

Marginality and the New Geography of Domestic Violence Policy in Post-Communist Poland

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ABSTRACT *The article explores the spatial distribution and institutional geography of domestic violence service provision in post-communist Poland. A new institutional geography providing services to victims of domestic violence is emerging in Poland as a result of NGO activism and new pro-woman policies implemented by the state. NGOs, often in partnership with local governments, are the most vital means of service provision in large and medium size cities, while in rural areas, public agencies predominate in the institutional geography of service provision. The assumption that NGOs will emerge to address the needs of victims of domestic violence is not realistic in rural areas. While urban Poland is developing an institutional geography to address domestic violence, state and NGO activists must focus on shrinking the rural margins of Poland's institutional geography.*

Domestic Violence as Social Injustice

Iris Marion Young (1990, p. 39) argues that 'justice should refer not only to distribution, but also to the institutional conditions necessary for the development and exercise of individual capacities'. While most would agree that violence against a woman prevents her from developing and exercising her individual capacities, few people follow Young's logic forward to consider how institutional conditions serve to make violence against women a systematic denial of social justice for women. Yet Young singles out violence as one of five particularly salient indicators of social injustice. She writes:

What makes violence a phenomenon of social injustice, and not merely an individual moral wrong, is its systemic character, its existence as a social practice. . . . It is a social given that everyone knows happens and will happen again. . . . [It] approaches legitimacy, moreover, in the sense that it is tolerated. Often third parties find it unsurprising because it happens frequently and lies as a constant possibility at the horizon of the social imagination. Even when they are caught, those who perpetrate acts of group directed violence or harassment often receive light or no punishment. To that extent, society renders their acts acceptable. (Young, 1990, p. 62)

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Thus, the institutional responses to violence against women are an excellent gauge of the degree of social justice afforded women in a particular society. This article is a study of the institutional responses to domestic violence in post-communist Poland. Amnesty International singled out the failure to effectively investigate and prosecute domestic violence cases, as well as the failure to protect victims from further violence, as one of the gravest human rights issues facing Poland today (Amnesty International, 2004, p. 1). Domestic violence is a phenomenon that affects an extraordinary number of women in Poland, with one in eight having been beaten by their partners and as many as 41 per cent of divorced women having been beaten by their former husbands (Amnesty International, 2004, p. 1).

Between 1989 and the present, Poland experienced a restructuring of its economy and welfare state as well as its political system. During this time, the emergence of institutional means of addressing domestic violence allowed domestic violence to move from being an invisible social phenomenon to a public violation of women's rights. An examination of institutional change in domestic violence reveals cases where women's measure of social justice has increased and some where it has not changed at all. In other words, the development of an institutional geography to address domestic violence reveals the strengths and weaknesses of Poland's post-communist state and civil society, as well as the unevenness of post-communist economic development.

The Margins of Europe

The literature on Eastern Europe is replete with terms such as 'borderlands', 'periphery', and 'semi-periphery'. These terms are more than geographically descriptive; rather they define Eastern Europe as existing on the margins of the West. The East European states created by post-communism fit Hadjimichalis and Sadler's (1995, p. 4) definition of marginality exceedingly well as they 'are at the peripheries of dominant economic, political and cultural systems. They all carry the image and stigma of a marginality which becomes closely associated with - indeed a defining characteristic of - their actual identity'.

Marginality, as well as the fear of remaining on the margins of Europe, has, indeed, become a defining feature of political discourse in post-communist Europe. Escaping the 'margins' has become a primary aim of post-communist political elites who frequently warn that if such-and-such a reform does not take place, their country will remain 'on the margins of Europe' (Polish News Bulletin, 2004; Scally, 2004; Baltic News Service, 2004; BBC Monitoring International Reports, 2003; MIA News Agency, 2002).

Post-communist Europe's marginality stems from the structure of its economy, especially its high rates of unemployment and its dependence on its agricultural sector. These structural differences between Eastern and Western Europe have not escaped the notice of policymakers in Western Europe. To the contrary, it is these differences that led EU negotiators to insist on phasing in agricultural subsidies to farmers in the new member countries (beginning at about 45% of the subsidy level afforded West European farmers in 2004). It has also led France and Germany, fearful of a deluge of migrant workers from the East, to implement quotas for work permits to be issued to Easterners. Likewise, the United Kingdom will require Eastern Europeans to work in the UK for 18 months before becoming eligible for social benefits. Thus, the structural differences between East and West

have created a significant gap in political power between them. Indeed, from a political economy point of view, the utility of admitting the East European countries to the union is precisely the asymmetries of power that exist between East and West.

The rhetoric of East European political elites reveals both their recognition of their weakness vis-à-vis the West and their fear of continued marginalization. Polish Foreign Minister Włodzimierz Cimoszewicz admitted as much when he warned that Poland should not use its veto vote in the EU more than once. 'I believe that this can only be used once. If a country invokes this instrument they will push themselves to the margins of Europe' (Sally, 2004, p. 13).¹ Thus, Poland, like most of post-communist Europe, keenly feels its lack of bargaining power vis-à-vis Western Europe and acts accordingly. Its fear of being marginalized cows its political elites into doing what Western European political elites want. In this way, its fear of marginalization reveals its real marginalization.

Gender and Marginality in Post-Communist Poland

Marginality also speaks to an individual's location outside the normal bounds of social citizenship, i.e., outside of the 'contractual relationship between an individual and a territorially-based state-like body which defines a person's eligibility to certain rights that are enforceable through collective institutional arrangements' (McDowell & Sharpe, 1999, p. 29). It focuses attention on the reproduction of inequalities within a given society along the fault lines of gender, class, ethnicity, state, and location, and how these interact with one another (Hadjimichalis & Sadler, 1995, p. 5). Of these fault lines, those of gender, class, state, and urban-rural divides are most salient to understanding the institutional geography of domestic violence in Eastern Europe.

While economic restructuring and state retrenchment have eroded the rights of all citizens in post-communist societies, these trends have marginalized women in post-communist countries in unique ways. Urban East European women's high levels of literacy and experience in light industry make them prime targets of corporations seeking cheap labor in Europe's eastern periphery. Domestic political elites have facilitated their economic exploitation by offering tax holidays and sanctioning wage freezes. In short, while urban East European women may still enjoy a higher standard of living than women in the developing world, globalization, European integration, neo-liberalism, and post-Fordism have converged in post-communist Europe in ways that severely limit the political voice and economic bargaining power of women in the region.

In Poland, gender, class and state inequalities intersect with other cultural and geographic fault lines that make Polish women uniquely marginalized and, hence, vulnerable to domestic violence. Poland is an overwhelmingly Catholic country and the Catholic Church has spoken out consistently and vocally in support of marriage as the foundation of the Polish nation and the Christian family. Efforts to enable the dissolution of marriages, even when violence is implicated, have been strongly discouraged by the church. Thus, women who seek to separate from or divorce abusive husbands face social and cultural marginalization in Polish society.

Secondly, despite the urbanization and industrialization that characterized state socialism, Poland is arguably the most rurally oriented nation in contemporary Europe. Some argue that Poland may have missed out on the main demographic

change affecting Europe after World War II: mass migration from rural to urban areas (Kim, 2000, p. 296). Today, 36% of the Polish population lives in rural areas (Goldman, 2003). In 2001, fully 18.8% of Poland's population was still employed in agriculture (UNECE, 2001). Most are employed on small (an average of 6.6 Q2 hectares) family-run farms (Ingham & Ingham, 2002, p. 121). Indeed, 68% of private sector farm workers are the farms' sole proprietors, while an additional 25% are family members of the farm owners (Ingham & Ingham, 2004). Hence 93% of private sector farm workers in Poland are people working their family farm.

