

BOOK REVIEW

***Feminist and LGBTI+ Activism across Russia, Scandinavia, and Turkey: Transnationalizing Spaces of Resistance.* By Selin Çağatay, Mia Liinason, and Olga Sasunkevich. Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2022. 252 pp. \$59.99 (cloth), ISBN: 9783030844509; \$49.99 (paper), ISBN: 9783030844530.**

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An increasing amount of literature has been published on feminism and queer politics in the Scandinavian countries, Russia, and Turkey. These countries present distinct, seemingly dissimilar, and varied sociopolitical trajectories regarding gender and sexual politics, raising critical points and challenges for feminist and LGBTI+ mobilization. Scholars have studied the history and everyday experiences of women and queer people, dictated by cultural and sociopolitical changes. Researchers have also examined the factors and mechanisms of these changes, paying attention to specific opportunities, constraints, and developments facilitated by the local contexts.

Selin Çağatay, Mia Liinason, and Olga Sasunkevich make an engaging contribution to this scholarship by providing a comparative investigation of feminist and LGBTI+ activism in Scandinavia, Russia, and Turkey, while also attempting to decenter Western knowledge and reevaluate the binaries of the North/South and West/East. They root their theoretical framework in feminist and queer transnational approaches. By rejecting the nation-bound models of research, the book explores the pluralist convergences, overlaps, and tensions that connect Scandinavian, Russian, and Turkish feminists and LGBTI+ activists. The book focuses on “the links between struggles, attending to the points of connectivity that take shape and produce spaces of resistance across different scales and sites” (5). This emphasis on connectivity is an important argument, which allows the authors to investigate feminist and LGBTI+ movements across the regions without reducing the analysis to the linear investigation of particular cases or overreliance on Western concepts of progress and change.

Drawing on the Gramscian perspective on civil society, Çağatay, Liinason, and Sasunkevich point out structural characteristics that are common across democratic and nondemocratic states. The book demonstrates that in all three examined cases, feminist and LGBTI+ organizations have encountered hostility and/or exclusion from the political public sphere to varying degrees and for various reasons. These organizations have also been complicit in maintaining existing power relations by propagating neoliberal practices through the marketization of activism and donor politics. While problematizing these issues, the authors also highlight activists' potential to challenge and resist established hierarchies.

The book seeks to provide a greater understanding of activist practices by considering more and less visible resistant tactics employed by feminist and LGBTI+ activists. Echoing scholarly discussions on contentious issues regarding resistance, Çağatay, Liinason, and Sasunkevich highlight that resistance does not alleviate established power structures and might reproduce and even strengthen inequality. Drawing on ethnographic accounts of activist coordinated work, the book investigates how activist efforts of community and coalition building challenge dominant power structures. In this way, the authors try to comprehend specific choices made by activists "in particular spaces constructed at the intersection of entities such as geopolitical regions, national states, dominant cultures, and social and economic relations" (51).

The book also builds on feminist and queer approaches to solidarity within and between movements to analyze activist practices of building solidarities across differences as a form of resistance. The book utilizes scholarship that explores the role of affect in solidarity practices. Inspired by Clare Hemming's idea of "affective solidarity" and Katharina Wiedlack's consideration of negative emotions, Çağatay, Liinason, and Sasunkevich draw on ethnographic research to address the role of transnational solidarities. They also account for religiosity as part of solidarity-building processes. Instead of focusing solely on more visible, public, and observable instances of solidarity, the book investigates "the grey zone," the overlap of visible and inconspicuous forms of solidarity building, which allows for a more insightful understanding of activist work.

The book pays attention to resistance through bodily practices to consider more and less visible struggles and tactics of activism. Rooted in anti-racist feminist and queer literature, the book acknowledges the issue of viewing visibility as a means to gain autonomy as opposed to establishing control. By highlighting embodied forms of action, the authors argue for the importance and potential of diverse bodily forms of resistance that might shift from individual to collective and facilitate solidarity.

Feminist and LGBTI+ Activism across Russia, Scandinavia and Turkey: Transnationalizing Spaces of Resistance is a very interesting read and a notable contribution to the research on transnational feminist and LGBTI+ movements, solidarity, and resistance. While there is a discussion of certain instances of feminist and LGBTI+ activism in those three countries, little consideration has been given to activism surrounding HIV/AIDS, which is intricately linked with and embedded in feminist and queer politics. Experiences of intersex activists are also overlooked, even though the intersex identity is included in the term "LGBTI+" employed in

the book. Despite this minor criticism, the book brings together varied contexts, recognizing multidimensional and complex issues and struggles experienced by activists. It shows how research on solidarity and resistance must be context-specific, accounting for the existing power relations. This book will be of interest to those who wish to get a better understanding of the nuances and challenges faced by feminist and LGBTI+ movements in Europe and beyond.

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