



ers, and fosters the empowerment of women and the children they raise, continue to date.

Kinser's book *Mothering in the Third Wave* is a refreshing and startlingly accurate anthology of the struggle and complexity of mothering in a third wave feminist era. In an effort to eliminate oppressive stereotypes of maternity that have often dominated feminist and mainstream discourse, Kinser and her contributors call for an examination of both the idealized maternal experience versus the real one, the accepted stereotypes of the good mother and the bad mother, and the meaning of the diversity in maternal behaviour, since the process of mothering is complex, and is situated in social, psychological, and political realities. Kinser does not present the experience of motherhood through rose-coloured glasses; rather, she is aware of the complexities and ambiguity involved in being a mother in the twentieth century.

As highlighted by the contributors of this anthology, and by Kinser herself, there exists a kind of social limitation produced by a traditional understanding of gender identity and motherhood which dictates only one way to be a mother and to experience motherhood. This complicates the multiplicity of experiences of mothering and experiences that differ from the uniform social construct of motherhood, which is depicted as

“ideal”. The greatest success of this book is its emphasis on women's subjective, lived experiences, which cut across lines of race, ethnicity, class, and sexuality, and are placed at the centre of Kinser's analysis. The essays include the experience of motherhood from the perspective of lesbian mothers in a heterosexist culture, minority mothers seeking to reconcile their mothering practices with their struggles against patriarchy, and mothers attempting to negotiate their maternity with their feminist beliefs, to name but a few.

The only weakness of *Mothering in the Third Wave* is that the majority of the contributors to the anthology are mothers in the academy. Narratives of working-class mothers forced to negotiate the challenges of motherhood and the labour force, or Third world women who have left their own families to raise the children of Western men and women in an attempt to gain citizenship would have enhanced the collection.

Kinser combines the academic with the narrative, making *Mothering in the Third Wave* accessible to a broad audience and of interest to students, scholars, and those mothering in the 21st century, whether or not they identify as feminist mothers. Ultimately, *Mothering in the Third Wave* provides a space from which to explore what (feminist) mothers are currently struggling with, allowing women to reflect on their own mothering practices. It helps us to imagine mothering as not only a practice with the ability to empower the women who engage in it, but also as a socially and politically relevant endeavour that has yet to be valued, supported, and appreciated as important and significant, and recognized as work that is transformative, and socially, as well as culturally, sustaining.

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AFRICAN WOMEN'S MOVEMENTS: CHANGING POLITICAL LANDSCAPES

Aili Mari Tripp, Isabel Casimiro, Joy Kwesiga, Alice Mungwa
New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009

REVIEWED BY GRACE ADENIYI OGUNYANKIN

African Women's Movements, a collaborative work by four scholar-activists, provides a comprehensive analysis of African women's movements in the 1990s and the consequent impacts on national politics and the entrenchment of women's rights in sub-Saharan Africa. Backed by primary fieldwork, analysis of media reports, and secondary literature review, the authors explore the factors behind women's visibility in politics and unprecedented role in effecting policy changes, and also examine why some countries have advanced women's rights while others have not. Though the authors provide adequate and comparative evidence from major countries in Africa, they particularly focus on comparative case studies of Cameroon, Mozambique, and Uganda due to similarities in Gross Domestic Product and high prevalence of women's movements and different colonial histories.

The authors first highlight the influences of African women's pre-colonial traditions and strategies as well as involvement in anti-colonial and national liberation struggles on African women's movements in the 1990s. They next examine the ineffectiveness of women's postcolonial organizations in addressing women's rights. Prior to the 1990s, women's organizations were not autonomous and were subsumed under umbrella women's organizations, often tied to and funded by the ruling party. However, in the 1990s, new autonomous women's movements emerged with

politicized agendas and contributed enormously to constitutional reforms and legislative changes. Three key factors led to the rise of new women's movements: 1) influence of international norms and ideas pertaining to women's rights; 2) political liberalization and democratization; and 3) access to alternative funding sources such as international donors.

The authors assert that a thriving and politicized women's movement is insufficient for the successful entrenchment of women's rights. Rather, countries that pass legislations safeguarding women's rights exhibit the following patterns: 1) active autonomous women's movements; 2) openness to changing international norms regarding women's rights and representation; 3) availability and deployment of resources to advance women; and 4) the opening of new opportunities as a result of a major upheaval, such as the end of conflict. For example, Cameroon, Mali, and Kenya have encountered challenges in the legislative process in comparison to post-conflict Uganda and Mozambique that have implemented constitutional changes.

Even in countries that have been open to change, not all proposed legislative changes by women's organizations are embraced. Proposals that have received the most resistance often challenge traditional customs, family relations, and gender relations. The recent August 2009 mass protests in Mali against a new family code promoting women's marriage and inheritance rights comes to mind as a perfect case in point.

The authors provide an illuminating discussion on the challenges that women's movements face such as government attempts to restrain autonomy and voice as well as expectations that demand for equality and rights will be limited to particular aspects of societies rather than cross-cutting issues. Another challenge that the authors discuss is public misperception about acquisition of assets as a result of donor funds instead of utilizing the money to

address the issues of the community and less privileged. I believe they have glossed over this issue by offering the explanation: "Because of the general deprivation of society, this (mis)perception is more strongly felt in Africa than in other parts of the world." I think that they should have addressed the possibilities of this being true and the cases in which it has happened rather than brush off critics' often legitimate perceptions as "(mis)perceptions". They should have further broached an honest discussion on how to minimize this "(mis)perception" and create more transparency and accountability to the community.

African women's movements were optimistically characterized as organized across ethnic, clan, religious, and rural-urban divides while the authors failed to question possible class and power relations that may pervade women's organizations. Also, there is a disproportionate focus on women politicians and rights activists whereas other women's organizations that are more informal and/or with less opportunities to influence policy and legislation were submerged. More disconcertingly, the authors, whether intentionally or unintentionally, essentialize African women and fail to sufficiently demonstrate that there may be conflicting interests and definitions of women's rights among women. To exemplify, I recall that while many women's rights activists promoted the proposed family code reform in Mali, there were some women's organizations that were concomitantly protesting it.

Despite the above criticisms, *African Women's Movements* presents an unparalleled and much needed comparative analysis of politics, gender, and women's movements in sub-Saharan Africa. In addition, I like that the authors note that African women's movements are not only influenced by international norms, but also contribute to the creation of international norms. This book addresses any misconstrued notion that African women have limited agency

and that African women's movements are a byproduct of feminist movements in the North.

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GLOBALIZATION, PROSTITUTION AND SEX-TRAFFICKING: CORPOREAL POLITICS

Elina Penttinen
London: Routledge, 2008

REVIEWED BY LEEANN TOWNSEND

I was quite intrigued by the project that Elina Penttinen endeavoured to carry out in her book. Through an examination of sexual commerce in Finland and Russia, the author proposed to do the following: to question what sorts of subjectivities and agency are produced by globalization; to ascertain how globalization is embodied and enacted in everyday life; to write feminist IR, an alternative to traditional mainstream/male-stream academic IR; and decentre positivist research methods by conducting an ethnography of sex bars and foregrounding the narratives of the women who work in them. This all sounded rather promising and potentially useful for studies of international relations, globalization, and sex work and having practical implications for feminist praxis and methodology. After reading through the text, however, I am not convinced that the author fulfills these goals.

In the first three chapters, Penttinen draws on theorists such as Judith