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Globalization and Feminism  
*Opportunities and Obstacles for Activism  
in the Global Arena*

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Globalization is the word of the decade. In newspapers as well as scientific journals, globalization is invoked in relation to everything from moviemaking to unemployment. Much of this discussion implies that globalization is a wholly new phenomenon, that this is only a top-down phenomenon that is happening to people rather than also a grassroots process in which individuals and groups are actively engaged, and that there is nothing particularly gendered about it. This book arises from our conviction that none of these three assumptions are true.

A variety of sociological statistics at the macro level suggest the extent of global integration of the early twenty-first century is more like that of the 1910s than of the 1950s. For example, in 1910 levels of global trade measured by imports and exports and of human interconnection in the form of immigration and transnational organizations were at levels very similar to those we experience today. Two violent world wars and a long cold war reduced these international ties to their low point in the 1950s and 1960s. It may be more accurate to see the end of the cold war as allowing the tide to turn back toward greater global interaction in 2000–2010.

To be sure, many linkages between states and across national boundaries have been created only relatively recently. The European Union is one of the most spectacular of these current experiments in reshaping the meaning of sovereignty, but the African Union (as Melinda Adams shows here) is also an important regional form of integration. These pacts follow in the footsteps of other, older links such as the World Council of

Churches and the United Nations that continue to be important. Such continuing global associations should be understood in the context of other, now-obsolete efforts to integrate political and economic life across national borders, be it the Warsaw Pact or the British colonial system. The commitments, perspectives, and processes that connect the globe today are different in interesting ways from what has gone before, but they are not unprecedented in their scope or consequences, including their facilitation of feminist organization. Comparing 2005 to 1955 and 1905 suggests that feminist mobilization has always been increased by greater globalization.

One way in which global integration today does differ from that of the past is the extent to which it involves ordinary citizens and social movements, not merely governments and elites. Despite the typical assumption that globalization is a massive force bearing down on helpless populations, to look at the actual process is to see a great variety of social actors—including many who are not educational or political elites—engaging in diverse types of integrative work. Social movements of many kinds are finding a voice, alongside more privileged actors such as states and corporations. Certainly there are structures and processes at work here that are far larger than any one individual, group, or even state can control, but this has always been characteristic of the world since the age of global navigation and the emergence of industrialization. What is more striking in the present moment is the intersection of the global with the local, and the expansion of popular, decentralized, and democratic forms of interpreting and responding to the top-down challenges posed by a world economy.

Moreover, rather than a hierarchical colonial world system or the dueling blocs of the cold war, the reconfiguration of the world order is arising today from multiple locations and pulling in diverse directions. Because “the West” is no longer held together by its anticommunist mobilization, Europe and the United States are discovering new tensions and differences in their relationship. The “third world” is no longer merely defined by its history of colonization but by its own diversity, regionally, economically, and politically. Democratic India and authoritarian Pakistan, prosperous Singapore and economically ravaged Zimbabwe all came into the twentieth century as part of the British Empire, but they enter the twenty-first century with very different concerns. World bodies such as the UN are faced with new conflicts that include citizens challenging their national governments for democratic participation, ethnic conflicts within states, and gender conflicts fed by religious fundamentalisms, as well as the more

familiar tensions among national and class interests. Globalization is today as much about the multiplicity of centers of power as it is about increases in their interrelationship.

From these diverse local centers, a variety of nongovernmental groups are engaging in the complex process of political renegotiation that hides under the label of globalization. Social movements like Attac, an international mobilization for democratic control of financial markets and their institutions that was founded in France in 1998, raise questions about the justice of international debt management and call for a “Tobin tax” (a fee placed on economic transactions to help defray the costs of development). Such groups are listened to by governments from Iceland to South Africa, although they are less well known in the United States. The World Social Forum connects social justice activists globally, allowing for a sharing of tactics and resources. Democracy movements in Ukraine, China, and Syria have used both mass media and Internet connectivity to draw popular support from abroad in struggles with their own governments. Globalization is also a form of political mobilization, and this grassroots involvement is also growing in scope and significance in many parts of the world.

Among the social actors most mobilized in the context of global opportunity structures are women’s movements worldwide. We emphasize that women’s global mobilization is neither something wholly new and unprecedented nor unconnected to the variety of local and regional conflicts that are part of the process of reshaping the world system. Gender is very much a part of the structure of the social order globally. Gender is therefore also part of what is being remade in the current reconfiguration of power relations. As with other aspects of this global reorganization, this restructuring involves women and men in a variety of local and transnational settings. Some of these women’s movements are feminist, but others are not.

