

opposition of the central industrial countries, 120 countries voted in favour of the “Mexican” charter.

In well-articulated and concise chapters and drawing on meticulous archival work, Thornton manages to relate the different levels of negotiation and agency of Mexican officials in the international arena, from the most local and personal instances to the changing national and geopolitical contexts. This book also explores Mexico’s difficult position in assuming a developmentalist strategy, with attempts to provide leadership for the Global South, while at the same time maintaining US support in the form of credit. The arguments of the Mexican officials in some scenarios are surprising, predefining what was later institutionalized as the theory of the unequal terms of trade and dependency and showing the plural genesis of counter-hegemonic narratives and practices. According to Thornton, the post-revolutionary Mexican position was not a radical one, but rather an attempt to rewrite the rules of the game. However, this strategy was abandoned by Mexico and other actors in the 1980s. In her conclusion, Thornton correctly warns that it is very possible that a similar story can be described for other peripheral elites in the same period. This innovative magnifying glass focuses on the arguments and negotiations of global peripheral actors, many of which failed and with victories little recognized by historiography. The implications of this perspective are related to the current attempts of the academic community in the Global North to provincialize and decentralize the narratives of globalization processes, while at the same time opening interesting bridges with current affairs. As Thornton points out in the

introduction to the book, the echoes of these less-known Mexican struggles and arguments on debt, credit, redistribution, sovereignty, and unequal representation and recognition can still be heard today.

Lucy Delap: *Feminisms: A Global History*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2020, 379 pp.

Reviewed by
Bonnie S. Anderson, Brooklyn

This magnificent history widens the entire field of feminist studies and employs a uniquely creative format to do so. Lucy Delap, eager to overcome the exclusively white and Euro-American sources of previous accounts, has used persons and sources from throughout the world to narrate this saga. Employing a thematic approach rather than a chronological one, she is able to overcome the limitations and biases of past histories. This tactic also enables her to show the connections and influences among both disparate regions and time periods. She accurately surveys the last 250 years of women’s activism. *Feminisms: A Global History* successfully remakes an entire field of study.

The range of Delap’s scholarship is astonishing. She begins by citing an unnamed “lady of Africa” claiming feminism in 1886. In her first few chapters, she goes on to portray feminists from India, Brazil, China, Algeria, Trinidad, Japan, Burma, and Nigeria. And she does not just men-

tion these activists. She conveys how they came to be feminists, what they did, and who they influenced. She also demonstrates the conflicts and tensions they experienced and produced. “As a movement, feminism insists on women’s inclusion in all areas of social and political life”, she writes in her introduction. “But feminism has its own forms of marginalization and has struggled to extend its boundaries to all women on equal terms. Black, working-class, lesbian, trans, and bi-sexual, disabled, non-Western and non-Christian women have often been shut out” (p. 5). Delap also includes better-known European and American feminists. Arguing that feminism is best understood as a “conversation”, she advances the concept of “mosaic feminism” with “politics in the cracks” (pp. 20–21).

Here are some specific examples of these methods. In her second chapter, Delap has a section on the Chinese concept of *nannü*. Composed of the Mandarin words for “man” and “woman”, *nannü* enabled the early twentieth-century Chinese feminist He-Yin Zhen to link “distinctions of gender to the organization of bodies, labor and power through cultural and economic life”. Ignoring Western European concepts, *nannü* let He-Yin conceive of a world where the concepts of “man’s nature” and “women’s nature” would no longer be necessary. “For her”, Delap concludes, “this implied the end of capitalism, the state, private property, as well as racial and sexual difference” (pp. 81–82).

In this same chapter, Delap reaches out to trans activists. Citing Raewyn W. Connell, a trans Australian theorist, she details her analysis of the advantages of being male. Men’s incomes are twice that of women’s,

and men have ten times the political accession of women; worldwide, men control the means of violence, weapons, and armed forces. “I call these advantages the ‘patriarchal dividend,’ for men, and this dividend is not withering away!”, Connell concludes (p. 96). This section contributes powerfully to Delap’s discussion of patriarchy.

In another important example of Delap’s inclusivity, she analyses early twentieth-century women’s protests in British-governed Nigeria. The Igbo people of the Niger Delta gave women the power to control their own market activities, the “*omu*”. When the British challenged this female authority, Nigerian women contested their actions, using traditional methods. They stripped themselves almost naked to protest, threw sand at the authorities, and loudly insulted them. Carrying machetes, the women opposed both colonial and local male authorities. This so-called women’s war ended in disaster as troops fired on the protesters, killing 21 of them. Despite this loss, Delap concludes that these “memorable protests of 1929 can be read as a contribution to the anti-colonial movements that resulted in the eventual ejection of British rulers in 1960”, citing later women’s protests in the 1940s as well (p. 118).

While describing global feminist actions, Delap does not neglect European and North American ones. Her fourth chapter begins with a detailed description of the English abolitionist Anne Knight’s creation of brightly coloured labels crammed with feminist inscriptions to be glued to letters: “Never will the nations of the earth be well governed,” began one, “until both sexes [...] are fairly represented,

and have an influence, a voice, and a hand in the enactment and administration of the laws” (p. 144).[1] In this chapter on objects feminists created, Delap easily segues into describing the colours suffragists wore to distinguish themselves. She also cites later feminists writing chain letters to publicize their protests as well as using clothing, sanitary pads, and coloured wool to mark the fence they built to protest the missile site at Greenham Common in the 1980s (p. 147).