Poland's rural economy is undiversified and cash poor. Two-thirds of all those employed in rural areas work in agriculture. However, at least one-quarter of farmers are unemployed and many of these are elderly. As a result, the modal source of income in rural areas is transfer payments from the central government, i.e., pension or unemployment benefits (Ingham & Ingham, 2004). In short, Poland's rural population is significantly dependent upon the state for income support with most living at or below the poverty line (Kim, 2000, p. 296).

The Polish countryside is also lacking in human capital. The level of technical skills and education is low (Kim, 2000). Only about half of adults have completed primary school, 15% have completed secondary school, and a mere 2% have attended university (Sharma, 2004). Moreover, decentralizing reforms to education have made education even harder for rural Poles to obtain, with rural communes closing nursery schools, cutting back on hours, and even closing Q3 schools down (Sharma, 2004). In 1999, the year the reforms went into effect, 70 primary and secondary schools closed, and it was estimated that 400 were at risk of closing the following year (Sharma, 2004).

Finally, Poland's rural population appears firmly rooted. Housing is in short Q4 supply and the transportation infrastructure is weak (Kim, 2004, p. 294). There is also a large measure of cultural resistance to mobility among Poland's rural population. According to Kim (2004, p. 294):

Polish peasants are usually unwilling to pack up and move to the city leaving behind the land that may have belonged to their family for generations. In a strange way, the fact that Poland was the only communist state in Europe to encourage private ownership of farms . . . has badly hampered the modern economy. Polish farmers are stubbornly committed to their farms and the lifestyle to which they have long grown accustomed . . . Furthermore, Polish peasants tend to be risk-averse and unwilling to seek new employment.

Taken together, these observations paint a fairly grim picture of rural life in Poland, one that has scarcely changed over the past 100 years. It is a life characterized by demanding physical labor, material deprivation, inadequate housing and education, and precious little cash. In all these senses, rural Poland languishes on the margins of Europe.

It is important to establish Poland's rural character because scholars of domestic violence note that its incidence and the availability of services vary significantly between urban and rural areas (Trial, 1984). First, the incidence of domestic violence in rural areas appears to be higher than in urban ones (Murty *et al.*, 2003; Logan *et al.*, 2003). Researchers speculate that the increased incidence of violence stems from the greater isolation of rural women combined with the particular ways that farm work tends to strain relationships (Murty *et al.*, 2003). Additionally,

they find that rural women often have less social support, less education, less income and worse overall health and mental health (Logan *et al.*, 2003).

The geographies of Polish rural life, therefore, present numerous challenges for women in abusive relationships. Polish rural women are likely to be undereducated, to have little access to cash or to transportation. They are likely to be dependent on the family farming enterprises and/or their husbands' government benefits for survival. In addition to these resource constraints, women seeking separation or divorce are likely to encounter strong social pressures against leaving their spouses.

In sum, women in rural Poland suffer from various forms of marginalization. They lack an institutional space for the articulation of their interests as rural women. The Housewives Circles that served as the transmission organizations for rural women during the state socialist period have largely been delegitimated and few are functioning at all at present.² Mainstream media accounts of farmers' protests and politics rarely focus on the specific concerns of women or make room for their stories and voices. Rather, one sees pictures and video images of angry and resolute middle-aged men driving their tractors into Warsaw. Polish rural women are virtually invisible on the political landscape of post-communist Poland. The 'co-variation of their low-level positions' (East European, post-communist, Catholic, female, rural) indicates that extraordinary institutional means are necessary to overcome their various forms of marginalization (Hadjimichalis & Sadler, 1995, p. 7).

Domestic Violence in Post-Communism: New Institutional Geographies

Between 1995 and 2000, I conducted interviews with social workers, social service department administrators, psychologists, lawyers, police officers, and activists working in the field of domestic violence in Poland. There was universal agreement on the point that domestic violence was a taboo subject before 1989. Before 1989, no services (e.g. shelters, counseling, legal aid) existed purely for victims of domestic violence and very few existed for women who were homeless, poor or unemployed since official ideology denied these problems existed. Further, the extreme shortage of housing made it almost impossible for married women to obtain even temporary housing. Since 1989, there has been growing interest and concern about domestic violence in post-communist Europe among feminist, East European activists as well as among Western scholars.³ The literature on domestic violence in post-communist Europe has illuminated several aspects of domestic violence service provision and policy. It has described how domestic violence is being reframed as a crime in specific countries, as well as the activities of specific centers, programs and initiatives (Brunell, 2002; Johnson, 2001; Mrsevic *et al.*, 2000). Finally, it has suggested reforms needed in policing, in criminal prosecution procedures and norms, and in national legislation (Brunell, 2002; Johnson, 2001; Banwell *et al.*, 2000; Cooper *et al.*, 2000; Mrsevic *et al.*, 2000; Philips *et al.*, 2000). Taken as a whole, this literature speaks to the need for institution building, especially to the need for creating woman-centered spaces that can critically examine the causes of domestic violence as well as ameliorate its effects.

While many are critical of the slow and inadequate pace of this institution building process by post-communist states in Eastern Europe, few have commented on the apparent contradiction between the desire to expand state

capacity to address domestic violence and the dominant post-communist pattern of scaling back the state. Citizens in Marxist-Leninist systems were subjected to extraordinary levels of state control of the public sphere in exchange for freedom from state control in the private sphere (Jowitt, 1992). State intervention into domestic life was a strictly prohibited element of the East's de facto social contract. Hence, convincing police, prosecutors and courts that they have a duty to intervene into the private sphere and convincing women that state institutions can be trusted to do this is proving to be a difficult and lengthy process.

I refer to changes in the boundaries between public and private in the East fully aware of the contentious history of these terms in the West (Okin, 1998; Elshtain, 1981). Indeed, deconstruction, redefinition and analysis of the meaning of the terms 'public' and 'private' have been an essential part of feminist scholarship across many disciplines (Okin, 1998; Phillips, 1998; Jaggar, 1983; Elshtain, 1981). **Q6** Feminist theorists have exposed how characterizing spaces as private has generally been used to excuse society and/or the state from the responsibility to protect women from harm and to legitimate men's control over women (Okin, 1998; Phillips, 1998). This explains why a crucial step in developing domestic violence policy is the process of making domestic violence a 'public policy object' or an issue warranting state response (Araujo *et al.*, 2000).

The public-private distinction is an equally trying obstacle to effective domestic violence interventions in the East just as it has been in the West. Johnson (2001), for example, has found that in Russia it is precisely the tendency of police, prosecutors and judges to conceive of domestic violence as a 'private' matter rather than as a criminal act that mitigates against effective state actions to halt domestic violence. Most violence against women occurs in the private sphere (Mooney, 2000), yet breaking out of such a relationship requires women to make very public declarations before police officers, specialists, and court officials about the crimes committed against them. Most of those who decide to separate from their abusers are also forced to rely on the state or nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to enter into new living and working arrangements. Thus, the public-private dichotomy, so well known in the West, is also operative in post-communist societies, especially in politics and policies affecting women such as domestic violence (Gal & Kligman, 2000).

NGOs, Women and the State

NGOs can challenge this public-private dichotomy. They are suggestive of an intermediate organizational space or arena inhabiting the space between the public and private spheres. NGOs are differentiated from the state in that they do not enjoy its legal status, especially its monopoly on the legitimate use of force, nor its universality, although they may receive public funds to accomplish public aims.

