

Andrew S. Tompkins, Review of Naples and Bickham Mendez (eds.), *Border Politics* (New York University Press, 2014) in *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 52, No. 2 (2017), pp. 474-476. doi:[10.1177/0022009416688182](https://doi.org/10.1177/0022009416688182).

This interdisciplinary volume wedges social movement studies, which remain largely embedded in the social sciences, with border studies, a growing field with roots in geography, anthropology, and women's studies. The editors take an intersectional approach, looking at how social movements are affected by bordering processes related to gender, sexuality, and group belonging as well as more conventional, territorial borders.

The book is organized into three sections, roughly covering women in nationalist movements, collective identity, and problems of solidarity. The strongest contributions though cohere mostly around two broad axes which cut across these sections. The first examines rightwing activism generally, which has received less scholarly attention than its leftwing counterpart. In the first section, Jennifer Johnson's chapter shows how American nativist 'border grannies' perform ostentatiously traditional feminine roles in the US-Mexican borderlands in order to beef up claims that women need protection from a dangerous, foreign 'Other.' Meera Seghal also finds 'women-as-nation' tropes and a patriarchal reframing of feminist discourse among the Samiti, a Hindu nationalist women's group. Seghal's ethnographic study of Samiti training camps shows them to be ineffective at achieving their stated purpose of teaching self-defence, but highly effective at promoting xenophobic 'feminized siege mentalities'. In a chapter on borderland conflict between India and Myanmar, Duncan Mcduie-Ra explores the ambivalent roles that women have played in peace processes there, sometimes mobilizing as mothers against violence and militarism (as scholarship on leftwing movements might lead one to expect), at other times participating in divisive ethnic conflict as mothers *of* a specific group. Elsewhere in the volume, the chapter by Rohlinger, Klein, Stamm, and Rogers on the Tea Party looks at nationalist mobilization from the perspective of collective identity, arguing that it shifted for this movement over the course of the protest cycle. Initially a broad church that preached 'American' values and traditions, the Tea Party came to define itself increasingly in terms of who constituted a 'real' American: not racialized others, not the 'socialist' activists of Occupy Wall Street. In different ways, each of these chapters brings new empirical material and analysis to the topic of rightwing protest.

The other main theme that brings together several chapters throughout the book is the complexity of transnational mobilization. In the book's 'identity' section, this comes through in the chapter by Ayoub and Patternotte on ILGA-Europe's lobbying for LGBT rights in Eastern Europe. Funded primarily by EU institutions, ILGA pushed a 'Europe = Tolerance' discourse that successfully advanced LGBT rights up to a point, but one which consistently favoured western European frames over possible alternatives. In the 'contested solidarities' section, Braun and Dreiling identify similar 'border problems' related to scale and privilege in the movement against large dams, where transnational advocates in the United States promoted a more fundamental opposition to dam projects than was politically safe for local opponents of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project. Instead of activists in Lesotho overcoming domestic political blockage through the 'boomerang effect' of transnational networking, they found themselves blamed when distant allies made tactical mistakes. Finally, Blumberg and Rechitsky's chapter on the 2007 'No Border' camp in Transcarpathia shows how 'internal borders' can emerge even within internationalist groups possessing a transnational, anarchist movement culture. Ukrainian and EU participants inadvertently reproduced a European East-West divide within the camp as they clustered in separate English- and Russian-speaking groups and disagreed over 'confrontational' actions which had more serious consequences for non-EU citizens. This

attention to the difficulties of cross-border movements constitutes another strength of the volume.

The remaining chapters are a mixed bag. Sarah Maddison's chapter on indigenous politics in Australia, Canada, and the United States provides a useful comparative overview, but its emphasis on policy feels out of place in a section on the collective identities of social movements. Moon Charania's chapter on veiled women defending the Red Mosque in Islamabad in 2007 provocatively explores the 'cultural conflict whether martyrdom liberates or oppresses women' and rightly criticizes the gendered and Orientalist assumptions in media portrayals of these women. However, the author's own interpretation of these events and their protagonists ultimately remains unclear. Like the chapter on 'No Border' campaigning, the two on Mexican-American binational organizing (Téller and Sanidad) and 'Occupy Slovenia' (Razsa and Kurnik) are the work of activist scholars. They provide detailed empirical material on social movement 'successes', but might have benefitted from more critical distance.

While geographic boundaries are present in some form in every chapter, the most important 'borders' analysed are often not spatial in nature. This contributes to the unevenness of *Border Politics*, which, as an interdisciplinary edited volume, necessarily jumps around between disparate case studies and different disciplines. None of the contributors are historians, and uninitiated readers may struggle with the jargon and ahistoricity of the sociological, political science, and queer studies chapters especially. However, the lack of a single, unified definition of 'border', like the interdisciplinary and intersectional approach taken, allow the volume to take in more than just the transnational social movements (TSMs) that traditionally dominate cross-border reflection on political activism. In this sense, the volume represents a productive change of perspective that makes a useful contribution to social movement studies.