

Neoconservative Movements in Slovenia

Monday 8 October 2018, by [KOVAČ Nika](#), [MALJEVAC Simon](#) (Date first published: 18 September 2018).

The report is analysing neoconservative movement that is focusing on opposing laws of and policies on sexual and reproductive rights in Slovenia. These movements are relying on religious beliefs to mobilize citizens to participate in politics around the ultra-conservative agenda related to family issues, gender, sexuality and reproductive health.

From 2009 on, when the debate around the Family code which included the provisions on regulating same-sex partnerships was opened in Slovenia, we have witnessed the emergence of new, seemingly “grassroots” movement(s) (different civil initiatives which can all be linked to Zavod Kul.si and the roman catholic church in Slovenia). These movements are relying on religious beliefs to mobilize citizens to participate actively in politics around the ultra-conservative agenda related to family issues, gender, sexuality and reproductive health.

Neo-conservative political agenda is set up as a struggle for the defense and protection of “endangered” category securities “of life, family and religious freedom”. The Church and its satellite civil society organizations increasingly refrain from using “biblical discourse”, substituting it with what appears as a rational, scientific discourse molded into reassuring and populist common-sense statements. In such a way, the Church is secularizing its discourse in order to “clericalize” society. Furthermore, it is successfully reinventing the issues of family and marriage as an ideological battleground of contemporary cultural wars in post-socialist societies, constituting gays and lesbians as the outsiders of the nation. These movements are essentially political initiatives, manipulating religious discourse, increasingly using public and political spaces and instruments for achieving their goals. From 2009 on they have become an integral part of any civil dialogue around sexual and reproductive rights in Slovenia. Neoconservative movements are not specific to a single country, they are strongly visible in France, Italy and Poland, but are not limited to these countries and are spread across the continent, some authors^[1] are even coming to the conclusion that when we are discussing about neoconservative movements we are discussing about transnational movements. Traces that when we are talking about transnational movements when analyzing neoconservative movements can be found in the fact that specific actions took place on the European level and not national. For example, on 2nd of February 2014 Manif pour Tous, neoconservative movement from France, organized a demonstration on the European level, the demonstration took place in France, Germany, Spain, Italy, Belgium and Slovakia. They have also mobilized for the European elections in 2014 when they started Europe for Family Campaign. Finally as one of the main manifestation of transnational actions of these movements, the European Citizen’s Initiative Mum, Dad & Kids should be mentioned. All the main proponents of neoconservative movements on the national level were also involved in this initiative.

Another fact that proves that we can talk about a transnational movement is also the fact that we can find traces of neoconservative movements and organisations in Brussels. Organisations and initiatives such as [Agenda Europe](#) and [European Dignity Watch](#) are one of the main proponents of neoconservative agenda in European institutions. In short, these organisations provide the platform and policy documents for opposition against sexual and reproductive rights in Europe and are involved in lobby work in European institutions. The fact that we are talking about transnational

movement that is having strong affect on social policies all across Europe calls for a unified and collective response from all progressive forces.

Nika Kovač , Simon Maljevac

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