While NGOs were once the darlings of democratic theory, they have become suspect as agents of democratization. Wedel, for example, underscores how East European elites were quick to adopt NGO terminology and the institutional structures sought by Western grantors while Western governments were quick to fund them without any consideration of the grantees' understandings of the terms or the pronounced gap between their understandings of terms such as 'NGO', 'foundation', and the like (Wedel, 1998, pp. 108-112). Henderson (2002) finds that Western funding to NGOs has simply reinforced the habit of clientelism rather than creating opportunities to practice Western-style civic engagement. **Q7**

Despite these criticisms, it is impossible to deny that many 'public policies', especially those that disproportionately affect women, are pursued through NGOs fueled by a combination of privately held and state-controlled resources. It is this unique structural location that prompts me to refer to the 'institutional geography' within which policies affecting women are devised and implemented. For example, several feminist scholars have argued that NGOs may offer women an important alternative sphere of political action. Some have argued that they are more open to women's participation because of their availability at local scales (Staeheli & Cope, 1994). Others find that NGOs create spaces within which new forms of political action can emerge as a 'response to the multifaceted demands on the time of activists, especially women activists, made by family, work, and personal needs' (Staeheli, 1996). Finally, others find that NGOs allow for agendas that are qualitatively different and more varied than those generated by state structures (Brunell, 1993). Thus, NGOs create new and different institutional spaces allowing for new and different conceptions of social justice, perhaps especially gendered social justice, to emerge.

These new institutional spaces are vital to feminist politics due to the inability of accomplishing feminist goals through the state. Feminist scholars have noted that states tend to reify women's roles as mothers and caretakers, serving to forcibly exclude women from certain types of economic and professional activities and to deny women the right to self-determination. This is precisely the feminist critique of communist gender regimes. While the family and maternity benefits extended to women in communist systems may have been the envy of working mothers in the West (e.g. months or even years of paid maternity leave, the right to return to one's previous position after maternity leave, cash benefits for a baby's birth, etc.), authors such as Einhorn (1993) and Funk and Mueller (1993) stress that these policies often were experienced by East European women as coercive and paternalistic. Thus, it is difficult to construct public policy through the state in ways that affirm the complexity of women's multiple identities and allow them real choices in social roles.

These concerns have led women's movement activists to press for 'new institutional arrangements within democratic states devoted to women's policy questions' (Stetson & Mazur, 1995). Stetson and Mazur point to institutions such as Denmark's Equal Status Council, France's Ministry of Women's Rights, and Sweden's Equality Ombudsman as examples of state institutions devoted to making 'state feminism' a reality. According to them, state feminism involves making 'the state into an activist on behalf of feminist goals, embedding gender issues in national policy agendas and giving advocates for the advancement of women permanent access to arenas of power' (Stetson & Mazur, 1995, p. 1).

Rather than locking women into clientelistic roles as communist and welfare state regimes most often have, Stetson and Mazur (1995, p. 273) find that 'femocrats' in state institutions have found ways to funnel resources to NGOs and women's advocacy groups so that they can pursue their own policy agendas. Thus, one of the state feminist strategies they identify is not simply the state devising and implementing woman-centered policies in a top-down fashion or grass-roots organizations working in a bottom-up fashion, but rather a merging of the two with strategically placed state actors facilitating the agendas of grass-roots organizations. I emphasize this point because I believe this model of cooperation between the state and NGOs is an under-recognized means of using state resources to accomplish feminist goals. Thus, I suggest that cooperation between

state actors and grass-roots activists in NGOs is an institutional strategy that can accomplish 'pro-woman policies'⁴ rather than 'state feminism' (Robinson, 1995) per se.

Building Pro-Woman Post-Communist Geographies

Robinson portrays pre-democratic transition Poland as a state sorely lacking in state feminist institutions. The *Liga Kobiet* (Women's League), which was intended to represent women's interests during the state socialist period, is characterized as doing nothing more than propagandizing paternalistic images of women, with the touted image shifting according to the economic needs of the state. Robinson laments the absence of an independent civil society in Poland capable of articulating alternative images of women and fears the lasting effect of *Liga Kobiet* is that it largely delegitimated feminism among Poles, especially any kind of feminism promoted by the state (Robinson, 1995, p. 271). My research in Poland confirms that Poles feel very skeptical toward state-organized feminism and, indeed, closely associate feminism with state propaganda (Brunell, 2002). This finding, along with Poles' proven penchant for self-organization in the Solidarity movement, suggests that NGOs are likely to be the preferred mechanism for developing and implementing pro-women policies in post-communist Poland.

According to JAWOR, a Polish research institute devoted to the study and development of NGOs, there has been a veritable explosion of NGO activity in Poland, some directly facilitated by state 'privatization' programs and others responding 'spontaneously' to increased need for social services resulting from the economic dislocation, and social disorganization associated with Poland's transition (JAWOR, 1995). Until Solidarity was re-legalized in 1988, there were no legally organized independent NGOs operating in Poland. Yet, by the end of 1989, 200 foundations were registered in Poland, nearly 900 by 1990, and nearly 1,200 by 1992 (JAWOR, 1995, p. XII). Poland's JAWOR '94/95 catalog has entries for 16,754 NGOs while JAWOR '98 (1998) lists 23,647 NGOs. Thus, Polish NGOs have proliferated at an astonishing rate since the late 1980s.

The explosion of women's organizations in Poland has been no less profound. In 1995, the Directory of Women's Organizations and Initiatives in Poland (*Informator o Organizacjach i Inicjatywach Kobiety w Polsce*) listed 65 women's organizations (Centrum Promocji Kobiet, 1995).⁵ Today, the Center for Information about Women's Initiatives (*Ośrodek Informacji Środowisk Kobiety*) website lists more than 300 such groups (<http://www.oska.org.pl/english/oska/projects/database.html>). That is a five-fold increase in seven years.

Yet, Regulska (2001) finds that many rural areas in Poland simply lack the activists and volunteers with the professional skills needed to maintain NGOs. Moreover, many feminists are critical of the NGO approach because they see service provision as a poor substitute for substantive gender justice accomplished through structural and social change. The Minnesota Advocates of Human Rights report on Poland echoes these concerns citing one lawmaker's frustration with Poland's new police intervention procedures (discussed in greater detail below) as a substitute for addressing real issues of power disparities between men and women and for failing to see violence against women as a systematic social problem (MAHR, 2002). The report also raises the following concerns about the shelters and crisis intervention centers developed and staffed by NGOs in Poland: that they are understaffed, overcrowded and under-funded; that shelter staff often

try to convince women that their behavior caused them to be attacked or to return to their abusers; that staff often treat women like children needing strict supervision; and that these organizations may exploit women's labor (MAHR, 2002, pp. 42-43).