This book looks at this diverse and contested process called globalization from the vantage point of feminism and women’s movements. This chapter has three specific goals and sections. First, I offer a conceptual definition of both feminism and women’s movements, and an argument about why it is important to distinguish between them. Second, I discuss the transnational opportunity structure that affects how even local feminists act, and I raise some questions about what its most promising and most dangerous features may be. Third, I present an overview of the chapters that follow and discuss why they offer important and complementary insights into how the process of globalization matters for feminism.

*Feminism and Women's Movements:  
A Difference That Makes a Difference*

Although some scholars use the terms "feminism" and "women's movement" interchangeably, this usage creates certain problems. In some contexts, it makes it seem doubtful that men can be feminists, since how can they be members of a "woman's movement"? In other contexts it can seem problematic to apply the label "feminist" to activist women, whether because they refuse to use this term for themselves or because the women's movement in which they are engaged has other goals, even ones in opposition to any change toward greater gender equality. When women mobilize, as they do, to pursue a wide variety of interests, are all such "women's movements" automatically to be considered feminist?

To make clearer just what kinds of activism are feminist, it is helpful to separate this concept from that of a women's movement. Organizing women explicitly as women to make social change is what makes a "women's movement." It is defined as such because of the *constituency* being organized, not the specific targets of the activists' change efforts at any particular time. The movement, as an organizational strategy, addresses its constituents as women, mothers, sisters, daughters. By using the language of gender, it constructs women as a distinctive interest group, even when it may define the interests that this group shares as diverse and not necessarily centered on gender. Naming "women" as a constituency to be mobilized and building a strategy, organization, and politics around issues defined as being particularly "women's" concerns are the two factors that make a women's movement, not a statistical head count of the gender of the membership, though typically women are the activists in such movements. This definition of "women's movement" explicitly recognizes that many mobilizations of women as women start out with a non-gender-directed goal, such as peace, antiracism, or social justice, and only later develop an interest in changing gender relations.

Activism for the purpose of challenging and changing women's subordination to men is what defines "feminism." Feminism is a *goal*, a target for social change, a purpose informing activism, not a constituency or a strategy. Feminist mobilizations are informed by feminist theory, beliefs, and practices, but they may take place in a variety of organizational contexts, from women's movements to positions within governments. Feminism as a goal often informs all or part of the agenda of mixed-gender organizations such as socialist, pacifist, and democratization movements.

Because feminism challenges all of gender relations, it also addresses those norms and processes of gender construction and oppression that differentially advantage some women and men relative to others, such as devaluing "sissy" men or the women who do care work for others. There is no claim being made that one or another particular aspect of gender relations, be it paid work or sexuality, motherhood or militarization, is the best, most "radical," or most authentic feminism. Feminism as a goal can be adopted by individuals of any gender, as well as by groups with any degree of institutionalization, from informal, face-to-face, temporary associations to a legally constituted national or transnational governing body.

Feminist activists and activism typically are embedded in organizations and institutions with multiple goals. To have a feminist goal is in no way inconsistent with having other political and social goals as well. The question of where feminism stands on the list of priorities of any individual or group is an empirical one. It is not true by definition that a person or group that calls itself feminist necessarily puts this particular goal in first place, since in practice it could be discovered to be displaced by other values (such as achieving or redistributing power or wealth, defending racial privilege, or fighting racial discrimination). Nor is it true by definition that a person or group that does not call itself feminist does not have feminist goals, since the identity can carry other connotations in a local setting (whether of radicalism or exclusivity or cultural difference) that an activist may seek to avoid by choosing another label.

These two definitions together generate a dynamic picture of both feminism and women's movements. On the one hand, women's movements are mobilizations understood to be in a process of flux in which feminism may be becoming more or less of a priority issue for them. Regardless of their goals, mobilizations that use gender to mobilize women are likely to bring their constituents into more explicitly political activities, empower women to challenge limitations on their roles and lives, and create networks among women that enhance their ability to recognize existing gender relations as oppressive and in need of change. Thus the question of when and how women's movements contribute to increases in feminism is a meaningful one.

On the other hand, feminism circulates within and among movements, takes more or less priority among their goals, and may generate new social movements, including women's movements. Successful feminist mobilization creates more places and spaces for feminism to accomplish its aims,

within movements and within institutional power structures. Thus, for example, feminism can percolate into organized medicine, where activists may then construct women's movement associations of doctors, nurses, or patients, develop new tools to recognize and treat illnesses that affect women and men differently, and make institutions deliver services more appropriately to women in their communities. Feminist mobilizations often intersect with other forms of transformative struggles. Activists originally inspired by feminism may expand their goals to challenge racism, colonialism, and other oppressions, and activists with other primary agendas may be persuaded to adopt feminism as one of their objectives, especially as feminist activists show them how mutually supportive all these goals may be. Thus, it is also a meaningful question to ask how feminism contributes to creating and expanding social movements, including women's movements.