These events are detailed in Delap’s fourth chapter, entitled “Objects”. Her method of organizing chapters thematically adds to her revolutionizing the subject of feminism. Most of these themes work extremely well. Chapter 1, “Dreams”, surveys utopian books and conceptions that furthered feminism. In addition to citing Charlotte Perkins Gilman’s *Herland* from 1915, a well-known Western novel with its all-female society, Delap analyses the Bengali Rokeya Sakhawat Hussain’s *Sultana’s Dream* from 1905. In “Ladyland”, the setting of the latter novel, women govern and set standards while men are confined to a harem. Arguing that Islam could set women free, Rokeya also founded a Muslim Women’s Association, campaigned for female education, and translated feminist texts from Britain and Afghanistan (p. 31). Delap then turns to actual attempts to liberate women. She recounts the Russian Alexandra Kollontai’s efforts to advance women’s lives in the new Soviet Union. She then discusses the Indian Pandita Ramabai’s Arya Women’s Society, founded in 1882, which attempted to educate women. This effort influenced a young Indonesian, Kartini, who went on to campaign for female education and against polygamy. Af-

ter describing a feminist dream of the English philosopher John Stuart Mill, Delap concludes this chapter with a discussion of late twentieth-century women’s poetry by Adrienne Rich and Audre Lord.

Delap’s other thematic chapters are equally global and rich. “Ideas”, the second chapter, surveys feminism’s opposition to patriarchy and male domination. Drawing on such disparate traditions as “Christianity, socialism, liberalism, constitutionalism, nationalism and republicanism”, feminism contends that “sexual difference is not a natural division, but is imposed in different forms across time and space” (p. 59).

Her third chapter, “Spaces”, details how feminists have created not only “rooms of their own” but also libraries, presses, markets, shelters, and worship areas. Chapter 4, “Objects”, is discussed above. Chapter 5, “Looks”, delineates how feminists displayed themselves, whether in pink pussy hats, male clothing, bloomer costumes, or hijabs. Her section on “hijabistas” is sophisticated, recounting how some Muslim women wore the veil to gain power against colonialism. Chapter 6, “Feelings”, explores how feminists have used anger, the Chinese concept of “speaking bitterness”, and love for themselves and other women to advance their actions. Chapter 7, “Actions”, follows naturally. While feminists avoided harming others, they used attacks on property, strikes, and marches to oppose their antagonists. The universal Icelandic women’s “national day off” in 1975 was especially effective, engaging 95 per cent of the female population.

Delap’s last chapter, “Songs”, is her least successful. It is difficult to convey music in words. But her conclusion regains this book’s power. Delap invokes Betty

Friedan's fear that feminism might have to "start over". Her book ends by asserting that "the richness of the global feminist past suggests otherwise" (p. 346).

Note:

- 1 Quoted in B. S. Anderson, *Joyous Greetings, The First International Women's Movement, 1830–1860*, New York 2000, p. 22.

Marian Burchardt: *Regulating Difference: Religious Diversity and Nationhood in the Secular West*, New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2020, 241 pp.

Reviewed by
Pier-Luc Dupont, Bristol

Over the last couple of decades, the repoliticization of religion in the secularized societies of Europe and North America has been the object of a fast-growing literature in sociology, political science, and law. While the sites and forms of this repoliticization have varied from one country to the next due to differing institutional configurations and national ideologies, there is a wide agreement that one of its main drivers has been the new religious diversity brought about by international migration. The presence and assertiveness of Muslims in particular has triggered widespread popular anxieties and reactive defences of religiously inflected national identities, leading national and local administrations to rethink long-established modes of religious governance.

Starting from these premises, *Regulating Difference: Religious Diversity and Nationhood in the Secular West* masterfully unpacks the cultural issues at stake in debates around religious diversity in Quebec and Catalonia, two traditionally Catholic but highly secularized minority nations whose politics have been strongly shaped by a desire to distinguish themselves from the states they are a part of. Drawing on a combination of legal and policy analysis, participant observation, and interviews with key stakeholders, Marian Burchardt identifies the main areas of contrast between these two a priori similar settings and attempts to explain them in terms of such factors as the dominant conceptions of secularism (or, to use the author's preferred term, secularity), the desire to maintain cultural hierarchies, and concerns about conviviality and gender equality. Importantly, the book refrains from drawing any normative conclusions about laws and policies, limiting itself to relaying the perspective of politicians, lawyers, journalists, intellectuals, religious leaders, activists, and concerned citizens. The book's five chapters, plus an introduction and a conclusion, are organized around a series of case studies addressing specific controversies or (proposed) policy measures. These range from the debate over reasonable accommodations to the adoption of a charter on Quebec values, the regulation and maintenance of places of worship, the prohibition of the face veil, and the representation of religion in museum exhibitions. Each case study is used to explore particular aspects of the cultural politics of religion as it plays out both at the national and local levels.