While these criticisms are warranted and some are corroborated by my own field investigations, I caution against overlooking the impact NGOs have had on public awareness about domestic violence and on the creation of a new kind of public sphere that allows its mention and recognition as a crime and a gendered social problem. For example, Gal and Kligman (2000, p. 97) credit Belgrade's SOS Hotline for domestic violence with changing domestic violence from a 'regrettable but accepted practice' to a 'social problem' in 'an astonishingly short time'. According to them:

[this redefinition] is exactly the sort of reciprocal relationship between organization in civil society and the creation and change of discourse in the public sphere that has been theorized by feminists and other social scientists. [It] illustrates one way in which multiple and decentralized public spheres can replace the state-dominated publics characteristic of the communist era. (Gal & Kligman, 2000, p. 97)

The explosion of NGOs in Poland has created a space for the articulation of
 Q11 'alternative visions of gender relations', as Robinson (1993) had hoped, perhaps without anticipating that these could be both feminist and anti-feminist in nature. The landscape of NGOs devoted to women's causes in Poland includes groups with decidedly feminist agendas such as the Women's Rights Center (<http://free.ngo.pl/temida/contents.htm>), a nationally active lobby and locally active association in Warsaw, and the Women's Foundation (*Fundacja Kobiet*), a new social movement organization with a flexible national and local agenda based in Krakow. Yet it has also opened both these arenas to socially conservative groups, such as those affiliated with the Catholic Church.⁶ This pluralization of the NGO sector is unavoidable in democracies and shows that the 'voicing of alternative
 Q12 visions of gender relations' sought by Robinson is often a double-edged sword for creating pro-woman policies.

Pro-Woman State Policy in Post-Communist Poland?

Between 1995 and 1997, the Polish government⁷ made raising awareness of domestic violence a priority with its campaign 'Combating Violence—Equalizing Chances' overseen by the Government Plenipotentiary for Family and Women (Nowakowska, 2000). Its purpose was to 'create a comprehensive system of support for victims of family violence' including giving loans to abused women to help them become financially independent of their abusers (Nowakowska, 2000, pp. 178-179). It trained activists from more than 10 organizations that aid victims of crime (chosen on a competitive basis) who were to be funded by local governments. Unfortunately, the campaign was not fully implemented before the 1997 parliamentary elections, won by the more socially conservative Electoral Action Solidarity (AWS), which discontinued the program for some time. When it was reactivated in 1999 plans to build local structures for the advancement of women had been dropped and the aims of the program were couched in gender-neutral terms and spoke of 'consolidating family bounds [*sic*]' (Nowakowska, 2000, pp. 178-179). The AWS government also moved in an anti-woman direction

by choosing a Christian-Nationalist to be the 'plenipotentiary for women and family'. The minister promptly dropped women from his title (Nowakowska, 2000, pp. 178–179).

These events highlight the fact that the Polish state has acted in both pro- and anti-woman ways with state policies toward women being dictated by the ideologies of specific political administrations. One may use the state apparatus to expand women rights while another may use the state apparatus to conceal how women's needs, rights, and interests differ from men's.

None the less, in the area of domestic violence, some state pro-woman policies have proved to be lasting. Before leaving office in 1997, the SLD government launched a program called 'The Blue Line'. The program initiated a procedure wherein police are required to fill out blue cards when responding to incidents of domestic violence. For the first time, the cards enable statistics on domestic violence to be kept separately from those on other violent crimes. Further, they include sections for police to refer victims to specific services in their communities, many provided by NGOs. Moreover, these organizations along with public agencies are authorized to proactively contact victims if victims do not contact them voluntarily.

The Blue Line campaign also raised public awareness about domestic violence by putting up graphic billboards of women with bruises underscored with slogans like 'Because the soup was too salty ...'. Finally, the program established a national hotline for domestic violence staffed 24 hours a day by staff knowledgeable about the dynamics of domestic abuse and armed with information about locally based services for victims.

In 1999, Polish police intervened in domestic disputes 376,538 times.⁸ Of these cases, 34,043 were documented incidents of physical violence.⁹ However, there are wide disparities in the rates of intervention from province to province. The average rate of interventions was 1.1 per thousand people, but the rate ranged from a low of only 0.1 interventions per thousand people in the northeastern Warmińsko-Mazurskie province to 2.1 interventions per thousand people in the west-central Lubuskie province.

While the program significantly raised the profile of domestic violence as a serious social problem and makes information much more readily available to victims, some women's NGO activists are critical of the program because it is administered by the Agency for Resolving Alcohol Problems (*Państwowa Agencja Rozwiązania Problemów Alkoholowych*). They object to subsuming domestic violence under the purview of this agency because it implies a causal link between alcoholism and domestic violence encouraging the misperception that 'only drunks beat their wives' rather than treating domestic violence as a problem based on the systematic disempowerment of women from all social milieus (Interview with Urszula Nowakowska, Director of the Polish Women's Rights' Center, Warsaw, 5 July 2000).

Some have also criticized the implementation of the blue cards, arguing that they are underutilized in many jurisdictions and that some police have interpreted one section, to be filled out by victims, as requiring the victim's initiative to file a complaint (Nowakowska, 2000, pp. 178-179).

These criticisms are well founded and point to the limits of national initiatives. Funding that would allow adequate levels of training and monitoring of implementation has been lacking. At the same time, we should not ignore that an important institutional space to address domestic violence has been opened for

the first time in Poland and that this should be construed as a pro-woman policy on the part of the Polish state.

These efforts by the national government are (ideally) to be complemented by those of local and provincial governments and NGOs. But not all local and provincial governments feel they are in a position to do much about domestic violence. Decentralizing reforms made sub-national governments responsible for the provision of social services. Yet local governments, especially in rural areas, often lack the resources to provide a wide range and high quality of services. This is particularly true since the second round of Poland's decentralization reforms were carried out in 1998 which gave many rural areas 'county' or 'county/municipality' status.¹⁰ It is unlikely that a rural municipality faced with the prospect of closing its schools will find the resources to provide domestic violence services or even the resources necessary to transport women to a jurisdiction that does provide them. Thus, while the efforts of Poland's national governments have established a rudimentary national network for domestic violence reporting incidents, raising awareness, and keeping statistics, they have also set the stage for significant variations in service quality and availability at the local level. This necessitates a more detailed analysis of the institutional geography of domestic violence service provision.

Research Questions and Methodology

The institutional means of providing services is an important question when examining geographical access to public services. Who provides the services reveals the priority the state places on such services. Delegating the provision of these and other social services to local governments and/or to NGOs implies a diminution of social rights guaranteed by the state. At the same time, it allows for uneven distribution of services across the country and for variations in institutional means and types of service provision to emerge. Thus, a careful examination of who is providing services, i.e., public sector or NGOs or a combination of the two, and what kinds of NGOs have emerged, i.e., secular or religious groups, is needed.

I began researching these questions when I lived in Krakow during 1995–96 and Lodz during 1996–97. In addition to the survey research I conducted with a broad range of NGO activists and local government officials in each city, I conducted a dozen interviews with NGO activists working specifically in the area of domestic violence and/or other women's issues as well as an equal number of representatives of local government, including both elected officials (city council members) and workers in city departments of social services. My findings from this research (Brunell, 2002) inspired me to expand the geographical scope of my research on domestic violence in Poland in an attempt to discover the scope of NGO activities and the degree to which local government reforms and the national campaign were affecting the frequency and quality of interventions and service provision across Poland.