As a consequence of both these processes, feminism and women's movements dynamically affect each other. In this set of changing relations, to restrict analysis to only those temporary phases in which women's movements have chosen to focus exclusively on challenging gender subordination or seeking equality with men of their own group marginalizes the ongoing intersectional elements of both. Distinguishing between feminism and women's movements, and then relating them empirically, moves the multiplicity of constituencies and dynamic changes in goals among activists "from margin to center" among the questions for analysis. When and why do women's movements embrace feminist goals—and when not? When and why do feminists choose to work in women's movements rather than in mixed-gendered ones or policymaking institutions—and when not? When and why do democratization, peace, or economic justice movements make feminism part of their agenda—and when not? These are important questions that can only be asked, let alone answered, if there is a clear definitional distinction between feminism and women's movements. The scope of feminist theory and its overall social critique is also obscured if the difference between feminism and women's movements is not made explicit. For some feminists, feminism means simultaneously combating other forms of political and social subordination, since for many women, embracing the goal of equality with the men of their class, race, or nation would mean accepting a still-oppressed status. For some feminists, feminism means recognizing ways in which male-dominated institutions have promoted values fundamentally destructive for all people, such as militarism, environmental exploitation, or competitive

global capitalism, and associating the alternative values and social relations with women and women-led groups. To define feminism in a way that limits its applicability only to those mobilizations that *exclusively* focus on challenging women's subordination to men would exclude both these types of feminism.

When analysts do this, they discover that the groups that are left to study are typically mobilizations of relatively privileged women who are seeking access to the opportunities provided by social, political, and economic institutions to men of their nationality, class, race, ethnicity, and religion.<sup>1</sup> The middle-class, white, Western bias observed in studies of "feminism" is at least in part a result of such an inappropriately narrow and static definition of the object of study ("feminism"). Defining feminism should not be confounded with other criteria such as the preferred constituency addressed (women or both genders), the organizational form preferred (social movement, community group, state or transnational authority), the strategy pursued (working inside or outside institutions, more or less collectively, with transgressive or demonstrative protest activities or not), or the priority feminism takes in relation to other goals (antiracism, environmentalism, pacifism, neoliberalism, etc.). Feminists do many different things in real political contexts in order to accomplish their goals, and working in and through women's movements can be very important strategically. But especially when trying to see just how feminism as a goal is being advanced in and through a variety of transnational strategies, it becomes self-defeating to presuppose that only women's movements can be the carriers of feminism.

Moreover, by stressing how feminism as a goal is characteristically combined with other goals and making its relative priority a question open to empirical examination, this approach more readily looks at the influence of the transnational opportunity structure upon both feminism and women's movements. "Political opportunity structure" (POS) is the preferred term among scholars interested in the positive opportunities and the obstacles provided by a specific political and social structure. Globalization is made concretely meaningful by seeing it as a process that increases the importance and level of integration of transnational political structures. At this transnational level, the POS can vary substantially from that provided at the local level alone. Thus Zapatista rebels reach out through the Internet for support from people and groups spread around the world to counter the repressive power exercised locally by the Mexican government.

The transnational opportunity structure is a political context that seems open to feminism, particularly as it takes up the discourses of human rights and development, as Pietilä argues in her chapter. What other goals are combined with feminism in which local contexts, and how does that help or hinder these ideas to travel transnationally? For example, if feminism is connected to the defense of class privilege, and upper-middle-class women's ability to enter the paid labor market is given priority over migrant women's ability to earn a living wage by their domestic work, then feminism is not going to be an appealing identity for those who do not already enjoy economic advantages.

The *intersectionality* of social movements characterizes them and shapes how they position themselves in the transnational arena in which they operate. Intersectionality means that privilege and oppression, and movements to defend and combat these relations, are not in fact singular. No one has a gender but not a race, a nationality but not a gender, an education but not an age. The location of people and groups within relations of production, reproduction, and representation (relations that are organized worldwide in terms of gender inequality) is inherently multiple. These multiple social locations are often—not, as is often assumed, atypically—contradictory. Organizations as well as individuals hold multiple positions in regard to social relations of power and injustice, and typically enjoy privilege on some dimensions even while they struggle with oppression on another. This multiplicity and the contradictions to which it gives rise are rarely acknowledged theoretically. As Ferree and Roth (1998) argue, scholars of social movements have instead tended to construct ideal-typical movements, envisioning these as composed of ideal-typical constituents: thus “worker’s” movements are imagined as organizations of and for white men, “nationalist” movements as of and for indigenous men, “feminist” movements as of and for white, middle-class women.<sup>2</sup> The reality is of course, much more complex, but it only emerges clearly when the goals and constituents of movements are acknowledged as distinct.

