



Theorizing NGOs: States, Feminisms, and Neoliberalism (Next Wave: New Directions in Women's Studies)

From Duke University Press Books



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Theorizing NGOs examines how the rise of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) has transformed the conditions of women's lives and of feminist organizing. Victoria Bernal and Inderpal Grewal suggest that we can understand the proliferation of NGOs through a focus on the NGO as a unified form despite the enormous variation and diversity contained within that form. *Theorizing NGOs* brings together cutting-edge feminist research on NGOs from various perspectives and disciplines. Contributors locate NGOs within local and transnational configurations of power, interrogate the relationships of nongovernmental organizations to states and to privatization, and map the complex, ambiguous, and ultimately unstable synergies between feminisms and NGOs. While some of the contributors draw on personal experience with NGOs, others employ regional or national perspectives. Spanning a broad range of issues with which NGOs are engaged, from microcredit and domestic violence to democratization, this groundbreaking collection shows that NGOs are, themselves, fields of gendered struggles over power, resources, and status.

Contributors. Sonia E. Alvarez, Victoria Bernal, LeeRay M. Costa, Inderpal Grewal, Laura Grünberg, Elissa Helms, Julie Hemment, Saida Hodžic, Lamia Karim, Sabine Lang, Lauren Leve, Kathleen O'Reilly, Aradhana Sharma

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Editorial Review

Review

"During the past several decades, NGOs have spread throughout the world yet until now accounts of their seemingly unstoppable diffusion are few and incomplete. *Theorizing NGOs* is in all likelihood the most persuasive and successful attempt at mapping this veritable 'age of the NGO.' This collection of essays is crucial to our understanding of how these organizations operate as gendered spaces where diverse women subjects are constructed. The lessons for feminism are clear, and they are spelled out in terms of the intricate connections between NGOs, globalization, liberalism, and modernity."

(Arturo Escobar, author of *Territories of Difference: Place, Movements, Life, Redes*)

"With NGOs playing a growing role in women's rights and women's welfare globally, this excellent and timely collection contributes to our understanding of the implications of this change for feminism. Examining what it calls the 'NGO form,' the book analyzes the ambiguous relationship between NGOs and the state in the context of neoliberalism and new configurations of the public and the private. It considers why gender issues are so extensively handled through NGOs and how the move to NGO-ization is reshaping feminism."

(Sally Engle Merry, author of *Human Rights and Gender Violence: Translating International Law into Local Justice*)

"*Theorizing NGOs* offers timely and insightful perspectives on the intersection between NGOs, women's experiences of NGOs and feminism across the world. Bringing together scholarly writings on women's experiences with NGOs from different parts of the globe is definitely one of the highlights of the volume. . . . This volume is a must read for anyone interested in gender and development, and in the anthropology of the state."

(Lipika Kamra *Social Anthropology*)

"In representing more than a decade of energetic discussion and debate, this collection provides fantastic evidence of the dynamism and creativity of feminist activism in all of its forms.... It is a welcome and valuable contribution."

(Miranda Joseph *Women's Review of Books* 2015-09-01)

About the Author

Victoria Bernal is Associate Professor of Anthropology at the University of California, Irvine. She is the author of *Nation as Network: Diaspora, Cyberspace, and Citizenship* and *Cultivating Workers: Peasants and Capitalism in a Sudanese Village*.

Inderpal Grewal is Chair of the Program in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies at Yale University. She is the author of *Transnational America: Feminisms, Diasporas, Neoliberalisms and Home and Harem: Nation, Gender, Empire and Cultures of Travel*, both also published by Duke University Press.

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