

Some Men: Feminist Allies and the Movement to End Violence against Women. By Michael A. Messner, Max A. Greenberg, and Tal Peretz. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2015, 274 pp., \$99.00 (cloth); \$24.95 (paper).

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This book begins with an “upstream-downstream” narrative juxtaposing the idea of women and men’s work within the various campaigns in the United States seeking to end violence against women. The work shares stories of men (also of some women) working on these campaigns, commencing in the late 1970s with the Movement Cohort, following with the Bridge Cohort of the mid-1980s, and ending with the Professional Cohort of the mid-1990s to the present. In terms of the authors’ aims, the book seeks to explore “the importance and promise of men’s engagements with violence prevention, feminism, and gender politics, with all its passionate commitments to personal and social change, cross-cut with its fraught tensions and contradictions” (p. 9). The men interviewed for this book were able to show that their alliances to the feminist movement emerged through their own personal experiences, and also “conducive social contexts” that allowed for these various campaigns against violence to take place (p. 30).

The authors bring to the surface many important questions regarding the research on men’s violence against women: how did these various generations of self-identified “profeminist” men engage in this work and these campaigns; what role, if any, should men play within the feminist movement; how did these men identify themselves within the feminist movement; how did the professionalization of grassroots organizations within the movement affect men working within this field; has this “bureaucratization” helped or hindered the movement to end violence against women; and, to whom are these men accountable? Throughout the book, the authors make many attempts to answer these questions, within the context of historical moments present within each cohort (p. 7).

The way in which the authors divide these feminist men into cohorts, using “moments of engagement,” was a welcome and sensible way to

show how these allied men perceived their roles within a given time period, but also as a way to show that the field of work itself changed throughout (p. 19). Not only were men shifting gears in reference to their roles but so too were the structures and campaigns themselves. They were being molded in various ways, moving from an almost exclusive grass-roots campaign to a professionalized industry (p. 68). This is an important distinction that the authors make, as it points to a changing nature within the campaign against violence. For example, once professionalized, feminist organizations were forced to remove women from their names and also replace “negative” language, such as assaults (p. 97). This removal, as the authors point out, shows how women can easily be rendered invisible but also how the violence they suffer becomes further invisible. This is a troubling trend, considering that women created this awareness, as the authors point out (p. 16).

While the authors mention many central aspects regarding feminism, the feminist movement, and violence against women, there are two overarching shortfalls present within this work. First, the usage of certain language, and second, some missed opportunities to engage more with third-wave feminism. In terms of the language, for example, on the one hand, the authors state how using “gender-based violence” versus “violence against women” “risks decentering *women*” (p. 15, authors’ emphasis), yet the authors continue to use both terms interchangeably. They also do not present a detailed explanation of what they mean by these terms: a further discussion would help the reader to know exactly what is being discussed *as violence*. Further, the framing of the concept “recipient of violence” is problematic (pp. 11-12). The term “recipient” can be used in the context of winning, that is, being the recipient of an award, and in this case, it feels as though by using “recipient of violence” the authors are not framing violence against women as something that is perpetrated *against* a victim/survivor. Second, in terms of engaging with third-wave feminists, the authors miss the opportunity on two occasions in chapters four and five (pp. 130, 152). Engaging with third-wave feminists could have brought a different perspective to the analysis by showing their influence and their stated “welcoming” nature to the men within this movement, as they do with second-wave feminists (p. 130).

Despite the mentioned shortcomings, this book helps to fill a gap that exists within the literature by showing how some men have engaged with the movement to end men’s violence against women. Through their interviews and examination, the authors conclude that “we have come to see the antiviolence field as a system of tributaries, each with its own

historical and social courings, but still ultimately interconnected with other streams and rivers. . . . Whether one works downstream or upstream . . . ultimately we all share the same waters” (p. 190). Overall, the book presents an interesting narrative framing violence against women and is highly recommended to those interested in the topic. As the authors state, “[p]ick a spot; join hands, wade in” (p. 190).

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