In sum, this book approaches feminism as one important goal of social change. It asks the question of how feminism is being related to women's movements and other organizational strategies that are being pursued locally and in transnational spaces, as well as to the various other goals that specific women and men have when they engage in social and political activities. And it looks especially at globalization as a process that is potentially empowering as well as disempowering women as they look for

effective strategies to make feminist social change, including sometimes building women's movements.

### *Transnational Opportunity Structures: Looking for Levers to Move the World*

Women's movements are far from the only tools that feminists have taken up to try to challenge and change male domination. Globalization in the sense of integration means speedy flows of ideas across great distances. This has contributed to the sharing of strategies that also reach beyond classic women's movements, protest demonstrations, and projects. Three groups of strategies for making feminist change have spread like wildfire through the world system: developing a “women's policy machinery” within state institutions, building an issue advocacy network outside of formal institutions, and developing women's movement practices that are knowledge-creating, many of which link policy machineries with advocacy networks to multiply political effectiveness. None of these is without its problematic aspects in the transnational system.

First, women's policy machinery has now been put in place in most countries of the world, nearly all of which has come into existence since the first UN Conference on Women in Mexico City in 1975. Such policy machinery includes specific national, local, or regional administrative structures that are targeted to women as a politically relevant group. Women's policy machinery includes ministries of women's affairs, agencies charged with “mainstreaming” gender perspectives into policy and/or bringing women into administrative positions, and programs designed to ensure that women receive a certain share of seats in elected and/or appointed bodies, from parliaments to corporate boards of directors. Women's policy machinery, unlike a women's movement, is formally embedded in state or transnational structures that have institutionalized authority. Policy machineries differ widely in their form and effectiveness, from the old but weak and bureaucratically low-level Women's Bureau in the U.S. Department of Labor to the Ministry for Women's Affairs in France.<sup>3</sup>

Women's policy machinery is a mechanism by which gender inequality can be addressed, but it offers no guarantee that this is how it will be used. The competing goals of those who occupy the positions that this machinery creates as well as the different interests of those to whom they are

accountable—typically authorities above them as well as constituents below—make for a mixed picture of what the machinery could produce. The term “policy machinery” itself is one that arose within administrative elites and diffused among activists, but it is not a bad image to use in considering the consequences of these structural innovations. Rather than achieving feminist goals by the very fact of their existence, they are tools, like levers, that require active use—there needs to be pressure put on the lever for it to budge anything within the system of male power. Paradoxically, sometimes the creation of women’s policy machinery seems to be mistaken for an end in itself or a substitution for active mobilization to exert pressure for change, and thus in practice can lead to demobilization by the women’s movements that helped to create them. Chapters in this book focus attention on the emergence and use of women’s policy machinery in the UN (Snyder) and in the nation-states of Europe (McBride and Mazur) and of Africa (Adams).

Second, globalization has facilitated the emergence of feminism as a goal in a wide variety of issue advocacy networks active at the transnational level. Overtly feminist discourse is heard in a variety of nongovernmental organizations that operate across national borders, working on a huge variety of issues from HIV/AIDS to literacy to economic restructuring, and in contexts as different as the World Bank and the World Social Forum. Gender equity as a principle has been taken up in networks concerned with health, peace, and social justice, as well as in networks organized directly to deal with issues seen as especially affecting women, such as trafficking in human beings, prostitution and other forms of sex work, and the use of genetic and reproductive technologies.

Many of these issues cut across national boundaries, and the networks constructed to deal with them are not organized as much on the basis of nationality as was true of their predecessors in the early twentieth century. A typical organization of a hundred years ago was “inter-national” in the sense of multiple national organizations belonging to a coordinating umbrella organization to which each national member group sent representatives. By contrast, in a world today characterized by Internet linkages, cheap airfares, and widespread telephone service, more fluid networks made up of individuals and organizations from many parts of the world actually interacting with each other more routinely can supplement or even supplant the conventional, hierarchical styles of international nongovernmental organizing. NGOs are ever more diverse in their form and

can be transnational in membership (individuals and groups not representing nations but belonging regardless of nationality).

NGOs are also linked in wider transnational networks around certain issues and values, as Keck and Sikkink (1998) pointed out, and coordinate the pressure the groups bring on national governments, as Swider shows here in the case of migrant and labor groups in Hong Kong and Bagić shows with regard to NGOs operating in the former Yugoslavia. Such networks are thus becoming potentially powerful transnational actors in their own right. Rather than one unitary principle of feminism being the basis for networking, as the International Council of Women adopted at the beginning of the last century, the actual political work of such NGOs and networks is differentiated and issue-specific. The flexibility and issue focus of networks on specific problems, from the access of women to scientific professions to the work conditions of migrant domestic workers or female genital cutting, makes them politically able to span a wider range of activist groups. Paradoxically, while feminism has entered a great many of these networks, the very variety of their goals fragments feminist attention and makes women’s movements as such seem exclusionary, overly broad, and less attractive forms of mobilization. Networks instead tend to combine paid professionals and unpaid local activists, men and women, inside and outside of government, and in many countries.

