

Reflective, dense, integrative

A unique, ongoing research tackles how globalization is affecting women's lives and gender relations within fisheries

Changing Tides: Gender, Fisheries and Globalization is an exceptional collection of research articles, case studies, reports and brief commentaries spanning 18 countries and including women fishworkers, community activists, researchers and academics from the South and the North. This book captures the work of a unique, ongoing research and development process, originating in Canada, that explores the way in which globalization is affecting women's lives and gender relations within fisheries. The perspective of the book is clearly stated—it adopts “a feminist approach that seeks to be global, critical, holistic and integrative”. The editors must be highly commended for bringing together a very vast sea of literature on each of the aspects—gender, globalization and fisheries—and for challenging the boundaries of conventional methodologies by documenting and collating such diverse contributions in a most useful and creative way.

The book itself reflects the very nature of this project—reflective, dense, integrative, detailed and diverse. Continually challenging the reader to move from women's grounded experiences to theory and back to locality, it does take considerable time to read and digest. In thinking about the readership, I was struck by the possibility that this book will not be easily accessible to some of the participants in this project—and yet, it is an important part of the process in and of

itself. Several of the articles draw rather heavily on the language of taken-for-granted conceptual frameworks of feminism, poststructuralism and deconstruction in their understandings of globalization, race and gendered identities, while others, most notably the authors of the article on *Changes in Icelandic Fisheries*, are particularly good at weaving explanations of these theoretical tools throughout their discussion, thereby extending the reader's own understanding of how we can make linkages as we move through information of this kind.

The editors have tried to assist the reader by structuring the book in such a way that the reader is able to assimilate the depth and complexity of the task of linking these broad topics. The introduction by Barbara Neis maps out the rationale for the structure of the book, providing an overview of the development of knowledge in the fields of gender, globalization and fisheries, and locating the book within the broader frame of the research initiatives that have shaped the contributions. The book is divided into six sections. The first two chapters provide an overview of the key issues. Most helpful is Martha MacDonald's chapter on *Building a Framework for Analyzing the Relationships Between Gender, Globalization and Fisheries*, which begins to “map linkages”, and guides the reader to some of the questions that might be asked “from trawl” right through the production and consumption line to “the table”.

Mapping linkages

The book is simultaneously a journey of mapping the linkages for the reader as

well as stretching conventional understandings and conceptual maps for understanding gender and globalization.

As MacDonald notes, fisheries provides “an excellent vantage point for exploring the processes of capital accumulation and relations of class and gender.” It is as if the addition of ‘fisheries’ to globalization takes one on a deeper voyage, enabling an extension of the depth and range of our knowledge of women’s lived experiences, and letting us hear previously unheard voices.

In the second and third sections, the interweaving of regional and local case studies with theoretical reflections on issues of women’s identities, roles, rights, race and class has the effect of successfully keeping the book grounded in women’s lived experiences of fisheries, while mapping the geography of household and community at the centre of a global frame.

The result is that as one reads these local stories, and then re-reads them through a conceptual lens in a following section, one sees the linkages between the lives of women living on the east coast of Canada with those of women dependent on fisheries in villages on the south coast of India.

Section Four comprises a wide range of reflections on the ways in which the

impact of globalization on fisheries management issues is mediated by gender, class, cultural and national identities. The contributions highlight the way in which globalization and gender discrimination combine to shape women’s access to marine resources within marine conservation systems in Mexico, and threaten women’s occupational health in Chile as well as limit their participation in specific approaches to management systems such as quality control systems introduced in Norway. The destructive impact of greedy, accumulative, gender-blind fisheries management systems is highlighted by the article on the impact of the individual quota system on communities in Iceland. The fact that women are not passive victims of these impacts is illuminated by the article on the use of trawler bycatch in Ghana, where class status enables certain women to enhance their entrepreneurial power in a globalizing fisheries context.

In Section Five, the authors pose critical questions regarding the nature of information-gathering, and warn against the dangers of “intellectual imperialism” mirroring the exploitative nature of globalization through one-sided research processes.

Feminist approach

Siri Gerrard’s article suggests that feminist approaches to research provide a

range of methodologies that can mitigate against unequal relations in a context in which access to information shapes power relations.

The need for researchers in the North to learn from the insights of frameworks developed in the South as well as for inter-sectoral, multidisciplinary approaches is motivated by two Canadian academics who have transferred a conceptual framework developed by Indian feminist Bina Agarwal for understanding the materialist basis of gendered aspects of resource degradation in India, to a fisheries context in Newfoundland, Canada.

In the final section, the impact of the intersections of a neoliberal, capitalist global system with unequal relations of power along gender, race, class, cultural and geographical lines is underscored both through the statement from the Gender, Globalization and Fisheries Network Workshop from which the initiative for this book arose as well as in the 'last words' presented by Barbara Neis and Maria Christina Maneschy. The authors of this section provide a very useful overview of the key themes that emerge in the book as well as identify a research agenda for the future.

The fact that globalization processes are "fundamentally gendered" is strongly illuminated through the 'fisheries' and 'gender' lenses used in this book. The work presented here deepens our understanding of the very destructive impacts of these processes by mapping the interstices of these systems of power relations at all levels of our lives.

However, while mapping these destructive forces, it simultaneously highlights the strength of women's resistance and the way in which feminist perspectives point to alternative ways of living and interacting with our fisheries and other natural resources.

Early on in the book, Indian feminist activist Nalini Nayak reminds us that feminist approaches to working within the fisheries sector have long emphasized the need for an alternative development paradigm and a more sustainable way of

living that is based on "fisheries for need not greed".

This collection suggests that creative research and development projects such as that of the one through which this book was produced, which draw on the critical insights of gendered analyses while also strengthening networks for transformation across the globe, might enable us to begin to "imagine and fight for alternatives...more likely to sustain life and enhance justice".

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