeneous, dynamic, both progressive and reversible, politically and socially contested process which is shaped by historical legacies, backlash, ruptures and crises within post-Yugoslav states. The contemporary literature identifies anti-gender movements that rely on religious, nationalist, and global conservative networks, using backlash strategies against “gender ideology”, the Istanbul Convention, women and feminist organizations and activists. That is why it is necessary to link and research gender equality within the broader context of democratic resilience against illiberal, populist and authoritarian trends. This reframes gender equality from being a social policy issue to becoming a core democratic process, linked to human rights and civil liberties, secularism, media freedom and the rule of law. Furthermore, the contemporary approach should be oriented towards the more economically and socially sensitive context of the structural intersectional inequality indicators of class, income, education, ethnicity, sexuality, age and disability, refugee, migration or marital status and spatial position – urban/rural, centre/periphery. This intersectional approach should be integrated into the gender equality assessment, audit and monitoring schemes with the aim to re-frame standard indicators and rankings.

* Research Associate, Institute of Social Sciences, Belgrade, Serbia, dvukomanovic@idn.org.rs; dijana.vukomanovic@gmail.com

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