Margaret E. Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1998).

As a consequence of transnational organizing on behalf of women's suffrage, women activists from both sides of the Atlantic met in Washington, D.C. in 1888 and established the "first lasting multipurpose transnational women's organization, the International Council of Women."[1] The International Council was slow to foster the formation of National Councils in countries other than the United States and Canada. However, under the leadership of Lady Aberdeen and through the international organizing efforts of Teresa Wilson, National Councils were developed in Australia, Germany, Great Britain, Sweden, and the Netherlands. Leila Rupp reports that by 1939 thirty-six councils were affiliated with the International Council. Almost one hundred years later, Rigoberta Menchú flew to Geneva on an invitation from the International Council of Indian Treaties. As she explains in her new book, *Crossing Borders* (1998:119-125), when initially finding herself alone with little money and no place to go, she decided to seek assistance at the Nicaraguan embassy. The ambassador put her in touch by phone with Don Luis Cardoza y Aragon, a friend of hers in Mexico, who then connected her with his house guest, Guatemalan poet Julia Esquivel, who resided in Geneva in the hope that she would have some suggestions for Menchú. Esquivel told her to go to Neuchatel to meet with some nuns who Esquivel would contact. When she returned to Geneva, Menchú became friends with Louis Joinet from France and met human rights activists from Costa Rica, Panama, Vietnam, El Salvador, and Chile. Through her efforts to raise the consciousness of United Nations' representatives about the human rights violations in Guatemala, Menchú also worked closely with Navajos, Hopis, Lakotas, and Yaquis. Eventually, her international advocacy work on behalf of indigenous peoples led her to participate in the environmental movement and campaigns for women's rights. *Activists Beyond Borders* is the first book to provide a framework for understanding the development and significance of such international activism. Rupp's historical evidence and Menchú's autobiographical account confirm that transnational advocacy networks (Keck and Sikkink's term) are built on personal relationships among different activists as well as generated in the context of international institutions such as the United Nations.

Activists Beyond Borders is a book whose time has come. No longer is it possible to ignore the power of transnational advocacy networks in shaping the politics of individual states and international relations. Keck and Sikkink assert that these networks shape state and international politics in at least five ways: "(1) by framing debates and getting issues on the agenda; (2) by encouraging discursive commitments from states and other policy actors; (3) by causing procedural change at the international and domestic level; (4) by affecting

policy; and (5) by influencing behavior changes in target actors" (201). Marshaling evidence from historical campaigns to end slavery and gain women's suffrage as well as more recent struggles for human rights, to protect the environment, and end violence against women, Keck and Sikkink explore how transnational advocacy networks influence public policy as well as negotiate the challenges they face in the process. *Activists Beyond Borders* also effectively transcends disciplinary borders. By drawing on sociological theories of social movements and asking questions that blur the typical distinction between international relations and comparative politics, Keck and Sikkink demonstrate the value of interdisciplinary research for explicating the complex and contested terrain of international politics.

In their first chapter, they explain that few scholars have recognized the value of activist networks because these networks are "motivated by values rather than by material concerns or professional norms" and therefore "fall outside our accustomed categories." (2) The authors then describe how they build on sociological and political scientific traditions to explore the emergence and effectiveness of transnational advocacy networks. Keck and Sikkink compare the creation and effectiveness of campaigns across regions and issues, and highlight three dimensions. First, "how connections are established and maintained among network actors, and between activists and their allies and opponents." Next, what "kinds of resources that make a campaign possible, such as information, leadership, and symbolic or material capital." And, finally, "the kinds of institutional structures, both domestic and international, that encourage or impede particular kinds of transnational activism." (7) They discover that these networks typically emerge under three conditions. First, when "channels between domestic groups and their governments are blocked or hampered or where such channels are ineffective for resolving a conflict, setting into motion the 'boomerang' pattern of influence characteristic of these networks." (12) Second, when activists foster networks to advance their political goals. And, third, as a consequence of contacts made at international conferences or other events.

Transnational advocacy networks include a diversity of actors ranging from international and domestic NGOs, local social movement organizations, trade unions, and churches to intergovernmental organizations and certain sectors of state governments. Network actors utilize a wide range of strategies to influence domestic and international politics including information politics, symbolic politics, leverage politics, and accountability politics. (16) Linking individual testimonies and technical information and statistics is especially valuable in legitimating network actors' political claims. In the case examples they analyze, Keck and Sikkink discover two types of issues that appear most effective for transnational advocacy networks "(1) issues involving bodily harm to vulnerable individuals, especially when there is a short and clear causal chain (or story) assigning responsibility; and (2) issues involving legal

equality of opportunity. The first respond to a normative logic, and the second to a juridical and institutional one." (27)

Chapter two presents three historical cases (antislavery and suffrage campaigns and the movement against footbinding in China) and demonstrates how they served as precursors to contemporary transnational advocacy networks. Keck and Sikkink emphasize the role of the antislavery movement in providing a "language of politics" and an organizational model for subsequent campaigns. (43) Both the antislavery and suffrage activists made claims on the basis of the liberal values of equality and liberty. Since Keck and Sikkink rely primarily on secondary sources for their analysis of these campaigns, their case studies often lack the richness of accounts drawn from original sources. By reading Rupp's historical account alongside *Activists Across Borders*, for example, it is possible to develop greater insight into the origins and dynamics of the international women's movement.

