


BOOK REVIEW

***Finding Gender Equality in the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda: From Global Promises to National Accountability.* By Barbara K. Trojanowska. Foreword by Cynthia Enloe. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2022. 174 pp. \$105.00 (cloth), ISBN: 9781538159088; \$45.00 (eBook), ISBN: 9781538159095.**

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How does gender equality manifest within peace and security? A few scholars have investigated the diffusion and operationalization of the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) agenda at the international, regional, and national levels, but not a lot of attention has been given to interrogating the trajectory of gender equality within the WPS agenda. In *Finding Gender Equality in the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda*, Barbara Trojanowska carefully unpacks the slow and highly politicized operationalization of gender equality in peace and security, from the international down to the regional and national levels. Trojanowska does so by providing a comprehensive account of the WPS implementation of the United Nations (UN) Security Council, Pacific Islands Forum (PIF), Association of South-east Asian Nations (ASEAN), and governments of the Philippines and Australia.

The well-substantiated discussions in the book do not stop at merely locating where gender equality is in Women, Peace, and Security but also discuss its multiple meanings and purposes. In the first chapter, Trojanowska identifies three paradigms of gender equality within the discourses and practices on peace and security within the UN: (1) the security paradigm of gender equality, (2) the development paradigm of gender equality, and (3) the human rights paradigm of gender equality. She interrogates how these paradigms resonate with the conception of gender equality within regional and national WPS operations. The security paradigm of gender equality captures women's experiences of conflict-related sexual violence and puts emphasis on women's voices in security forces. Trojanowska posits that this paradigm is evident in the earlier WPS resolutions (1888, 1960, and 2106), which narrowed the focus of WPS and reduced

the framing of gender equality to protection. These early WPS resolutions were contended to have framed gender equality as a “security-driven goal” by setting out women’s inclusion in the (still) masculinist security spaces as a method to increase the effectiveness of the security institutions and by situating sexual violence within the challenges on national and international stability.

The second and least prominent paradigm within the WPS agenda of the UN Security Council is the development paradigm of gender equality. This paradigm, Trojanowska argues, has expanded the conception of gender equality to include women’s roles in development, women’s postconflict recovery needs, women’s empowerment, and women’s participation in peacebuilding. As observed in WPS Resolution 1889 and ASEAN’s gender equality approach and as examined by Trojanowska, a development-focused paradigm remains limited in terms of providing a broader gender equality approach, as the paradigm’s emphasis on women’s empowerment and participation focuses heavily on women’s gender stereotyped roles, essentializing the differences across gender and failing to transform the norms that sustain gender inequalities.

The third paradigm is the human rights paradigm of gender equality. As discussed by Trojanowska, the human rights paradigm has broadened the framing of gender equality within WPS and included the protection of women’s rights and promotion of women’s leadership. This broader conception of gender equality has led to efforts to institutionalize WPS and strengthen its accountability mechanisms through the establishment of the Informal Expert Group on WPS and the Women’s Peace and Humanitarian Fund and the appointment of Gender Advisors. Apart from Resolutions 2122 and 2242, the PIF’s Regional Action Plan on WPS and the WPS National Action Plans of Australia and the Philippines align with a human-rights-centered gender equality paradigm.

Apart from offering a broader understanding of the traction of gender equality with peace and security, Trojanowska also provides a regionalized and localized examination of the WPS agenda. In the regional case studies, Trojanowska highlights how PIF has had a stronger engagement with WPS than ASEAN, evidenced by the PIF’s early adoption of its Regional Action Plan on WPS. Trojanowska argues that factors that have slowed the localization of WPS within ASEAN are ASEAN’s noninterference principle and the notion that UN Security Council resolutions are tools for neocolonialism.

In Trojanowska’s empirical accounts of the national-level WPS operations, she argues that the Philippines has had a more consistent and unified conception of gender equality across policies and within institutions compared with the “patchy” approach of Australia. The Philippines has taken an inward-looking approach focused on the conditions of inequalities within its borders, while Australia has taken a more outward-looking approach, seemingly detached from pressing domestic concerns such as the issue on asylum seekers and First Nations peoples.

Trojanowska concludes that gender equality has become not only a “moving target” but also a political goal “instrumentalized toward various ends.” She further argues that the progress made was soon followed by strong(er) resistance, especially at the UN Security Council. While the book offers a comprehensive and somewhat critical account of the gender equality politics within WPS, it

is worth noting that the development of local action plans on WPS may also in some ways impact the national narrative on WPS (assuming it exists). Taking the case of the Philippines, it is a worthwhile cause to expand the lens of “feminist curiosity” beyond the capitals and redirect it to communities in areas like Mindanao in the Bangsamoro Region, where violence of various types persists and peace remains elusive.

This book must be added to the not-to-be-missed book list for all feminist scholars and advocates. It is an authoritative work presenting a rich empirical analysis of the alignment and tensions and the progress and setbacks of gender equality within peace and security. As emphasized in the book, gender equality being placed front and center in peace and security policy making remains contested and limited—and its meaning fluid. This book is a call for scholars and practitioners to continue asking what gender equality in peace security looks like, how it is and should be pursued, and what it means for those in conflict, postconflict, and nonconflict communities. More importantly, the question of whose experiences of (in)equality inform the WPS policies and, in turn, the gender equality goal within WPS must remain central to the analyses of feminist scholars.

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