

No Shortcut to Change: An Unlikely Path to a More Gender-Equitable World. By Kara Ellerby. New York, NY: New York University Press, 2017. 288 pp., \$30.00 (paper).

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How do we challenge pervasive gender inequality at the institutional, national, and global levels? In her timely book, *No Shortcut to Change: An Unlikely Path to a More Gender-Equitable World*, Kara Ellerby takes on this important question in a thorough and pragmatic manner, skillfully weaving in U.S.-based examples as well as plentiful global comparisons of the discouraging consequences of these often essentialist, individualist policies in practice. She shows how state-driven attempts to challenge women's exclusion and subjugation draw from a liberal feminist logic that considers women's oppression to be intrinsically tied to legal barriers, institutional discrimination, and lack of representation.

In the midst of the severe gender trouble we currently find ourselves in, Ellerby asks how "women" and "gender" became reduced to substitutable terms, arguing instead for women to be understood as a "collection of categories." Much is at stake in *No Shortcut to Change*, as Ellerby argues that examining these policies is crucial to understanding the perpetuation of gender inequality. Yet she hardly buries the lead here, as the entire premise of the book is a nod to the complex and often slow process of making genuine, substantive change toward gender equity rather than the simplistic "add women and stir" approach that has shaped both policy content and the overarching narratives around both gender equality and "women's empowerment." Ellerby argues that this understanding of inclusion relies upon a "liberal feminist logic of emancipation through addition," one that sharply reduces a necessary conversation about power to instead rely upon easy shortcuts. Part of the problem comes from the kind of "bounded agency" women experience in positions of power. For example, Ellerby delves into ways that parliamentary, rather than presidential, systems offer women potential inroads, and yet masculine socio-political capital still reigns in those spaces as women are subject to

implicit assumptions about how they will and should act in office.

She sets up the second half of the book by using a chapter each to tackle a particular “problem” that hinders a more gender-equitable world, including women’s representation in government, recognizing women’s economic rights, and protecting women from violence. In addressing those three areas of social life, she purposefully uses the term “problem” as a means to unsettle and to examine those areas more profoundly. What follows is Ellerby’s critical feminist critique of these practices and policies and the mechanisms of power embedded within them, such as the key recommendation to change how we evaluate and name these types of policies in practice. Rather than continuing to measure their success based on *gender equality*, we should instead assess them for what they attempt to implement—*women’s inclusion*. More than a question of semantics, this suggested shift reveals how including women is simply one element of the broader action required to achieve substantive gender equality. In this vein, she purposefully employs the term “kyriarchy” rather than “patriarchy,” as the latter terms fail to consider the intersectional, interlocking nature of systems of domination, including racism, sexism, imperialism, and heteronormativity. Ellerby also brings men—and masculinities—into larger global conversations around gender equality, drawing from diverse examples such as Niger’s school for husbands, Bosnia and Serbia’s initiative to deconstruct masculinity among teenagers, and Rwanda’s center organized by men to end gender-based violence. However, just as with women’s inclusion policies, these efforts to “fix” men must also destabilize and challenge broader dominant cultural narratives of domination and heterosexuality.

Ellerby relies heavily on others’ empirical research here; however, that vantage point allows her scope and breadth throughout the text so that she can analyze her subject of inquiry, these global policies. At times, however, the text reads as more of a literature review due to Ellerby covering so many topics, but that exhaustive approach shores up the global perspective she brings. Because of that expansive reach, the book is full of ideas for future, rich qualitative studies on the ground. To this point, it would be an especially important read for graduate students of gender and sexuality studies seeking to understand the layers of scholarship around these topics, as well as for courses in political science, sociology, international studies, and public policy.

No Shortcut to Change is a much-needed companion text to changing a widespread narrative that has been long overlooked, especially now, situated in a social context of heightened public discourse around sexual

harassment and assault and the growing, global #MeToo movement. Ellerby's contributions urge us to challenge gender relations by moving "beyond add-women politics" in her thoughtful call to action, grounded in a serious attempt to demystify the flawed logic embedded in these policies that shape our lives.

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