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Violence against women is a universal phenomenon that occurs at troubling rates throughout North America, Europe, Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East. As I write this review in November 2013, the UN's campaign, UNITE To End Violence Against Women, has begun its announced 16 days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence. The events shine a spotlight on a profound problem, but also on those legislative reforms, capacity building efforts, and protests organized by feminist and human rights activists to demand more concrete state responses and greater public awareness. Violations of women's rights have occurred throughout history and under a range of different political and gender regimes; not even consolidated democracies have managed to escape or eradicate assaults on women's bodies and minds. Nevertheless, the framing of violence against women as an assault on human rights or an outcome of gender inequality is the outcome of a long road traveled by activists, grassroots NGOs, states, policy makers, and other public and political actors with power to change the status quo. And despite these antiviolence efforts, we are still faced with "whys" and "how comes" as scholars analyzing and prescribing feminist social policy and political theory, as activists for women's rights, and sometimes even as politicians committed to the advancement of gender equality.

It is in this context that Celeste Montoya's *From Global to Grassroots: The European Union, Transnational Advocacy, and Combating Violence against Women* is such an important achievement. Montoya seeks to illuminate the politics of combating violence against women through a multilevel analysis that employs an array of methods, from archival research and data collection; analysis of twenty-five years of news articles, press releases, and monitoring reports and policy documents; qualitative and quantitative analysis of legislation; and historical process-tracing (p. 12). The author grounds her analysis in intersectional feminism, while also noticing the need to gently balance the universal and intersectional frames regarding violence against women. Even if an emphasis on the methodology is just a commonplace normative academic behavior, choosing to "stick to the norm" should be understood as much more than a merely scholarly decision. For Montoya intends to draw attention to the complexity of violence against women, as an object of study and as an area desperately in need of adequate public policies. This process of understanding has a decisive role to play in crafting effective social policy, and social research is thus an

important instrument in the effort to develop better antiviolence policies and practices. Montoya's book contributes greatly to our better analyzing, explaining, and understanding violence against women.

At the same time, the book offers no casual encounter, for Montoya invites the reader into a powerful and grounded theoretical, epistemological, and methodological journey. *Global to Grassroots* is a major work of political science scholarship at the intersection of comparative politics, international relations, and political theory. It carefully unravels the role played by transnational advocacy in changing legislation, institutions, and practices at the local level, emphasizing the role of international and regional organizations, particularly (though not exclusively) of the European Union, and critically analyzes various transnational strategies and partnerships developed by EU member states. Besides theorization of networks and transnational interactions it also provides an empirical study of the struggles to combat violence against women in an international and a European arena. Montoya writes in a personal voice, emphasizing her preference for specific words (as they are loci of significance), while refusing others: "I believe that acronyms sterilize words, diluting their meaning and impact. It is extremely important to me that we do not lose sight of the fact that violence against women is at the heart of this study" (p. 17). The book invites its readers to understand the European Union as an organization within multiple transnational networks, influenced both by external networks—such as the United Nations and Council of Europe—and internal advocates, such as the European Women's Lobby and Women Against Violence Europe (WAVE). Montoya analyzes both the processes whereby violence against women acquires a form of situatedness and grounding in the complex system of multilevel governance, and the strategies used by the EU to influence members or candidate states in changing, practices that include public awareness campaigns, legal reforms, capacity-building, and coercive social policy. Her cross-national study illuminates the EU's impact on national arenas, acknowledging the specific power dynamics regarding newer members, candidate members from Eastern Europe, and established Western member states.

One important contribution of the book is its focus on the impact of international advocacy on domestic practices. A second is its attentiveness to the variation in national policy responses. For despite important public campaigns, legal interventions, and institutional developments, violence against women remains a pervasive problem in terms of its prevalence and in terms of the inconsistent responses of states and other public and political actors. Montoya carefully analyses these differences, focusing in particular on the hesitations of the EU during its development stages. She presents a remarkable periodization of EU policies into four periods: a first generation of policy discourse that began

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in the mid-1980s with the Western feminist movement playing an important role; a second phase that began in the 1990s and "articulated multiple discourses from different institutional positions, some of them more feminist than others"; a third phase that occurred from 2002 to 2008 facing "problematic trends in terms of feminist framings related to xenophobia and perceived cultural dissonance"; and a fourth phase, under the auspices of the Lisbon Treaty, characterized by attempts to develop more effective binding EU legislation (pp. 105-106). By tracing shifts in discourse and policy over time and space, Montoya succeeds brilliantly in capturing the historically-evolved character of antiviolen politics.

