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A Woman's Place: US Counterterrorism since 9/11. Joana Cook. London: C Hurst & Co Ltd, 2019. xvi + 560 pp. £45 hardback. ISBN 9781787381315.

By examining 'how, where and why women have become visible in the discourses and practices related to counterterrorism through the lens of US efforts since 2001' (p.1), Joana Cook makes an invaluable contribution to contemporary security studies. A lengthy volume, the book's clear structure and consistently well-evidenced material, drawing on extensive primary interviews with an impressive line-up of key figures alongside a range of policy documents, makes this thorough analysis of women's place in counterterrorism engaging to the reader. Divided into three case studies of the US Department of Defense, the US Department of State, and the US Agency for International Development, Cook carefully navigates the complexity of the overlap and tensions between these organisations. Providing a typology in the introduction, which outlines 'categories of "women" in US counterterrorism discourses'; the factors that impacted how "women" evolved at the agency level; and 'justifications to include "women"' (p.35), offers the reader a helpful framework for approaching the case studies. Whilst the selection of Afghanistan, Iraq, Yemen, and Syria as the major examples through the book is justified by the author, it would have been interesting to have included an example from outside of the Middle East for comparison. The author stays true to the methodological roots of her research in discourse analysis, guiding the reader through 'how the notion of "women", became apparent, and how these were understood in relation to counterterrorism' (p.23).

Through her review of the literature, Cook makes a strong case that women have been under-examined in relation to counterterrorism, describing an absence of nuance in how 'diverse agencies' 'conceive of, frame and engage women' (p.51) along with an inadequate mapping of influencing factors. Drawing on Alex Schmid's concept of the 'defining agency' (p.79), Cook emphasises institutional control of discourse construction whilst importantly recognising the influence of gendered assumptions and stereotypes. She convincingly draws attention to the relationship between strategic rhetoric 'measured against the practices that developed and those that were either carried out or resisted on the ground' (p.90).

Examining the Department of Defense in Chapter 3, Cook's inclusion of a thorough set of examples, from Female Engagement Teams to Abu Ghraib, illuminates the relationship between discourse and practice. One of the most striking statements of the book was the recognition that UNSCR 1325 (the first resolution on Women, Peace, and Security) 'was not reaching or resonating with those who were shaping military efforts and specific security operations in countries like Iraq and Afghanistan' (p.167). Cook captures the oft-overlooked complexity of the discursive landscape in which 'women' were constructed, including the flawed assumptions on which many of these initiatives, including Team Lioness and the Sisters and Daughters of Iraq, were based; the relationship with debates about women in ground close combat, or the 'gap between legality and the reality on the ground' (p.156); and the futile, piecemeal efforts of gender-related programming through the Provincial Reconstruction Team.

In Cook's exploration of the US Department of State and the US Agency for International Development in Chapters 4 and 5 respectively, she conveys their more established and nuanced approach to gender through their institutional histories. Both chapters demonstrate the significance of a policy shift in reframing their efforts in relation to counterterrorism and Countering Violent Extremism (CVE). In the US Department of State, for example, this moment was a post 9/11 policy shift while in the US Agency for International Development, it was the decision to make development an equal pillar with security in the 2011 Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review. When translating this revised policy rhetoric into practice, however, Cook demonstrates that its implementation was often neither 'systematic' (p.298) nor 'meaningful' (p.274).

In the final chapter, Cook assesses the significant impact of the Trump administration's foreign policy changes, including downgrading and funding cuts, whilst again providing insight into the complex discursive landscape by highlighting contradictory moments such as the publication of the long-awaited Women, Peace and Security Act of 2017. By investigating women 'as agents, partners and targets of full spectrum counterterrorism' (p.363), this chapter presents the complex relationship between insurgent/terrorist discourses and counterterrorist discourses, often forgotten in studies based on a single population or example.

Returning to the aim of Cook's book—to review 'how, where and why women have become visible in the discourses and practices related to counterterrorism through the lens of US efforts since 2001'—the author adeptly addresses the questions of 'how' and 'where'. In providing detailed institutional history to answer the 'why' question, the book does not address the (gendered) organisational cultures of these three departments. Several times the author refers to resistance to policies or practice without asking questions about the power dynamics behind these narratives, which might have informed her response to the 'why' question. Nonetheless, this comprehensive volume makes a significant contribution to unlocking an under-researched dimension of the Global War on Terror.

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