

the continued influence of both neoliberalism and NGOs on feminist organizing and women's lives. It gains particular significance when read against the backdrop of recent "anti-gender" campaigns that often select NGOs as one of their targets.

References

- Alvarez, Sonia. 1999. "Advocating Feminism: The Latin American Feminist NGO 'Boom.'" *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 1 (2): 181–209.
- Lang, Sabine. 1997. "The NGOization of Feminism." *Transitions, Environments, Translations: Feminisms in International Politics*, ed. by J. W. Scott, C. Kaplan, and D. Keates, 101–20. New York: Routledge.

Jelena Košinaga
<https://doi.org/10.52323/209382>

Borderlands in European Gender Studies: Feminisms of Postsocialist Europe

Teresa Kulawik & Zhanna Kravchenko. *Borderlands in European Gender Studies: Beyond the East-West Frontier*. Abingdon: Routledge, 2020.

Borderlands in European Gender Studies: Beyond the East-West Frontier, edited by Teresa Kulawik and Zhanna Kravchenko, is a book that arose from a 2011 conference entitled *Why Is There No Happiness in the East? The Making of European Gender Studies*, at the University of Södertörn in Stockholm. The discussions at the conference mainly tackled the duality between Eastern and Western feminisms within the larger scope of gender studies. Aside from the introduction and epilogue, the book is organized into three parts, comprising ten chapters altogether. The volume introduces "a critical analytical perspective of Europe as borderland" (1) by delving into the advantages and limitations of feminist theorizing of the borderlands that go beyond the East/West dichotomy. This way of theorizing represents a form of critical thinking foregrounded on the personal narratives of the contributors as well as their contextualization within "nation-specific contexts and intellectual traditions" (26) that comprise the multiple approaches of gender, temporality, location, sexuality, and so on.

The first part of the book, "Bringing in the second Other," explores possibilities of how we can bridge the gap between the Eastern and Western feminist scholarship and gives voice to the second Other of Europe. In this context, the "second Other" refers to what was initially designated as the Second World, the Cold War conceptualization of the socialist states in-between poverty and wealth. In her chapter, Marina Hughson borrows the ideas from world-systems theory to argue for semiperiphery's contextual perception in

analyzing its gender regimes. Through the dichotomous relationship between “premodern” Serbian masculinities and “modern,” West-influenced Serbian femininities, Hughson proclaims the semiperiphery a crucial “strategic concept” for its implication of the resistance against the deflecting knowledge production (69) that structurally relates it to the center. She adds that this structural approach to semiperiphery can be the foundation of how multiple masculinities can emerge; however, in these semiperipheral societies’ masculinities, there is still a battle between native ideology and encroaching hegemonic, 1st world ideology. Yulia Gradszkova tackles the issue of silencing Muslim women living in the Volga-Ural region by doing away with the Russocentric perspective that was dominant in that scholarship. She argues that decolonial theoretical perspectives contribute to a different understanding of gender within Eastern Europe, and will also contribute to the creation of policies of inclusion.

The body becomes the main focus of the second part, “Conceiving scattered bodies” – with its central role in feminist thought and gender studies – as the medium/border between nature and culture. It emerges as a relevant signifier in the process of “rebordering of Europe” (28) or the disruption of geopolitical polarities. Kathrin Braun critically addresses the praxis of reproductives, which is a research field that aims at creating, storing, and manipulating embryos by combining reproductive technology and genetic methods. She argues that contemporary feminist scholarship has insufficient theoretical capacity for the matter. According to Braun, to overcome these challenges, feminists should first reflect on the postcolonial framework as a relevant lens to unravel the cross-border transactions and the very role of the subaltern in that process. The socio-economic distress of women participating in the reproductives “business” should also be addressed, as well as the stereotyping of them as inferior and agentless compared to their Western counterparts. Next, Elżbieta Korolczuk discusses how reproductive rights and notions of (national and ethnic) belonging are discursively articulated in modern-day Poland. In Poland, human rights discourses are often deployed by those who oppose women’s reproductive rights and often appear extreme. Korolczuk sees this as an attack on women’s rights on the whole and as a limitation of their reproductive freedoms. Subsequently, to resist the notion of backwardness often associated with Eastern Europe, Redi Koobak examines “challenges of feminist theorizing beyond time lag” (29) by focusing on Anna-Stina Treumund’s series of self-representations inspired by the Butlerian concept of performativity. Analyzing Treumund’s photograph *Drag*, Koobak utilizes Muñoz’s concept of “disidentification” to highlight Treumund’s conflicting position, whose “working on and against” the Western hegemonic discourses signifies simultaneous resistance to dominant ideology and its assimilation (184).

The final part, “Citizenship intersected,” explores the praxis of conceptualizing novel forms of citizenship emerging from the intersections among the questions of belonging, agency, statehood, and legal status within the frame-

work of “European and global rebordering” (29). Aleksandra Sojka takes a feminist perspective to analyze the concept of citizenship by reflecting on the case study of Polish female labor migrants in Spain. In her investigation, Sojka uses the theoretical framework of intersectionality to analyze the categories of whiteness, Europeanness, gender, and nationality to unravel the “complex positionality between privilege and disadvantage,” as illustrated in the positioning of the white women in the essentially racialized sphere of the domestic work (195). Lenita Freidenvall and Drude Dahlerup’s chapter addresses women’s (mis)representation in the political scene. Focusing on the electoral gender and minority quotas, their study is based on the postal questionnaires administered to the political parties of Europe and on the interviews conducted in Poland, Macedonia, and Sweden. They question the possibility of inclusion of minorities within the political sphere, especially as resulting of the improvement of women’s positions in politics.

In concluding the volume, Myra Marx Ferree discusses the challenges it poses to readers by taking the perspective of those who are invisible or “erased” (253). The book provokes the readers to come to some differential conclusions and perceptions of the borderlands of Europe and understand the gradation of hierarchies meandering across the “borderlands” between the Orient and Occident. Moreover, focusing on the “excluded” voices allows us to see some other “truths,” otherwise overshadowed by the dominant hegemonic discourses. My only critique would be insufficient empirical coverage in the chapters conspicuously relying on empirical research. Nevertheless, for scholars in the post/decolonial theory, gender studies, and feminist theory in the postsocialist world, the volume is an excellent example of how to address the questions of borderlands critically, vocalize the invisible, and rethink the very transnationalism.

Alexandria Wilson-McDonald
<https://doi.org/10.52323/208952>

A Queer History of Communism: Navigating Sexuality and Gender in Czechoslovakia, 1945–1989

Věra Sokolová. *Queer Encounters with Communist Power: Non-heterosexual Lives and the State in Czechoslovakia, 1948–1989*. Prague: Karolinum Press, Charles University, 2021.

Life under communism is often presented in totalizing and simplistic terms. Věra Sokolová’s book *Queer Encounters with Communist Power: Non-heterosexual Lives and the State in Czechoslovakia, 1948–1989* provides a welcomed and compelling contribution to this history by exploring the experiences of queer and non-heterosexual people’s lives under state-socialism in Czechoslovakia. This review examines this timely work and brings