

1-2000

Gender Politics in Global Governance (Mary K. Meyer & Elisabeth Prügl eds., 1999)

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Recommended Citation

Berta E. Hernández-Truyol, *Gender Politics in Global Governance*, 94 Am. J. Int'l L. 209 (2000) (reviewing *Gender Politics in Global Governance* (Mary K. Meyer & Elisabeth Prügl eds., 1999)).

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falter. Hudec offers us more than lip service to the ideal of globalization; he possesses the vision to make globalization safe for democracy.

Despite the occasional redundancy of these essays and the absence of a general introduction pulling together the diverse themes of the book, this volume effectively communicates Hudec's distinctive and important contribution to our understanding of international trade law. He writes with persuasion, clarity, and wisdom. One hopes that his message will be heard above the shouts of the angry crowd.

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Gender Politics in Global Governance. Edited by Mary K. Meyer and Elisabeth Prügl. Lanham MD, Boulder CO, New York, Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield, 1999. Pp. xii, 299. Index. \$69, cloth; \$26.95, paper.

In 1995 the United Nations Human Development Program (UNHDP) officially confirmed what many would confess to knowing: "In no society today do women enjoy the same opportunity as men." This harsh reality stands in sharp contrast to the global legal norms that, since the UN Charter entered into force in 1945, have promised the equality of men and women. This commitment has subsequently been reaffirmed in the Universal Declaration and in numerous other human rights conventions and conference documents.

As Mary Meyer, one of the editors of *Gender Politics in Global Governance*, notes in her interesting chapter on the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, women have been continually concerned about and involved with international issues since early in the nineteenth century. The activities of that organization itself have ranged over eight decades, and it continues to have a central role in organizing women's efforts in behalf of world peace and human rights. In the context of this long and ongoing history of women's international involvements, 1975 was a landmark year: it was declared by the United Nations as the International Year of the Woman, which became the first year in the United Nations Decade for Women. The decade included three conferences, the first of which was held in Mexico City in 1975, a year that proved to be a turning point for women: their participation in discussions by and about the role of women in global politics and

governance took a decidedly public and activist turn. The Mexico City conference was marred by tensions between competing geopolitical blocs (West/North, South, and East). It underscored not just the breadth and complexity of "women's issues," but their indivisibility from, and interdependence with, larger issues of global politics and economics. The second women's conference, a 1980 meeting in Copenhagen, was also tense and problematic. The third, however—the 1985 meeting in Nairobi—was much more successful, resulting in the publication of *Forward Looking Strategies*, a document that centered women on the international agenda and specifically included (for the first time in such an international document) the issue of gender violence. It was this issue that, because of its prevalence, would later prove to be a unifying theme for women from across the globe. Ten years later, in 1995—coincidentally the year that the year the UNHDP acknowledged the persistent inequality of women—the UN-sponsored Fourth World Conference on Women produced the Beijing Platform of Action, a comprehensive document addressing ongoing issues, concerns, and needs of women—ranging from education to violence, from peace to health.

These four conferences and the events surrounding them are significant signposts of the cultural changes that have occurred with regard to the discursive space of women in the international arena. It is the activism that these conferences engendered, coupled with the work of women in or around international organizations, that inspired Meyer and Prügl's book, the central goal of which is to "compile empirical work documenting the intersection of feminist activism and international politics." This intersection not only "constitute[s] a significant aspect of globally oriented feminist politics but . . . provide[s] materials for current reconceptualizations of the international that reach beyond the interstate arena" (p. vii).

In the book's first chapter, which serves as an introduction, Meyer and Prügl explain their goals and methodology. Given the emergence of multilateral institutions in this century, the mobilization of women against "male supremacy" has taken an internationalist turn; it seeks to shape "the agendas of international organizations and the normative practices of global governance" (p. 3). In an effort to understand and analyze this movement and its impact, the editors have compiled a volume that "draws together new research that explores gender poli-

tics in global governance . . . [and] is attentive to historical and contemporary modes of women's organizing from the local to the global levels to effect change in the governance structures and practices that oppress women" (p. 3).

In putting together this volume, Meyer and Prügl had to grapple with two difficult methodological issues: its language and its organization. With respect to language, they confess that the book's title is itself "contested." In particular, the terms *gender* and *global governance* have no plain meaning but "emerge from specific political debates . . . about the role of women in society and about political authority in a world that increasingly connects agents" from various and diverse locations (p. 4). (Interestingly, they do not interrogate or even comment upon the contested meaning of the term *politics*.) Because analysis of gender issues is a relatively new phenomenon within the context of global governance, and because global governance is itself an emerging phenomenon, the editors neither prescribed any particular "unitary" definition to "global governance" or "gender" nor asked the authors to employ the editors' own understanding of these terms (p. 4).