Global terrorism and “national security” are also increasingly recognized as being intertwined and gendered issues. This feminist concern can take the form of considering how religious fundamentalism, control over women’s bodies, national identity, and male pride and privilege are being negotiated and renegotiated in diverse transnational as well as national settings. Both fundamentalists (Christian, Islamic, Jewish, and Hindu) and those who challenge them are linked in networks that may include state as well as nonstate actors. Among the interesting questions that this increasingly global conflict raises is how and when feminist principles become co-opted in the national interests of either liberal modernist states or religious fundamentalism.

In the cold war era, the communist states co-opted the idea of women’s liberation as an accomplishment of state socialism, which allowed the communist countries to divert attention from the ways in which women in fact were far from liberated under their regimes, on the one hand, and on the other hand placed Western countries in the position of resisting feminism as godless, antifamily, and a threat to (Western) civilization.

Interestingly enough, in the current global "war on terror" rhetoric it is the Western democracies that attempt to co-opt feminism as one of their greatest accomplishments. The oppression of women is framed as religious, family-based, and a threat to (Western) civilization, which is now defined as the champion of secular modernity and the value of equal rights for all. Diverting attention from the way that women continue to be far from liberated in Western capitalist democracies is one discursive accomplishment of this strategy, and if it succeeds, it could be a demobilizing factor for feminist women's movements.

Thus the strategic use of transnational networks has both a material side in the flow of resources and support for issues they spread globally across national borders and a discursive side in the way that issues are framed and conflicts organized on a global level. The concrete work of building and supporting networks as a way of working on feminist interests is explored in this book by looking at issue-based networks bring resources to women's movements in the former Yugoslavia (Bagić) and labor organizers in Hong Kong (Swider). The relationship of feminism to issues of religion, identity, social justice, and economic development is also examined in both Turkey (Ertürk) and Finland (Pietilä), as women's movements attempt to deal with the challenges of fundamentalism, neoliberalism, and ethnic conflict on a global scale.

The third lever with which feminists have tried to change the world is with knowledge-creation strategies. Women's movements have been prolific producers of "new words" to name old problems from sexual harassment, acquaintance rape, wife beating, the double day/shift, and the nanny chain. Women's movements have been important places for the development of transnational feminist theory and identity, creating the free spaces that foster ideological innovation and strategic inventions, like the women's policy machinery of the 1990s and the shelters for battered women of the 1980s. Creating the space to produce new feminist analyses of gender and of gender systems' effects on both women and men, the many national women's movements and the journals, magazines, and women's studies programs to which they gave rise have developed feminist theory. As McBride and Mazur indicate for Europe, and Ferree and Pudrovska show for the World Wide Web, these new ideas are now moving in a transnational space.

Conferences share this knowledge, none more spectacularly than the 1995 Beijing Fourth Women's World Conference and NGO Forum. Ideas such as "gender mainstreaming" and "gender budgeting" become devel-

oped through the active participation of feminists engaged in knowledge production work in their own countries and transnationally. These ideas then become part of the shared language and competences that women's movements and women's policy machineries in many countries adopt and use. Conferences organized on a transnational basis in and across many disciplines offer social support to women to keep them actively pursuing feminist goals in their scholarship and carrying their theory out into practice with activist groups and transnational networks. Knowledge and its creation become a sustaining aspect of the work of making feminist change, and this work especially blurs the distinctions among those in policy machinery, in movements, in social service, and in academia. Evaluation research accompanies social change projects, and feminist theory informs statistical data collection.

All over the world, women's associations fund and conduct studies, disseminate reports, encourage discussion, and train researchers and policymakers to develop greater awareness of gender inequities and greater commitment to redressing them. Lobbying, monitoring, funding demonstration projects, assessing best practices, and encouraging new networks are all activities in which feminist women's movements are increasingly engaged as they become more institutionalized as policy relevant actors in their own right.

Knowledge work links policymakers and social movements, serving as a powerful strategy for spreading feminism. But feminist ideas can spread without any accompanying feminist identity. Feminist women's movements struggle to create and sustain feminist identities that women will find meaningful for themselves, and through such identities, movements give meaning to even the losing battles that they fight. As crucibles of identity, community, and commitment for feminists, women's movements can play a critical role in sustaining activism across time (generations) and space (geography). However, feminist women's movements do not just provide the sometimes-comfortable homes where valiant feminists can return and refresh themselves but are themselves at times sites of tremendous diversity and conflict.

