

10th Anniversary Interview - Cynthia Enloe

Written by E-International Relations

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E-INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS, DEC 4 2017

E-International Relations (E-IR) was founded 10 years ago this week. During that time we have interviewed over 150 academics, policy-makers and journalists. To celebrate E-IR's 10th anniversary we asked some of our existing interviewees two further questions reflecting on the last decade in International Relations.

Cynthia Enloe is Research Professor in the Department of International Development, Community, and Environment at Clark University. She was awarded the International Studies Association's Susan Strange Award in 2007, the Susan B. Northcutt Award in 2008, and the Peace and Justice Studies Association's Howard Zinn Lifetime Achievement Award in 2010. She has also continued to inspire her students, as evidenced by the "Outstanding Teacher" award that she received three times from Clark University. Professor Enloe has published numerous books, including an updated and revised edition of *Bananas, Beaches and Bases, Globalization and Militarism, The Curious Feminist* and *Maneuvers: The International Politics of Militarizing Women's Lives*. Her most recent book *The Big Push: Exposing and Challenging the Persistence of Patriarchy* was published in October. Professor Enloe was interviewed about women in combat, the meaning of the feminist slogan "the personal is political" and feminism's contribution to International Relations scholarship in 2013.

What changes have you seen in International Relations or your field over the last 10 years?

Perhaps, for me, the most important and positive change (not all changes are for the best!) has been the growing variety of voices, perspectives and topics contributing to IR. I've been impressed, for instance, with the emerging IR scholars from Brazil, Poland, New Zealand, Iran, Sweden, Korea, Pakistan, and Turkey.

It has always struck me as profoundly odd that a field aspiring to explain the entire world's multi-layered international relations should be so stunningly parochial in its actual practices. The English language imperative of IR as an academic discipline, of course, has been a principal culprit. But so too has been many scholars' "great powers" obsession.

We all know, mainly because we've been embarrassed into recognising our own lack of serious effort, that inclusiveness never "just happens." Each of us – in our creation of panels, editorial boards, guest speaker series, publishing series lists, course syllabi, and job short lists – today still has to be explicit and determined to push IR teaching, research and publishing beyond its North Atlantic comfort zone.

Over the last decade feminist IR scholars/teachers/editors, I think, have felt especially responsible for doing this. It's not because we are saintly. It is because feminist analysis stems from an acute awareness of what exclusion looks like, how it is perpetuated and at what costs. This awareness certainly has not meant we as feminist IR teachers and scholars have been successful in our inclusivity efforts. But at least we are more genuinely embarrassed when we fall short. That's a good start.

What books, or other media, published in the last 10 years has made an impact on you and/or the discipline?

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If we were talking via Skype, you would see the books piled up here on my study floor. Books on the shelves are those I've already read and marked up. Those in precarious towers on the floor are the ones I am about to read—ethnographies, histories (on top is the newest of Svetlana Alexievich's surprising oral histories to appear in English), as well as novels and biographies (I've just started a hefty biography of Florence Nightingale).

In their own stack, resting next to my red knapsack, are recent issues of journals that I'll take to lunch with me – of course, the *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, but also *Critical Military Studies*, *International Political Sociology*, and *Perspectives on Politics*. I look at them full of anticipation.

Reports. They now have their own corner of the study. Nowadays I read – slowly, carefully, pen in hand – a lot more reports, especially those researched and issued by NGOs. Over the last ten years, I've probably read more NGO reports than I ever have. So many of our MA and PhD students have become researchers for organizations such as UN Women, Refugees International, SIPRI, and Human Rights Watch. Researchers and editors of reports by NGOs have to have their reports deemed as credible in order to have any influence on the myriad policy-makers and media commentators they seek to influence. As a result, they tend to be detailed and explicit in laying out their research methodologies.

Here are three recent reports that have made me sit up and think fresh thoughts about the workings – including the gendered workings – of international politics. All three are available on line.

- *Tightening the Purse Strings: What Countering Terrorism Financing Costs Gender Equality and Security* (March 2017). This eye-opening report exposes the new obstacles being faced by grass roots human rights groups due to the militarization of banking practices. It is co-researched and co-published by Women's Peacemakers Program (headquartered in the Hague) and Duke Law School's International Human Rights Clinic (Duke University, Durham, NC).
- *STOP the Sexual Assault Against Humanitarian Aid Workers* (March 2017). For all the recent media attention to sexual harassment and assault perpetrated by male peacekeeping soldiers, male social media entrepreneurs and male Hollywood moguls on diverse girls and women, there has been woefully little curiosity about masculinized abuse – and its cover ups – within transnational aid organizations. These two authors, Dyan Mazurana and Phoebe Donnelly, have lifted the lid. The report is published by The Feinstein International Center at Tufts University.
- *Women for Disarmament* (October 2017). Colombian feminist peace activist researchers Katherine Ronderos, Marina Kumskova and Alexandra Rojas explore here the post-peace accord stumbling efforts at effective implementation of its provisions. In particular, they document the continuing proliferation of guns and chart the specific ways those guns subvert Colombian poor rural and urban women's participation in post-agreement local civic life and economy. This valuable report was commissioned and published by Women's League for Peace and Freedom (Geneva).