Thus, I returned to Poland for six weeks during the summer of 2000. I conducted a mail survey to reveal where and by whom social services for victims of domestic violence were being provided. The survey questionnaire was addressed to representatives of social service departments at various sub-national levels of government¹¹ and NGOs likely to provide services to victims of domestic violence. The goal was to generate a sample that represented all sizes and types

of communities: larger cities (over 250,000 residents); medium sized cities (50,000-250,000 residents), small cities (10,000-50,000 residents) and villages (fewer than 10,000 residents). The sample included all 16 provincial government Departments of Social Services and a random sample¹² of 64 Departments of Social Services at the city (*miasto*), city and municipality (*miasto* and *gmina*) and municipal (*gmina*) level. Finally, I randomly chose 20 county-level departments of social services (*powiaty*) to complete my sample of 100 public sector respondents.¹³

I then constructed a sample of 100 NGOs from several sources, based on what I had learned about the kinds of NGOs developing in Poland during the 1990 s. I chose a random sample of 50 women's organizations listed in the National Women's Information Center Information Guide (*Informator-Osrodek Informacji Srodowisk Kobietych*) found at <http://www.oska.org.pl>. Because my prior research had shown that Catholic charities comprise a large proportion of NGOs in Poland, I also chose 50 Catholic groups randomly from the listings of all Brothers of Saint Albert and Caritas (the two largest Catholic charities in Poland) and other listings beginning with 'brotherhood' found in Bank Danych o Organizacjach Pozarzadowych w Polsce w wersji elektronicznej 'Jawor 98' (Data Base for NGOs in Poland, CD-ROM version, 'Jawor 98') a database funded by the European Union's PHARE Social Dialogue Programme.

My questionnaire asked the respondents both closed- and open-ended questions about who provides services to victims of domestic violence in their community, what range of services are offered, how long these have been available, and what needs to be done to improve the quality and availability of services. Of the 200 surveys sent out, three were returned undelivered (one to a public sector respondent, two NGO respondents); and 40 were returned completed (18 of 99 in the public sector; 22 of 98 in the third sector). The overall response rate was 20% (18% for the public sector; 22% for the third sector).¹⁴

I also interviewed 20 people active in domestic violence service provision in four different cities; the two large cities of Krakow and Lodz, and two smaller cities, Rzeszow and Bialystok.¹⁵ The four cities were chosen because they are provincial capitals and, thus, are under a state (largely unfunded)¹⁶ mandate to create a center for crisis intervention and are likely to be provincial hubs for a variety of social services. I also selected cities controlling for some historical commonalities while at the same time seeking spatial diversity. Krakow and Rzeszow are Galician cities which were once part of the Austrian partition of Poland. Lodz is in the center of Poland but, like Bialystok in the northeast, was part of the Russian partition of Poland. Because all four cities are provincial capitals, each should have a center for crisis intervention, according to the Blue Line mandate. However, at the time of my research only two of the four cities had such a center (Krakow and Bialystok) and each was funded and institutionalized in different ways. I also interviewed several women's organization activists working at the national level and a representative from the Blue Line office in Warsaw.

Findings on the Spatial Distribution of Intervention and Services

Figure 1 features all of the localities responding to the survey. It shows a fairly broad spatial distribution of respondents across the territory of Poland, with both urban and rural areas, and villages, small, medium and larger cities represented.

Figure 2 shows the locations and mode of provision of domestic violence services of all respondents who indicated that services specifically for victims of

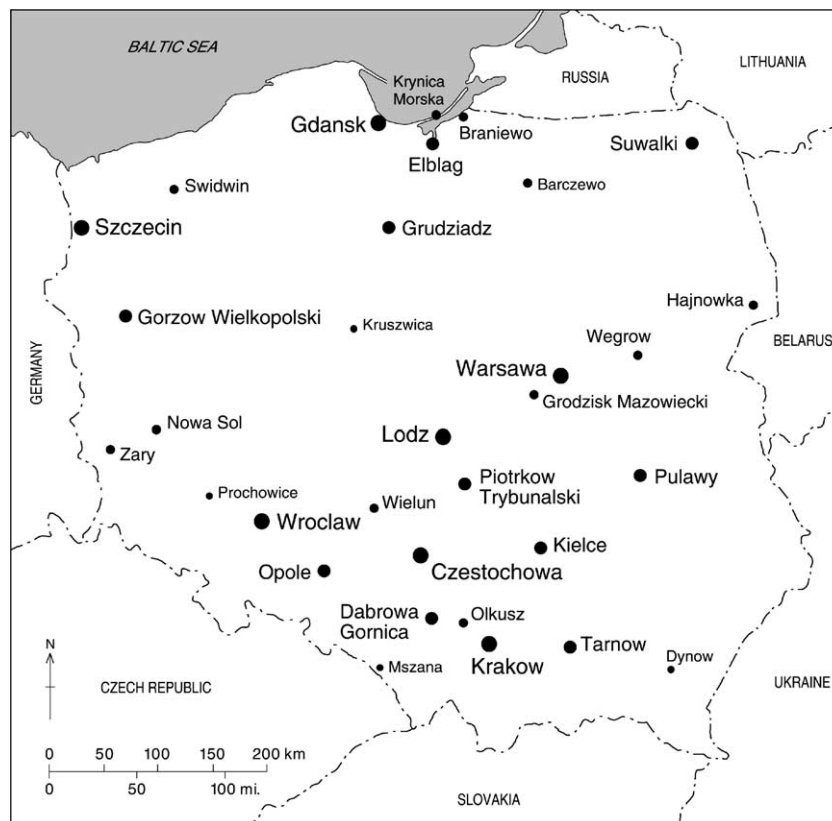


Figure 1. Respondent cities

domestic violence were available in their cities. At least some services for victims of domestic violence are available in 82% of the communities responding to the surveys. While it might be expected that small cities do not have services, it is noteworthy that medium sized cities such as Czestochowa and larger cities like Szczecin also do not offer services for victims of domestic violence.¹⁷

Shelter, even short term, for women experiencing domestic violence was available in only 42% of the responding locales. As anticipated, the availability of shelter varies considerably by city size. It is available in all but one of the larger cities and in two-thirds of the medium sized cities, but shelter is available in only 22% of smaller cities and none of the villages (see Figure 3).

The disparity between larger and smaller communities in terms of the availability of domestic violence services and shelter highlights the limits of both state and NGO efforts to create the institutional geography necessary to intervene in incidents of domestic violence, to direct victims to services and to create institutions capable of providing the services they need. Cultural and structural disparities among provinces prevent the application of the Blue Line program in a uniform way across Poland. For example, severe economic problems, high rates of alcoholism and a culture that accepts domestic violence increase the incidence of domestic violence in Warmińsko-Mazurskie province.¹⁸ Several experts in domestic violence indicated that the province has the highest rates of domestic violence and alcoholism in the country.¹⁹ Despite these trends, the rate of



Figure 2. Respondent group types

intervention into domestic violence by the police is the lowest of all the provinces. Polish experts contend that the low intervention rate is partially attributable to the cultural tolerance of domestic violence, more pronounced in rural areas, among police, who are reluctant to intervene. Moreover, many farm houses do not even have telephones²⁰ and the nearest police station is likely a dozen or more kilometers away from most farm homes, making fast intervention practically impossible. Thus, state efforts to intervene more often and more effectively in incidents of domestic violence are hamstrung by the cultural and structural geographies of the Polish countryside.