The editors' approach to the term *gender* raises an additional set of issues. In both differentiating *gender* from, and equating it with, *woman*, the editors seek to elucidate the utility of addressing the social construction of womanhood, but, unfortunately, they thereby collapse terms with different meanings. *Gender* refers to a social construction; *sex* refers to biology. By using *gender*, the authors obscure the real differences between being oppressed because of one's sex—simply for being a woman—and being oppressed because of one's gender identity—for one's self-presentation in the context of normatively ascribed and socially predetermined notions of femininity and masculinity. The editors' use of *gender* is thus contrary to the current social sciences literature and, in the end, unnecessary. The book is not about gender, but about sex; that is, with locating the role of, and challenges for, women in global governance. To be sure, an alternative title using the words *Women's* or *Sex-Based Politics* (rather than *Gender Politics*) would not have had the same allure, but it would have better served the audience in representing the book's contents more accurately.

The editors' second methodological concern relates to the book's three-part structural framework: the role and place of women in international institutions; women's strategies for shaping

global agenda; and challenges both to traditional discourse about women and to the policies shaped by that discourse. There is tremendous overlap among the three parts, however, which is compounded by the inevitably diverse stylistic models of the fifteen contributors. Moreover, the book's organization proves to be relatively artificial and reflects, perhaps, the editors' conception of the target audience (social sciences, law) rather than the book's actual content. For example, Emek Uçarer's chapter on trafficking in women—one that makes a curious distinction between dealing with trafficking as a human rights issue and as a migration issue, ignoring the reality that migration issues *are* human rights issues—appears in the third part of the book; because of its extensive discussion of how trafficking has been handled by the United Nations, however, it seems to fit better into the first part on international institutions.

The issue of target audience arises again in relation to the editors' choice of materials to be included in the book. Although the editors aspire to present "new research," much of the information on women's marginalization—in global, as well as domestic, politics and processes—is interesting but not new. The existing literature has already addressed many of the themes covered by the essays in the book, including the essays by D'Amico on women in the UN and other organizations, Tinker on nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), Higer on women's activism in Cairo, Joachim on violence against women, West on UN women's conferences, and Baines on protection of refugees.¹

To be sure, the collection also presents work that provides a fresh view on subjects that have already received substantial treatment in the literature. For example, Meyer herself provides an interesting historical view of women's successful participation and growth within an international organization. Judith Hicks Stiehm, in her essay on "United Nations Peacekeeping," provides an inspired analytical framework for evaluating the utility and desirability of designing peacekeeping missions to include women. In showing how women's presence may have desir-

¹ For examples of the existing literature that touch upon these themes, see, e.g., *HUMAN RIGHTS OF WOMEN* (Rebecca Cook ed., 1994); *WOMEN'S RIGHTS, HUMAN RIGHTS* (Julie Peters & Andrea Wolper eds., 1995); *FEMINISM & POLITICS* (Anne Phillips ed., 1998); *WOMEN, GENDER, AND WORLD POLITICS* (Peter R. Beckman & Francine D'Amico eds., 1994); Jan Jindy Pettman, *WORLDING WOMEN* (1996); Cynthia Enloe, *BANANAS, BEACHES AND BASES* (1990).

able results, she notes that women have, as a practical matter, better access to the women's population being served and that they are also, at least with regard to some problems, better service providers (for example, in relation to reporting rape and sexual misconduct, acts that are sometimes even committed by the peacekeepers themselves). Catherine Hoskyns's essay on "Gender and Transnational Democracy" makes a useful contribution by studying the European Union as an organization in relation to women's progress in political participation. She reveals that despite the Union's well-developed institutional policy in support of women, the organization falls short of being one in which women's aspirations can easily be realized. In her essay on "What is a Worker?" co-editor Prügl presents a brief but useful history of work in the home and illuminates the sex-based assumptions underlying traditional conceptions of work.

One of the most valuable chapters, by Alice Miller, illuminates the interplay between women's NGOs and the UN (including its vast social and economic apparatus). She concisely and effectively demonstrates the utility of having women's NGOs monitor the UN system. She also captures the tensions that have emerged because of the conflicting needs and expectations of national and regional NGOs, particularly as juxtaposed to international NGOs. Notwithstanding these tensions, she confirms that women's NGOs have been instrumental in pressuring intergovernmental bodies to live up to the rhetoric of women's rights. Miller's chapter highlights the utility of asking "women's questions" in the international sphere. Gender analysis provides the groundwork for developing, expanding, and transforming the content, context, and meaning of rights—for example, by facilitating the understanding of women's economic subordination as a form of violence against women, or on maternal mortality as a right-to-life issue.

Three other chapters that make valuable contributions are those by Stephanie Hallock Johnson, Anne Sisson Runyan, and Deborah Stienstra. Johnson's "Ecofeminist Critique of the International Economic Structure," which takes off from the assumption that "patriarchal power manifests itself in the daily operations of the international economic system" (p. 221), systematically unveils the linkages between production and reproduction—linkages that result in the marginalization of both women and the environment. For example, she notes that, with respect to rural people, "since the daily tasks of providing for basic needs

usually fall to the women in these communities, women are the most acutely aware of the results of environmental destruction" (p. 221). In underdeveloped regions, the environment upon which women "directly depend for survival is being destroyed by inappropriate production methods, leaving women without alternatives for food and fuel" (p. 222). In industrial states, events such as the Three Mile Island nuclear plant accident in the United States have unveiled the relationship between the protection of women (protection against threats to women's reproductive systems, as well as to children's health) and nature, and the dangers of modern science. In presenting the "ecofeminist alternative," Johnson urges a "subsistence perspective [that] recognizes that the different dominance systems and problems are linked and cannot be solved in isolation" (p. 228). This view urges an approach to issues that considers their interconnectedness. In doing so, Johnson weaves theory and reality together, underscoring the gap between capitalistic goals and human flourishing.