Keck and Sikkink's use of comparative case examples offers another interesting angle from which to investigate the obstacles faced by transnational activists, as well as the creative solutions devised in response. The comparative method reveals the complexities of organizational, cultural, and international relations as they influence the possibilities for success of different campaigns. For example, the campaign against footbinding came to symbolize Chinese nationalism at the turn of the century and therefore proceeded without strong opposition. This contrasts sharply with the unsuccessful attempt by missionaries in Kenya to challenge the practice of female circumcision during the mid-twentieth century. While both campaigns were responding to the concern for women's bodily well-being, "the anticircumcision campaign became associated with colonialism and interference, and the practice of female circumcision with independence, nationalism, and tradition." (71)

Chapter three examines the establishment and effectiveness of human rights advocacy networks with particular attention to those focused on Latin America. On the one hand, the point can be made again that reliance on certain kinds of data circumscribes the story that can be told about the origins and development of these advocacy networks. It also limits the perspective from which to understand what is at stake in human rights advocacy work. Clearly, the statement that "most modern human rights activists have had a more secular inspiration" than antislavery and suffrage activists, would not ring true for indigenous activists like Rigoberta Menchú. On the other hand, Keck and Sikkink have digested a wide variety of sources to develop concise and convincing cases studies to illustrate their framework in this chapter including interviews with human rights activists, articles from newspapers and human rights newsletters as well as government reports.

Keck and Sikkink highlight the contributions of Franklin Roosevelt and H.G. Wells in bringing the concern for human rights to the international arena. They next focus on Amnesty International's role in creating a strategy to draw

attention to specific cases of human rights abuses in different parts of the world. The later part of chapter contrasts the successful efforts to address human rights violations in Argentina with Mexico, where it took longer for human rights organizations to develop. Keck and Sikkink explain that when "human rights consciousness began to penetrate Mexican civil society" (111) in the 1980s, the number of human rights organizations grew from four in 1984 to 200 in 1993. With the growth of domestic organizations, human right violations were documented and through links with international organizations pressure was placed on the Mexican government to address these abuses. They conclude from this comparative analysis that "a key factor in network effectiveness" is "the vulnerability of the target state." (117)

Keck and Sikkink next turn their attention to environmental advocacy networks. This chapter highlights the import of international conferences for providing a site through which transnational networks can mobilize. As environmental activists began to link environmental issues with development, international funding organizations such as the World Bank gained center stage as a target for activism. This chapter further demonstrates the relative effectiveness of campaigns constructed around concern for bodily harm done to individuals. As Keck and Sikkink explain, "the environmental issues that most easily lend themselves to such portrayals involve displacement of traditional peoples or destruction of their livelihoods." (132)

The later part of this chapter contrasts the campaign against deforestation in Rondônia in the Brazilian Amazon with deforestation in the Malaysian state of Sarawak. In the Brazilian Amazon, network activists successfully worked with local groups to call the World Bank's attention to the environmental and social damage caused by local development projects they funded. In the Sarawak campaign, local groups also tried to use a "boomerang strategy" so that international pressure would be placed on their government to change their policies. However, they were less successful than network activists in Brazil. Keck and Sikkink conclude that the divergent outcomes resulted from the "different configurations of domestic political struggle." (162) They explain that Sarawak "has considerably more leverage over its central government than does Rondônia, for reasons of both political economy and governing coalitions." (162)

In chapter five, the authors explore the establishment and strategies developed by transnational networks on violence against women — the most recent of the campaigns they discuss in the book. The United Nations did not address this issue until 1985. However, once it came to international attention, it swiftly gained center stage as "the most important international women's issue." (166) For example, at the 1995 United Nations Conference on Women held in Beijing, violence against women was one of the four issues highlighted in the Conference platform. Keck and Sikkink explain that the linking of violence against women with human rights provided a framework that

"resonated across significant cultural and experiential barriers." (167) It also permitted activists working against violence against women to join their efforts with a broad-based preexisting network which enhanced their reach. The unprecedented success of this network is evident in the September, 1998, landmark judgement by the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, and the Sisterhood Is Global Institute's 1998 report that the Honorable Judge Navenethem Pillay of South Africa, who is "the only woman among the Tribunal Judges [,] ... successfully lobbied her judicial colleagues for the inclusion of rape 'as an act of genocide when women were assaulted specifically because of being members of a targeted ethnic group.'"

Keck and Sikkink conclude that "scholars of international relations should pay more attention to network forms of organization — characterized by voluntary, reciprocal, and horizontal exchanges of information and services." (200) Clearly, if there charge is not heeded, our explication of the complex forces that play out on the international stage and influence domestic policies across the globe will continue to fall short. The interdisciplinary and comparative approach the authors take is an especially effective way to enrich scholarship in this area. *Activists Beyond Borders* should be read by scholars and activists alike.

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[1] Leila J. Rupp, *Worlds of Women: The Making of an International Women's Movement.* Princeton, N.J. 1997), 15.