Moreover, *successful* intervention is necessarily less likely in rural jurisdictions where there are no shelters or NGOs to aid victims. My research affirms that there are wide disparities in the number of NGOs in rural vs. urban areas of Poland (Regulska, 2001). Among Poland's former 49 provinces,²¹ there was an average of one NGO per 6,427 citizens.²² However, this number is heavily skewed toward Poland's most urbanized areas as there was an average of one NGO per 5,316 citizens in Poland's six most densely populated regions but only one NGO per every 9,554 citizens in Poland's six least populated regions.²³ Overall, the correlation between population density and the number of NGOs found in each region is .739 (significant at the .01 level).²⁴ This confirms that NGOs are extremely rare in rural areas, precisely the areas where domestic violence is most tolerated

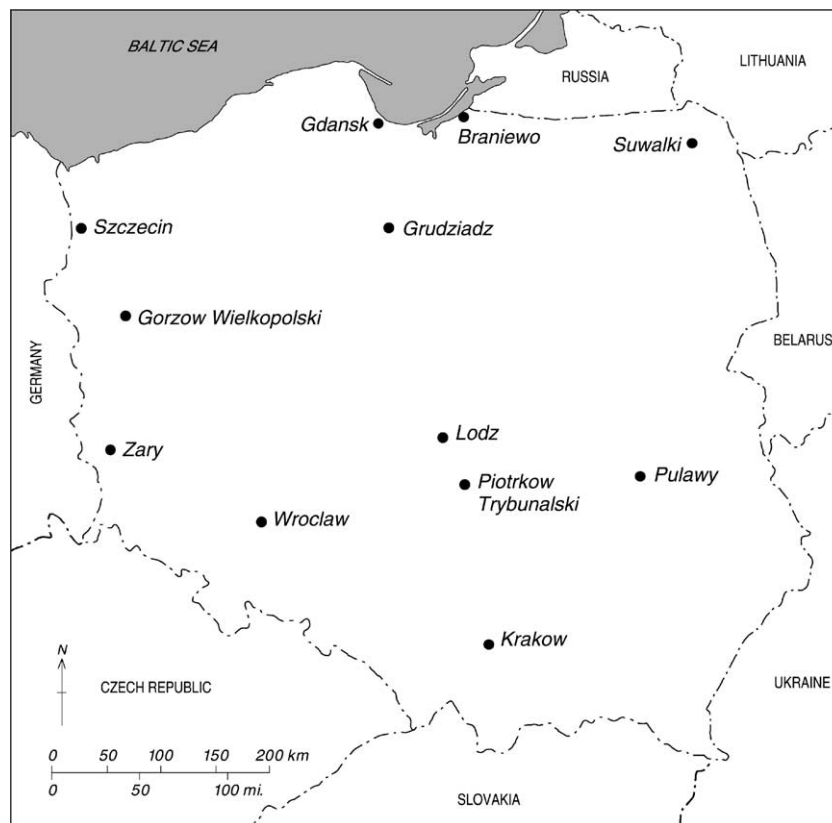


Figure 3. Respondent cities with shelter for domestic violence victims

and women have the fewest personal resources to allow them to escape violence on their own.

The only source of aid to women in most small cities and villages are public Departments of Social Services (see Figure 4). My data show that these are the sole means of service provision in all of the villages in the survey, although one does so in conjunction with the secular NGO the Polish Red Cross and the Catholic NGO Caritas. Thus, the institutional geography of domestic violence varies considerably between urban vs. rural spaces, with NGO or NGO-public provision predominating in urban areas and public provision being the predominant institutional response in rural areas.

Public agencies, however, tend to provide fewer services to victims than NGOs or NGOs and public agencies working together.²⁵ Public agencies and NGOs working together provided the most services (the average was 6 services) while NGOs providing services alone averaged 5.5 services and public providers averaged only 4.5 services. Hence, public sector agencies and NGOs are able to accomplish more by pooling resources and combining expertise (Brunell, 1999). For example, the city may own a shelter but invite in an NGO with counseling expertise to treat clients, as is the case in Krakow. Alternatively, an NGO may operate a shelter but rely on city social workers to do a lot of other casework with clients, as is the case in Lodz.

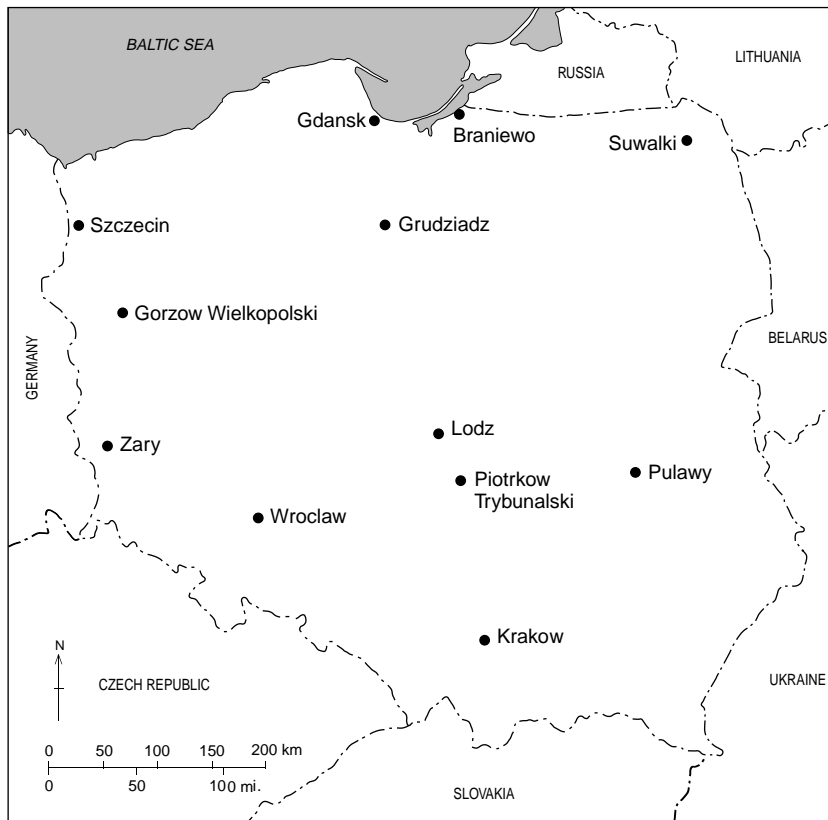


Figure 4. Types of domestic violence service provision

Concerns about the quality and capacity of state provision must be viewed in the context of the nascent institutional geography of the region. NGOs often have a greater yet more specialized capacity than public agencies. This point is underscored by the answers to an open-ended question asking the respondents to explain why particular institutions provide these services in their communities. Forty-four percent said the institutions are under a statutory obligation to provide the services; these are predominantly local and provincial governments who were delegated this responsibility in the decentralizing reforms of the 1990s. Another 18% said they were the only entity available in their communities to provide such services. In other words, in nearly two-thirds of the cases, services are provided by default, because they 'must be' provided or because there is no one else can provide them. In only 38% of the cases did respondents say that the providers in their communities had unique expertise in providing these services. In the majority of cases, therefore, services exist only hypothetically as part of a given locality's menu of social services available via their Departments of Social Services or by other charities that exist to serve a wide variety of social needs. Neither of these milieus is specifically for victims of domestic violence, or publicized as such, therefore victims are unlikely to identify them as avenues of assistance and the quality of services available may be questionable.

Thirty-eight per cent of the NGO sample were broad-based women's organizations that exist to promote women's rights, increase awareness of women's issues, help women to become more marketable in the new economy, and so on. Broad-based women's groups help women who suffer from abuse because there is no other place in their communities for these women to go, or because they do not agree with the kind of treatment the women are likely to receive from other organizations in their communities. Only 14% of the institutions in the sample were explicitly devoted to domestic violence.

As may be expected in a country as strongly Catholic as Poland, one-third of NGOs providing services are affiliated with the Catholic Church. Although I have previously found that Catholic organizations may limit the options of women seeking to leave abusive relationships (Brunell, 2002), it appears that 'the Church' is not molding domestic violence services in a monolithic way. Rather, Catholic organizations seem to have varied responses to domestic violence. In my interviews, it was revealed that in at least one shelter, owned by a city government but operated by a Catholic charity, the majority of victims do seek divorces. Another feminist organization said it used an area convent as a safe house for abused women. Thus, the Church is contributing to the diversity of this new institutional geography through the activities of well-established and widely dispersed NGOs such as Caritas, as well as through more autonomous and decentralized NGOs such as Holy Orders.