Similarly, Runyan's chapter on "Women in the Neoliberal 'Frame'" engages in a methodical and effective deconstruction of the liberal framework of rights and exposes the uneven effects of globalization. Her particular focus is the labor market; she documents the deleterious impact of globalization on women from the North, South, and East. Rather than simply considering the market forces of globalization, she both assesses the damages globalization has caused and notes its deficiencies, such as the exclusion of labor from the concept of globalization itself. Finally, Stienstra's chapter on gender, social movements, and global governance reveals the structural interconnections between state and global civil society. It underscores how these two dimensions reflect the norms contained in international agreements; from this perspective, she traces the differential consequences of those agreements on the elites that were their primary focus and on the poor and women whose concerns may have been invisible to the elite negotiators. She notes that the increased participation of private financial entities in global governance translates into an economic emphasis that has feminized poverty on a local level and created gender and racial divisions in labor on a global level.

Despite the book's breadth of coverage, it still has significant gaps, and its treatment of sex/gender could be interpreted as addressing the problems of a mythical "universal woman." For example, although the book in various places

addresses the North/South and East/West divides, it wholly fails to examine the third world that exists within the first world. Although it grapples with the issue of poverty and its feminization, it does not address the double liability of being, for example, poor and a minority. Although it mentions minority women, it does not specifically address women of color within their larger social and economic communities, and it does not examine issues of culture. In addition, and especially noteworthy in view of the book's title, the terms *lesbian* or *sexual minority* are mentioned only in the chapters by Miller, West, and Stienstra (and even then, not pursued thematically).

That said, Meyer and Prügl's edited volume makes three major contributions to the literature. First, it makes available in one volume much of the interesting history of women's involvement in, and contribution to, the development of the global stage, even while recognizing that progress has been slow and much work remains to be done. Second, the book provides both a rich bibliographical resource and a useful collection of abbreviations for those not wholly familiar with the overly abundant acronyms we navigate daily in the world of international relations and organizations. Third, and most significantly, every single chapter raises and explores the globalization of the local and the localization of the global. To be sure, one of the major challenges facing internationalists in the coming century, regardless of what discipline we claim, is to understand connections and interconnections between the global and the local, to establish linkages between the two, and to find solutions to the tensions between global and local that affect both individuals and cultures. Various and varied constructions of sex exist locally, yet they collectively translate to the marginalization of women globally. The transformation of cultural/national and sex/gender expectations at the global and local levels are preconditions to women's full and effective participation at both levels. The book's unpacking of the foundations of sex/gender subordination—in the environment, in organizations, labor, and migration, and in theory and practice—helps us to understand and subsequently transform the underpinnings of gender relations that, in turn, facilitate the prevailing culture of gender subordination on both the local and global stages.

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International Law, Human Rights, and Japanese Law: The Impact of International Law on Japanese Law. By Yuji Iwasawa. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999. Pp. xiii, 355. Index. \$105.

Ever since the 1985 publication (in Japanese) of his impressive first book, *Domestic Applicability of Treaties: What Are Self-Executing Treaties?*, Yuji Iwasawa's principal concern has been the domestic implementation of international law. Driven by the recognition that "little is known outside Japan about the relationship between international law and Japanese law" (p. 1), the author, a professor at the University of Tokyo, has published, both in Japanese and in English, articles and books on Japan's international law practices. The goal of this new book is to explore the impact of international law on Japanese law in the last two decades and to "demonstrate that the impact has indeed been considerable" (p. 3). His scintillating analysis specifically targets human rights because that is where "the impact has been felt most strongly" (*id.*). Readers, particularly from other jurisdictions, will appreciate Iwasawa's fine-tuned approach in presenting this contemporary perspective of the Japanese legal scene.

After briefly but critically reviewing the "conspicuously defensive" (p. 5) attitude of the Japanese government towards international human rights lawmaking and supervision, Iwasawa offers a comprehensive picture of how international law is introduced into the Japanese legal order and how it is implemented within that order (chapter 2). In so doing, the author sensibly begins with an examination of the constitutional framework for the treaty-making process—an issue seldom discussed, at least thoroughly, by international lawyers in Japan. In the Japanese system of parliamentary democracy, the executive branch has the authority to conclude treaties, whereas the Diet (parliament) the power to approve them. Conflict over such matters has been rare, however. And in practice, the executive has assumed the dominant role in treaty making, in formulating reservations and interpretative declarations, and in establishing the official translations of treaties. The Diet's already secondary and relatively passive role in the treaty-making process has, moreover, been largely superseded; more than 90 percent of the international agreements recently concluded by Japan are executive agreements, which do not require the Diet's approval (p. 20). In addition, the executive branch often signs intergovernmental instruments (that is, memorandums of