Thus the decline in popular mobilization in the form of autonomous feminist women's movement organizations and mass demonstrations can be partly attributed to the crucible for conflict that they can offer. Feminist identity is a highly charged and much-debated concept, and for some networks and organizations it may be more convenient and effective to simply avoid the issue. But the heat of conflict in feminist women's move-

ments has also been accompanied by the light of developing feminist theory and the warmth of a feminist community in times of struggle. If feminism becomes so diffused in networks and policy institutions that women's movements themselves fade out as an active part of the picture, there paradoxically might emerge a time in which we have feminism without feminists. In this book, feminist identity is considered both as a transversal, linking strategy (Yuval-Davis) and as a contested and much-avoided term (Ferree and Pudrovska). The specific knowledge and frames for issues that women's movements have developed have spread, often from the "bottom up" from local movements in the global South to transnational networks and state institutions in the affluent countries of the North, raising issues of control for those still in local settings (Tripp) and highlighting the danger of not taking differences seriously into account (Yuval-Davis).

*Global Feminism, Situated Activism: Perspectives on Power and Social Change*

Although the present wave of globalization is different than the one that crested in the early twentieth century, some questions about the relationships among feminism, women's movements, and globalization persist. How can women's movements manage the challenges of diversity, of generational succession, and of organizational institutionalization that are posed by becoming a more fragmented field of special interest groups that share a concern with women's equal rights but differ in so many other regards? How can the inequality of resources around the world be used to create constructive flows of support? What conditions foster democratic participation transnationally and build solidarity for addressing problems not one's own? These are the types of issues that the chapters of this book address as they situate feminism in its current transnational context.

Just as this chapter offers a theoretical orientation to the issues facing feminists and women's movements globally, Margaret (Peg) Snyder offers an empirical perspective on how the UN facilitated the emergence of both feminism and women's movements worldwide. As the longtime director of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), Snyder has a perspective on networking that comes from inside the policy machinery, specifically from her decades of work inside the UN. Her view of how feminist NGOs gradually changed and were changed through their

transnational cooperation over issues of development highlights the important role that the UN itself played in creating the venues (from conferences to committees) where fruitful interaction could occur. Unlike McBride and Mazur, who see movements as the actors and political institutions as their targets, Snyder highlights the way the programs and priorities of the UN affected women's movements, and in some ways even could be said to have created the transnational movement that we now observe. Because the UN's structures give political voice to otherwise weak states and perspectives, the concerns of women from the global South could be brought to the attention of more privileged women and raise their consciousness. Similar to what Sarah Swider shows at a local level in Hong Kong, the structure of representation makes an enormous difference in just whose concerns are heard and how the overall agenda is set at this global level. Peg Snyder argues that the UN structures were suitable to be actively used to create empowerment opportunities for women, a clear case of co-opting and changing the UN as an institution, as well as making it a "godmother" to a variety of local feminist initiatives. Tripp then takes up this theme to spell out the ways that local women's movements seized the chances thus created. She argues that the UN forums and resources offered more than a "boomerang" to influence gender politics at the national level, instead creating a truly transnational opportunity structure. One of the key contributions of this transnational POS was in allowing local activists of the global South the opportunity to challenge and change the perspectives and priorities of the North.

The next part of the book addresses the concrete ways in which feminist challenges are met in specific movements and networks that operate on this modern transnational terrain. The purpose of these chapters collectively is to indicate how the world-traveling concept of feminism meets the needs of local women's movements—or, as is often the case, does not. As Tripp's contribution here suggests, in these chapters the transnational level is taken as an opportunity structure that allows for but does not insist on positive uses of transnational resources in local settings and creates spaces for locally based ideas to be taken up by other actors.

Yakin Ertürk has a particularly valuable perspective to offer on this question, bringing together her years at the Division for the Advancement of Women at the UN and her teaching and administrative experience in higher education in largely secular and democratic Turkey and in fundamentalist, authoritarian Saudi Arabia to consider the various meanings that transnational Islamicist mobilization can have for women. Focusing



on the experiences of women in relation to the changing fortunes of the Islamicist political party in Turkey, she argues that both (un)veiling as a symbol and women's movements as a form of politics need to be seen in a historical context to understand their feminist implications. Rather than forcing them into universalist categories, Ertürk indicates the open-ended negotiations of identity conducted by women through a diversity of women's movement organizations. But she also places these in the context of a global mobilization of fundamentalist Islam that has put pressure on politicians and movements in Turkey and the equally transnational pressures arising from Turkey's desire to enter the European Union, where gender equality is treated as a test of human rights.

