

6-1-2002

## Book Review. Nonprofits in Urban America (Richard C. Hula, Cynthia Jackson-Elmoore, eds.)

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### Recommended Citation

Peter J. Haas. "Book Review. Nonprofits in Urban America (Richard C. Hula, Cynthia Jackson-Elmoore, eds.)" *American Political Science Review* (2002): 211-212. doi:10.1017/S0003055402314321

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renewed the call for a constitutional amendment to correct what he felt was an error on the part of the Court. That drive, of course, did not succeed, although it came very close. In 2002, in large part due to a 5–4 ruling by another Supreme Court (with two members appointed during his father’s presidency), another George Bush sits in the White House, and many of his political views and practices are committed to fulfilling the earlier agendas and aims of his father. We live in a time when close Court decisions are overturning or re-examining issues of privacy, the separation of church and state, and the relationship between federal and state authority. Goldstein convincingly explains why the movement for a constitutional amendment against flag desecration diminished in effectiveness from 1995 to 2000, but he ends the book by reaffirming how divided our nation is on this issue and how it will inevitably resurface in legal and political battles.

For the most scholarly and thoroughly documented analysis of *Texas v. Johnson* or for a wide range of primary sources to assess, look to earlier books written or edited by Goldstein (*Burning the Flag: The Great 1989–90 American Flag Desecration Controversy*, 1996; *Desecrating the American Flag: Key Documents of the Controversy from the Civil War to 1995*, 1996). For a handy, accessible text appropriate for general readership, and faithful to Goldstein’s well-established scrupulous attention to all his sources, this is the book for you.

**Nonprofits in Urban America.** Edited by Richard C. Hula and Cynthia Jackson-Elmoore. Westport, CT: Quorum Books, 2000. 235p. \$65.00.

Peter J. Haas, *San Jose State University*

This volume purports to explore questions about the changing role of nonprofit organizations in contemporary urban America. The stated theme is to explain how and why such organizations “attempt to sculpt the landscape of urban policy and political action rather than simply react or adapt to it” (p. 1), although the nine articles do not embrace it with equal rigor. The editors, who also contribute a chapter, further state that the text will explore “when and where such efforts are effective and when and where they are not” (p. 1). These are timely and important issues, given the Bush administration’s stated goal of increasing reliance on nonprofit organizations.

The essays are extremely uneven, both in terms of their ability to deliver on the editors’ vision and in their overall quality. The highlight of this nevertheless worthwhile volume is the synthesis in the first chapter by Steve Rathgeb Smith. He does an admirable job of weaving a comprehensive literature review on the evolution of scholarly thought about the origins and roles of nonprofits into the more specific concerns of the articles in this volume. His contribution deftly identifies the lacunae in existing theory, which tends to overemphasize the role nonprofits can play in enhancing social welfare, and points to more explicitly politically significant functions that nonprofits are fulfilling in urban areas. He seeks to show how the other contributions to this volume exemplify various aspects of this more political purpose for nonprofits.

Although generally trenchant, Smith’s essay creates something of a straw man argument that is repeated several times throughout the book. Smith maintains that Lester Salamon’s oft-cited “partnership” theory of nonprofit organizations cannot account for the emergence of more politically motivated nonprofits. Yet, few readers will be surprised to learn that some nonprofits may frequently take a more independent and even antagonistic stance toward the public and private sectors. It is true that Salamon’s theory emphasizes the economic logic behind nonprofit creation, but it seems unenlightening

if not unfair to discredit it on the basis of what may well be a limited number of exceptions that are the focus of this text.

There are many inadequacies in most of the subsequent chapters, which for the most part focus on a particular community or type of nonprofit organization or both. A common foible is that the cases tend to underplay severely potential concerns about method. Beyond a brief article based on a limited survey of nonprofit directors, the essays are only loosely anchored in any kind or rigorous approach to data collection and analysis. Contributors Joseph Cordes, Jeffrey Henig, and Eric Twombly, for example, make the rather bold assertion that increasing “privatization” of nonprofits may risk “further depletion of the role of purposive mission,” converting them into “more material-based organizations” (p. 59). Yet, they offer only anecdotal examples of this sort of conversion, which leads me to wonder whether and to what extent it is really occurring.