Unfortunately, the Blue Line campaign has not been very successful in increasing the chances that victims get linked up with NGOs providing domestic violence services in their communities. Police make few referrals to NGOs even in cities that have hundreds of NGOs.²⁶ In the four provinces I studied, police made about 60 times as many referrals to public sector Departments of Social Services as to NGOs (see Table 1).

This tendency to refer mainly to public sector institutions would make sense if the most comprehensive services were provided by the public sector in each case. However, police tend to refer to Departments of Social Services even in places

Table 1. Number of NGOs and referrals of domestic violence cases to NGOs and public sector organization by the police in four provinces (1999)

	Kraków	Łódź	Rzeszów	Białystok
Number of NGOs in province ¹	1445	982	365	409
Number of referrals to NGOs ²	21	19	8	9
Number of referrals to public sector organizations	1320	1264	1718	526

Notes:

¹ Province here refers to the pre-1999 reform provinces, when there were 50 small and fairly cohesive provinces in Poland. As a result of the reforms, there are now only 16 larger provinces however, each of the cities listed here was and is its provincial capital.

² Statistics on referrals were obtained directly from the commandant of each province police department (*Komenda Wojewoda Policja*). Public-sector organizations included City Departments of Social Help, Commissions for Resolving Alcohol Problems, public health administrations and schools.

Source: Bank Danych o Organizacjach Pozarządowych w Polsce w wersji elektronicznej 'Jawor 98' (Data Base for NGOs in Poland, CD-ROM version, 'Jawor 98') sponsored by the European Union's PHARE Social Dialogue Programme.

Table 2. Availability of crisis intervention centers, shelters and most comprehensive services in four provinces

	Kraków	Łódź	Rzeszów	Białystok
Has a provincial center for crisis intervention	Yes	No	No	Yes
Shelter specifically for victims of domestic violence administered	City govt. with Catholic NGO	Secular NGO with city govt support/fees	No	City-funded short term shelter
Most comprehensive services offered by	Public sector–NGO partnership	NGO w/ public support	Public sector ¹	Public sector–NGO partnership

Notes: ¹ City branch of the Center for Alcoholism Prevention and Addiction Therapy (Centrum Profilaktyki i Terapii Uzależnień). All cities have a branch partially funded by the Ministry of Health.

where an NGO is providing the most comprehensive services or joint provision is the norm (see Table 2).

Implications of the Findings

An examination of the spatial distribution and institutional geography of domestic violence services has revealed the depth of Polish rural women's marginalization. While some specialized NGOs devoted to domestic violence and broad-based women's groups are struggling to acquire the resources and expertise to adequately address domestic violence in their urban communities, my research highlights the unevenness of the development of NGOs especially in rural areas. Overall, organizations devoted to domestic violence are still rare in urban environments and virtually non-existent in rural ones.

My research underscores the need for an expanded role of the state in providing services to victims of domestic violence. The Blue Line campaign, while a modest effort in some ways, indicates a significant deviation from the state 'anti-feminism' often noted by scholars studying Poland. It has raised awareness of domestic violence as a serious problem and set out to change public perceptions of domestic violence through the graphic billboards that appeared in cities all over Poland in 1997. Although these billboards were sometimes the subjects of jokes, they constituted an important element of a public health strategy to reduce the incidence of domestic violence, i.e., getting people to see domestic violence as a social injustice. Changing a deeply rooted belief that domestic violence is an acceptable part of intimate relationships, especially in rural communities, is a long and arduous process, one that will take generations to be fully realized.

Establishing a national hotline for victims, perpetrators and witnesses should also be construed as a pro-woman act. The hotline is a vital resource because many communities cannot staff such a service. It dispenses crucial emergency counseling and guides victims to resources in their communities, of which they are often unaware. It provides a national infrastructure and expands the reach of locally available services at the same time. The reach of this infrastructure, however, is limited by the fact that many rural households still lack telephones.

Finally, the Blue Card procedures instituted for domestic violence interventions are clearly a pro-woman policy. Because of these procedures, it is possible to have some idea of the scope and spatial variations in the incidence of domestic violence across Poland for the first time, and to track police intervention rates from province to province.

These three accomplishments of the Blue Line underscore the publicity, coordination and procedural functions the state is uniquely qualified to perform. Yet these efforts need to be supplemented in several ways to address the continued marginalization of rural women. Rural women are a particularly vulnerable and difficult to reach population due to their spatial isolation on farms and in villages that make operating shelters and providing specialized services prohibitively expensive.

The state or foreign donors could create a small grant program to encourage existing NGOs to expand into underserved areas, especially rural areas. This entails approaching successful, urban-based NGOs and encouraging them to expand into rural areas and/or pairing activists from well-established groups with would-be activists from underserved areas.²⁷

Second, future efforts must focus on developing the expertise of the local state in dealing with domestic violence especially in rural areas. To this end, the state can organize meetings between social workers, police and NGO activists (imported from cities where they are most active) in every region to enhance the understanding by police and social workers of the dynamics of domestic violence, and to raise their awareness of the entire spectrum of women's needs and treatment options available in Poland. This will increase the quality of existing interventions and also raise the likelihood of more specialized NGOs becoming organized in smaller communities.

Finally, the state should identify politicians, bureaucrats and NGO activists committed to gendered social justice and encourage them to use their patronage and resources to create crisis intervention centers in underserved areas. It was a goal of the Blue Line to have a crisis intervention center in every province, but many still do not have them. Moreover, Poland's territorial reforms made provinces larger, making such provincial facilities rather distant from many rural women who need the services the most. A thorough state-funded spatial analysis of where shelter is available should be done and outreach efforts should be made toward interested elected officials, bureaucrats, and NGO activists in underserved areas to get shelters up and running as soon as possible.

My analysis shows that urban Poland is developing an institutional geography that promotes pro-woman understandings of domestic violence. Just as in the West, it will certainly take several years for these institutions to mature and for real changes in attitudes toward domestic violence to occur. In the meantime, state and NGO activists must focus on shrinking the rural margins of this institutional geography.

Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge the University of Wisconsin, Oshkosh, for providing me with a Faculty Development Grant to conduct the fieldwork for this article and Carolyn King for preparing the maps that appear in it. I would also like to thank Linda Peake and *Gender, Place and Culture's* anonymous reviewers. Their

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comments greatly enhanced the quality of the piece. Finally, I would like to thank Jean Pugh for her editing assistance.