Sarah Swider then takes up the way that transnational support can matter for women's practical organizing by looking at the innovative multilevel association that migrant domestic workers formed in Hong Kong. Using resources drawn from transnational NGOs concerned with migrant rights and local resources that support union organizing, the Filipina majority among domestic workers and the more disadvantaged Indonesian and Thai women migrant workers built a network of associations that gave nationalities representation and offered grassroots-level support services for each ethnic/national community. Unlike the conventional labor union structure that collapsed based on differences in interests among the women, this multilevel "women's economic association" had the structural ability to accommodate minority perspectives. It mobilized the migrant domestic workers to protect themselves from state cutbacks in maternity benefits and to fight for equal pay across divisive lines of nationality, thus striking the balance between universal rights and specific needs that Nira Yuval-Davis later associates with successful transversal politics.

Aida Bagić also focuses on the question of how transnational support and national differences in a locality can aid or interfere with women's movement organizing. Looking at the support that transnational donors channeled to women's NGOs in the late 1990s, she shows how donor preferences followed media attention to what were defined as the characteristic problems of Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Serbia, and Montenegro. The women's NGOs in these post-Yugoslav states responded to donor preferences as well as local needs in setting their own priorities, thus developing sometimes stereotypical national profiles for organizations. Although the women's NGO scene flourished in the western Balkans, her case study provides more of a cautionary tale about the limits

of feminist politics in practice than a shining example of transnational understanding and organizing.

Hilkka Pietilä takes advantage of her years of experience in women's development politics in the UN and in transnational bodies coordinating women's international agenda setting to raise some questions about the nature of these transnational agendas in an era of militarization and neoliberal economics. She uses the example of Finland as a state that was relatively rural, poor, and "underdeveloped" until a few decades ago to suggest what a constructive agenda for development would be. In her view, gender and development are strongly intertwined, and women's movements have a key role to play in directing this development toward peace and social justice. The UN, rather than the EU, provides a model in her view for how women's policy machinery and knowledge-production work can be directed in fruitful lines. Economic and social development for the nation-state becomes a process of building capabilities among the poor rather than competition among the rich. As Pietilä conceptualizes it, this sort of national development and women's rights are dual engines for women's empowerment. She argues the two women's movements in Finland complemented each other successfully because each chose one such agenda to emphasize, and suggests that women's mobilizations globally might be wise to create a similar division of labor today.

In the next part, the book moves from the organizations that pursue feminist goals to the contexts in which they now operate. Rather than looking at specific local groups that have been more or less successful on the terrain created by global connectivity, these chapters focus on where and how new political opportunities are being created and used. In different parts of the world, diverse transnational mechanisms are emerging as important.

The African Union as a source for transnational standards for gender equality is the focus of Melinda Adams's chapter. Adams focuses on the regional level, one that is often overlooked and undervalued in discussions of global integration. Her model makes clear that women's movements in Africa have built up their own NGO networking, similar to that found in Latin America, and these movements drew on transnational resources to lay a groundwork for a transnational policy machinery in the African Union. At the regional level, the African Union, the NGO feminist policy networks, and the universities and research institutes producing feminist knowledge are clearly active and effective. Autonomous, rather than state-

led, women's organizations were the real motors for change in this part of the world, and their lobbying of AU politicians has produced regional-level political commitment to feminist policymaking. How well these aspirations translate into national policy or local women's lives remains to be seen, especially as local-level political policymaking can be more corrupt or conflict-ridden than the AU itself.

Dorothy McBride and Amy Mazur ask how women's movements and women's policy machineries are faring in Western Europe, where they are confronting a new transnational space created by the formation of the European Union. The notion of institutionalizing feminist policy machinery is itself novel, but while this is a strategy that is widespread in Europe (unlike the United States) today, the type and degree of institutionalization achieved varies between countries. By tracking policy outputs that can be defined as feminist, and associating them with variations in the level of mobilization of different types of groups and strategies for working in and outside of the state structure, McBride and Mazur lay a framework for understanding what makes feminist politics effective. As leading figures in the transnational feminist research group Research Network on Gender Politics and the State (RNGS), they have helped to develop the kind of feminist knowledge-producing strategy that can directly inform not only policy makers but also activists. Their view of the political opportunity structure for feminists highlights the way that policy issues and strategies for addressing them spread because of the actions of specific women's movements.