Todd Swanstrom and Julia Koschinsky argue that community-based housing organizations (CBOs) have the primary goal of “addressing place-based inequalities . . . that limit the ability of citizens to realize their full potential as active economic, social, and political beings” (p. 75). They find that contemporary CBOs are instead emphasizing “service delivery and real estate development” (p. 85). Once again, however, the evidence is at best sketchy, and the reader cannot judge the validity of the authors’ analysis, including the extent to which CBOs actually embrace the authors’ notions about their goals. One does not expect definitive data in a volume of essentially case studies, but the contributors collectively ignore such concerns.

Several articles freely substitute normative assertions for more objective analysis. A common undercurrent is the idea that nonprofit organizations should be vehicles of political change, rather than merely alternate modes for urban service delivery. Several authors suggest (as do Swanstrom and Koschinsky) that cutbacks in public funding have forced nonprofits to “sell out.” If that is indeed the case, they need to consider to what extent, if any, the clients of these organizations would be better served by more focus on political expression and less on the delivery of tangible goods and services.

Some of the articles seem to be too sanguine about the effect of political efforts by nonprofits. In their essay, editors Hula and Jackson-Elmoore describe the development of “governing nonprofits” in Detroit. These are defined as nonprofits for which “targeted empowerment” of otherwise disenfranchised or alienated groups is a “core organizational goal” (p. 130). They strongly suggest that such groups have succeeded in increasing the representation of African Americans and, therefore, the city’s “civic capacity” to address social and economic issues. They fail to consider that this development occurred during a period when Detroit lost a significant portion of its white population to suburban areas, which made increased minority representation almost inevitable, and they do not demonstrate that African Americans are now any better off than they would have been absent these organizations. Similarly, Marion Orr extols the “crucial role” of Baltimoreans United in Leadership Development (BUILD), citing a few limited accomplishments, such as the city’s support for a “living wage” that was essentially ignored by corporate employers. I wonder whether and to what extent the political presence of BUILD is actually improving the lives of poorer residents.

In sum, *Nonprofits in Urban America* is an often provocative but equally disappointing foray into the political aspects of American nonprofits. Too frequently, potentially significant questions are posed (or implied) but left unanswered or are answered with inadequate documentation. Nevertheless,

the volume offers a useful descriptive survey of the range of political dimension of nonprofit organizations, particularly for those unfamiliar with this terrain.

**Faithful and Fearless: Moving Feminist Protest Inside the Church and Military.** By Mary Fainsod Katzenstein. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998. 270p. \$40.00 cloth, \$18.95 paper.

Laura R. Woliver, *University of South Carolina*

The power of social movements to transform what we take for granted and what we contest is beautifully displayed in *Faithful and Fearless*. Mary Fainsod Katzenstein shows how some protest in American society has moved inside institutions. Particularly, she means, feminist protest: "Less lawbreaking than norm-breaking, these feminists have challenged, discomfited, and provoked, unleashing a wholesale disturbance of long-settled assumptions, rules, and practices. . . . Sometimes by their mere presence, but more often by claiming specific rights, and by demanding in certain facets the transformation of the institutions of which they are a part, feminists have reinvented the protests of the 1960s inside the institutional mainstream of the 1990s" (p. 7).

The study takes as its starting point the fact that what used to be seen as outlandish has become commonplace in our society. The book offers an account of how feminist activists have worked to effect change in core institutions of American life. Katzenstein's fieldwork and interviews focus on the institutions of the United States military and the American Catholic Church. From 1988 to 1997 she interviewed about 120 individuals active in women-centered reform efforts within these two institutions. Her findings are compelling for many reasons. One is that the two institutions she studied represent the best test cases for her thesis. If change is occurring within the Catholic Church and the military because of feminist/womanist pressures (two of our stodgiest, thickly moss-backed, phallogocentric institutions), then indeed the "sisterhood is powerful." Different tributaries flow from a common feminist source and set in motion social changes.