Notes

1. Similarly, Polish President Aleksander Kwasniewski warned that voting against joining the union would push Poles to ‘the margin of Europe’ (BBC Monitoring International Reports, 2003).
2. Thus, the example set in Canada by the Canadian Farm Women’s Network would be difficult to replicate in Poland. See Fletcher *et al.*, 1996.
- Q16 3. In Gal and Kligman’s edited volume *Reproducing Gender: Politics, Publics and Everyday Life after Socialism*, for example, domestic violence or violence against women figured prominently in five chapters, each on a different post-communist country (Gal & Kligman, 2000). Likewise, Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights found the problem acute enough to warrant its study in numerous Central and Eastern European countries (Cooper *et al.*, 2000; Philips *et al.*, 2000; Banwell *et al.*, 2000).
4. I am grateful to an anonymous reviewer for *Gender, Place and Culture* for suggesting this term.
5. To arrive at this figure, I counted groups listed under the headings of associations, federations and clubs; foundations; charity organizations; religious groups and associations; trade unions and parties; and foundations and women’s projects.
6. On the impact of having members of the clergy staff domestic violence shelters see Laura Brunell, 2002.
7. The Government was formed by the Communist successor party the *Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej* (SLD)—the Alliance of the Democratic Left.
8. Biuro Koordynacji Służb Prewencyjnej, *Raport o stanie zagrożenia demoralizacja, przestępstwa oraz patologia wśród dzieci, i młodzieży w okresie od 1 stycznia do 31-go grudnia 1999* (Warszawa, Komenda Główna Policji), 15 March 2000, p. 67.
- Q17 9. Biuro Koordynacji Służb Prewencyjnej, *Raport o stanie zagrożenia*, p. 67.
10. There are three levels of territorial administration in Poland. The *gmina* (municipality) which is recognized as a unit of ‘local self-government’ with legal personhood in the Constitution and charged with providing specific services to their population. While the Constitution entitles municipalities to receive funds from national government, municipalities have independent powers of taxation and revenue generation via user fees, licensing, etc. *Powiaty* (counties), created by a legislative act of the Sejm in 1998, are equivalent to county-level government in the US, and are funded entirely by national government funds, as are *województwa*, i.e. voivodships or provinces. As a result of the 1998 territorial reform, there are 370 *powiaty* and 16 voivodships in Poland.
11. I surveyed 100 departments: all 16 provincial government departments and a random sample of 64 departments at the city (*miasto*), city and municipality (*miasto* and *gmina*) and municipal (*gmina*) level. The universe of social service departments at the city, city and municipality, and municipality levels was determined by the Directory of Provincial Departments of Social Assistance and Centers of Social Assistance published by the Polish Ministry of Labor and Social Policy (*Wykaz adresowy wojewódzkich zespołów pomocy społecznej oraz ośrodków pomocy społecznej (stan na dzień 25 maja 1995r.)*) (Warszawa, Ministerstwo Pracy i Polityki Socjalnej, Departament Pomocy Społecznej). One *powiat* (county) from each region and four randomly drawn *powiaty* (counties) from *Wykaz Powiatowych Centrow Pomocy Rodzinie (stan na dzień 31 maja 1999r.) Baz komputerowy*. (Warszawa, Ministerstwo Pracy i Polityki Socjalnej, Departament Pomocy Społecznej). The goal of my sampling methodology was to generate a sample that represented all sizes and types of communities: large and medium sized cities, smaller towns and rural villages.
12. I used a random numbers table to choose 64 localities from an exhaustive list, *Wykaz adresowy wojewódzkich zespołów pomocy społecznej oraz ośrodków pomocy społecznej (stan na dzień 25 maja 1995r.)* (Warszawa, Ministerstwo Pracy i Polityki Socjalnej, Departament Pomocy Społecznej), of all *miasta* (cities), *miasta* and *gminy* (cities and municipalities—some localities have both designations), and *gminy* (municipalities) departments of social services.
13. Source: *Wykaz Powiatowych Centrow Pomocy Rodzinie (stan na dzień 31 maja 1999r.) Baz komputerowy* (Warszawa, Ministerstwo Pracy i Polityki Socjalnej, Departament Pomocy Społecznej).
14. My response rate is in the typical range for a mail survey conducted in Poland. A survey conducted by the Women’s Association for Equal Gender Status Beijing 1995 to assess implementation of the Polish National Action Plan prepared for the UN’s Conference on Women in Beijing 1995 received only five responses to the 80 questionnaires it sent (see Nowakowska, 2000 cited above).
15. Both Krakow and Lodz have approximately one million residents while Rzeszow and Białystok have between 100,000 and 200,000 residents.

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16. I say largely unfunded because provincial governments do receive money from central government tax revenues to provide social services but no funds were given specifically for the crisis intervention centers. It is up to the provincial legislatures to decide how to spend these funds.
17. For coding purposes, localities with populations of less than 50,000 were coded small towns or villages; 50,000–200,000 medium sized; and over 200,000 large sized.
18. The director of the domestic violence shelter in Łódź informed me of the pervasiveness of domestic violence in this region during an interview in the spring of 1997, before the Blue Line campaign was fully in place. The director of the Center for Crisis Intervention in Białystok concurred with his assessment in our interview during the summer of 2000, as did several specialists at the National Agency for Resolving Problems Related to Alcohol and the Rzeszów branch of this agency.
19. See previous note.
20. The national average for Poland is 219.4 phones per 1,000 people, yet urban–rural differences are pronounced. In cities, there are 288.7 phones per 1,000 people compared to only 107.1 phones per 1,000 people in villages, *Mały rocznik statystyczny 1999* (Warszawa, Główny Urząd Statystyczny, 1999), p. 259.
21. I opted to use the old provinces because these smaller provinces are more homogenous and more easily characterized as rural or urban.
22. Population figs were drawn from *Mały rocznik statystyczny 1996* (Warszawa, Główny Urząd Statystyczny, 1996), p. 447, which gave population estimates for 31 December 1994. Estimates of the number of NGOs per vovoidship were drawn from JAWOR 94/95 Informator o organizacjach pozarządowych w polsce (Warszawa, Fundusz Współpracy, Program Dialog Społeczny).
23. Poland's six most densely populated regions in 1994 were: Łódzkie, Warszawskie, Katowickie, Krakowskie, Bielskie, and Wrocławskie. The least densely populated were Suwalskie, Łomżyńskie, Słupskie, Białopodlaskie, Gorzowskie, and Pilskie. Again, see, *Mały rocznik statystyczny 1996*, p. 447.
24. I used Pearson's measure of correlation.
25. My survey listed the following services to be checked off by respondents: temporary shelter, aid in finding housing, aid in finding a job, providing food and other necessities during the stay at the shelter, psychological counseling, meetings with clergy, legal advice and representation, and accompaniment to court proceedings. There was also a category called 'other forms of assistance' followed by space for respondents to fill in with any other types of services provided but not listed in the survey.
26. Unfortunately, statistics on referrals are not published. I obtained the data for four provinces (provincial capital in parentheses)—Małopolskie (Kraków), Łódzkie (Łódź), Podkarpackie (Rzeszów) and Podlaskie (Białystok) by contacting each province's commandant of police directly.
27. Funding for these kinds of initiatives may be available from the European Union's PHARE Social Dialogue Programme, the Batory Foundation, the Ford Foundation, the Network of East-West Women and other international foundations with an interest in expanding civil society and improving women's lives in Poland.

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ABSTRACT TRANSLATION**Marginalidad y la nueva geografía de la política de violencia en el hogar en la Polonia postcomunista**

RESUMEN Este artículo explora la distribución espacial y la geografía institucional de las provisiones de servicios contra la violencia en el hogar en la

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Polonia postcomunista. Como resultado del activismo de las organizaciones no gubernamentales (ONG) y de las nuevas políticas pro-mujer en Polonia, una nueva institución geográfica esta emergiendo que suministra servicios para las victimas de violencia en el hogar. Las ONG, muchas veces junto con los gobiernos locales, son el medio más importante en la provisión de servicios en las ciudades medias y grandes; en las áreas rurales, las agencias publicas predominan en la geografía institucional de la provisión de servicios. La suposición que las ONG surgirá para abordar las necesidades de las victimas de violencia en el hogar no es realista en las áreas rurales. Mientras el área urbana de Polonia desarrolla una geografía institucional para abordar la violencia en el hogar, el estado y las activistas de las ONG tienen que enfocar en reducir los márgenes rurales de la geografía institucional de Polonia.

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