Myra Marx Ferree and Tetyana Pudrovska look at the tool that is most seen as characterizing the new phase of globalization, the Internet, to see how transnational women's organizations make use of Web pages to publicly define themselves and their agenda. As part of the global opportunity structure, the World Wide Web allows groups to connect without direct physical presence, on the one hand, or the intervention of the media and its priorities, on the other. Thus group Web pages offer a public but unmediated look at the group identities. Using Web sites from groups based in different parts of the world, Ferree and Pudrovska argue that these identities are still regionally specific as well as transnationally connected. The North-South connections that Snyder discusses as so effective at the level of organizational development and face-to-face contacts in the UN setting appear to be similarly important in the virtual world of Web-based identities. The transnational women's organizations of Europe stand somewhat aside from this North-South axis of dialogue and seem con-

cerned with the problems and policies stemming directly from the enormous expansion of the European Union. How well they either do outreach into other parts of the world or draw global attention to the feminist political experiments done in and through the EU as a new type of transnational body remains to be seen. But it is striking, as Pietilä suggests, that the UN-sponsored agenda seems to diverge from the EU-sponsored one among nongovernmental women's groups in different parts of the world.

In the final part of the book, the chapters address the continuing problems facing activists who are attempting to work on the transnational level and begin to suggest strategies for constructively dealing with them. Nira Yuval-Davis traces the historical movement of feminism from an exclusionary version of "identity politics" that privileged the definitions of the most powerful to a "transversal" version of feminist identity that is dialogical and reflexive. Based on her work in Britain, in Israel/Palestine, and among transnational feminist groups that are mobilizing against religious fundamentalists, she highlights the potential for transversal feminist identity to contribute to building awareness and support for human rights across ethnic and political lines of conflict. She argues that both the universalism claimed by the left and the identity politics of feminists and others have hardened lines of conflict that can be softened by dialogue that crosses borders both horizontally and vertically (transversally). "Rooting" arguments in one's own experience while "shifting" to encompass the views of the other is crucial to this transversal process, but in this chapter, Yuval-Davis draws out the specific obstacles that stand in the way of achieving this. She uses the discourse around "human rights" to illustrate some of the less than ideal ways that feminist identities and goals enter into dialogue across borders.

Finally, Aili Mari Tripp's chapter concludes by reframing the themes of human rights discourse and transversal strategy that Yuval-Davis lays out theoretically as being issues of practical interrelationships among feminists in and outside of women's movements around the world. How can feminist networks really work more fairly and effectively to incorporate the voices of the most affected women? What strategies of organization and representation allow for the most democratic ways of shaping a feminist agenda inside and across transnational organizations? When are women's movements from privileged settings using too much of their financial and logistical power to shape the agenda of policymakers and women's organizations in developing countries, and when are they valu-

able allies in pressing for human rights and social justice? Using concrete cases of difficult—and sometimes failed—feminist efforts to cooperate, Tripp presents practical politics as an arena needing more than good intentions from participants to make effective cooperation possible. Although Tripp points to the serious problems that have arisen in specific cases, she argues that the overall trajectory has been one of greater inclusion, responsiveness, and respect for others.

In Tripp's accounting, as well as in many of the specific case studies in the previous parts, the issue of representation for the least advantaged emerges as a critical feminist issue. From a structural position of empowerment inside the UN, as Tripp, Pietilä, and Snyder all argue, the representation of voices from the global South has reoriented the entire women's movement. The presence (or absence) of organizational empowerment plays a crucial role for women in the local case studies of Swider, Bagić, and Ertürk as well, indicating that the way that the local and the transnational intersect to give women the opportunity to represent themselves politically is critical. The new frameworks of the African Union, the EU, and the Web are resources that may complement or contradict the political opportunities provided historically by the UN and its agencies for women and for development, as Adams, Pietilä, McBride and Mazur, and Ferree and Pudrovska suggest. When and how women achieve a greater degree of self-representation at the transnational as well as at regional, national, and local levels is thus the question for feminist organizing. Women's movements will surely play a role in this self-representation, but other tools are important too.

Globalization can work to women's advantage—as especially seen in the UN—but also unleash forces of inequality that will further disadvantage women. Just what feminism means and what women's movements do for women are therefore questions not merely for theory but for the practice of the next decades to determine.

#### NOTES

1. See, for example, studies using such a mixed and static definition as Margolis 1993; Chafetz and Dworkin 1986; and the critiques in Gluck 1998 and Buechler 2000.

2. This approach also offers an alternative to Molyneux's model of women's pragmatic and strategic gender interests, and does not presume that movements, constituencies to which they strategically appeal, and the interests of these con-

stituents can be theoretically known by analysts with access to the "correct" understanding of the social structure, but instead works from the idea that interests, constituents, and movements all need to be socially constructed. See Ferree and Mueller 2004 for a more developed discussion of this point.

3. See the discussion of this process especially in Europe in McBride Stetson and Mazur's *Comparative State Feminism* (1995).

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