She studies the feminists, mostly women, not in the public eye who throughout the last three decades (1960–1990s) have challenged in their everyday lives the institutions in which they work and live. The women engage in unobtrusive mobilization within these patriarchal edifices. These very same institutions, in turn, have a power of their own to shape differences in contemporary feminism. For example, military feminists have a strong belief in equal rights and equal opportunities. Their strategy is simply to have existing laws implemented within the military. The military women are liberal feminists, practicing interest-group feminism, whereas the Catholic feminists are more radical. They want to transform cultures, institutions, and society. They directly confront and contest poverty, homophobia, racism, war, and violence. The feminists within the Catholic Church in America are activists for radical equality. This Catholic feminist protest is a more radical discursive politics. Discursive politics, Katzenstein explains, is the politics of meaning making (p. 17). The American Catholic feminists utilize language, cognition, books, and conferences to process and articulate their vision of a just world which includes a feminist worldview. Their meetings, networks, prayer groups, conferences (indeed, confessional conferencing), and reports constitute discursive activism. They have, therefore, a difference in perspective. They form organizational habitats (protected spaces) within the larger institutions. Within the Church, their enclave becomes like a "women-church;" it is not removed from the male bastions of power but seriously engaged as a dissenting, discursive

voice. Like the women in the military, the women-church activists use the ethics and rhetoric of the institution to force the institution to abide by its own promises and principles. The Leadership Conference of Women Religious, for instance, works to revision women in the Church and the Church's role in social justice.

Radicalism in the Church is shaped by the lack of legal redress since the Church is a private and religious organization. These feminist radicals in the Catholic church are seeking an understanding of the structural or systemic bases of inequality in the church and in society. They are not like Mother Teresa of Calcutta, nursing the poor and ameliorating their pain and suffering. Rather, they focus on "the identifying and rooting out of the very *systems* that cause the poor to be poor, the homeless to be homeless, and that cause people to die of poverty or oppression" (p. 21).

Katzenstein's research displays the multilevel significance of the law for women who seek equality within institutions. The legalization of claims making in American politics can assist in the institutionalization of feminist protest. She also explores the meaning of protesting from inside institutions. Katzenstein cautions us against the view that inside activism signals the end of the challenges that movement politics initiates.

For women within the military, Katzenstein explains the complicated and contradictory role of the law. She writes, "The law's role is also a normative one, shaping the way activists come to define themselves, see the world around them, and prioritize their agendas. For how can we explain otherwise the fact that activists seize some opportunities but not others?" (p. 165). The military women are feminists by any other name. They do not directly claim the mantle of feminism, yet all their beliefs, positions, justifications, and orientations are feminist.

Katzenstein shows how these women must be *Faithful and Fearless*: "Given the previously rigid gender-cast system in both military and church, and given the continued risks to career, status, and respect that those who challenge gender ascription incur, such women must be fearless to be faithful to their institutions on feminist terms" (p. 164). Cultures agree on what requires debate and what does not (p. 35). Feminist issues now require debate, and this is great progress. Backlashes against feminism, then, occur because of feminist progress. Katzenstein deftly proves that by demanding a co-equal place inside *male-dominant institutions*, feminists have transported protest into mainstream institutions and have changed institutional and social givens.

Katzenstein's study is sure to be a classic in social movement, feminist, religious, and democratic theory. It is richly deserving of all the awards it has already received (the Marion Irish Award of the American Political Science Association for the best book in women and politics, for instance) and will receive in the future.

**Environmental Injustice in the United States: Myths and Realities.** By James P. Lester, David W. Allen, and Kelly M. Hill. Boulder, CO: Westview, 2000. 216p. \$19.00.

Michael E. Kraft, *University of Wisconsin-Green Bay*

Over the past decade the study of environmental justice has sparked considerable debate, with conflict often exacerbated by conceptual and definitional muddles, scarcity of pertinent data, and disagreement over which methods to employ. This book by the late James Lester and his colleagues is unlikely to diminish the controversy. Yet, as a comprehensive attempt to clear out the conceptual underbrush and bring hard data to bear on difficult empirical questions, the book merits