Montoya's book makes clear that the movement to oppose violence against women has faced great challenges, and that it was only in the early 1980s, after the emergence and development of second-wave feminism, that violence against women was transformed into a genuine *political* issue requiring the attention of European Community. This kind of historical recovery is especially important regarding the different paths undertaken by feminism in Western and Eastern Europe. Montoya's book adds to important recent comparative research on the role of autonomous feminist mobilization in progressive policy change (see Mala Htun and S. Laurel Weldon, 2012, "The Civic Origins of Progressive Policy Change: Combating Violence against Women in Global Perspective, 1975-2005," *American Political Science Review* 106(3): 548-569) and on the compatibility of different political regimes in Europe with feminist reform (see Mihaela Miroiu, "Communism was a State Patriarchy, not State Feminism", *Aspasia: The International Yearbook of Central, Eastern and Southeastern European Women's and Gender History* 1:1 [2007]: 197-201; Krassimira Daskalova, "How Should We Name the "Women-Friendly" Actions of State Socialism?", *Aspasia: The International Yearbook of Central, Eastern and Southeastern European Women's and Gender History* 1:1 [2007]: 214-219). The history/herstory that Montoya provides needs to be understood, especially in light of the EU's recent enlargements. For, as East European feminist scholars know all too well, while the EU has been an agent of democratization in terms of gender equality in Central and Eastern Europe, especially in the legal domain, the history of such efforts and the obstacles they confront is not well known. Montoya's book also helps us understand the complex evolution of the struggle against violence against women, by illuminating waves of progress and regression, and by highlighting the roles of different European institutions (for example, while the European

Parliament has been progressive in terms of antiviolen commitments, the European Commission has been less powerful and more hesitant).

Montoya's careful analysis underlines several important conclusions. One is that "the bigger obstacles to combating violence against women are outside the language of the law. These obstacles lie in the inconsistent implementation of law, in societal attitudes, and in poor resource distribution" (p. 250). A second conclusion is that the processes of framing violence against women are hugely important, both globally and domestically. Montoya also makes clear that the international and domestic arenas relate in complex ways; for example, the framing of gender violence as a matter of human rights frame and gender equality, while important in the international arena, has often had much less traction in many European countries with strong patriarchal traditions. Further, as Montoya makes clear, in many parts of Europe resurgent right-wing movements and political parties feed a heavily culturalized and instrumentalized understanding of violence. They are thus willing to support strong legislative measures against "foreign" or "imported" violence, such as female genital mutilation and honor killings, while turning a blind eye to the more normalized forms of domestic violence that are far more pervasive in European society (p. 249).

As a European feminist scholar and teacher who lives and works in a country (Romania) that is still struggling to consolidate liberal democracy, I strongly believe that empirical social science can play an important role in promoting progressive policy reforms designed to advance women's rights, the inclusion of marginal groups, and active civic engagement within our societies. Whenever I encounter a book on women's rights, I look for its usefulness not only as a means of theoretical development and knowledge production, but also as an activist and political tool for future interventions of social movements and in public policies. And as a participant in both scholarly and feminist activism, I must say Montoya's book meets both my expectations. I have thus already included the book in the bibliography of my Gender and Politics course at the University of Bucharest, and have also shared it with my colleagues at FILIA: Center for Curricular Development and Gender Studies, a Bucharest-based feminist NGO (see <http://www.centrulfilia.ro/>). *Global to Grassroots: The European Union, Transnational Advocacy, and Combating Violence against Women* is an excellent book that makes an important contribution to both scholarship on the politics of contesting violence against women and the practical effort to eradicate such violence.