

In December 2005, Isis commissioned two papers on the theme “peace and security” for its *Gender, Governance and Democracy* monograph series. The contributing authors, Anurada Chenoy¹ and Marieme Helie-Lucas,² both called for the urgent development of a feminist agenda towards understanding notions of nationalism, religious fundamentalism, secularism, among others, in relation to the protection of women’s rights in these times of conflict. They also called for a stronger feminist lens for “engendering” human security framework.

This *WIA* issue responds to Chenoy’s and Helie-Lucas’ push for collaborative work between the women’s movement and women parliamentarians/politicians and indeed other social justice movement actors on addressing peace and security issues.

Peace talks presents a series of conversations, talks and snapshots on new and alternative visions, strategies, dialogues centered on addressing peacebuilding towards nation building and the interrogation of what constitutes the social context of that peace, nation and state.

Tesa C. de Vela and Mira Alexis Ofereneo’s paper “Political violence as moral exclusions: linking peace psychology to feminist critical theory” leads the discussion on the latter question. Political violence has social, psychological and cultural dimensions. The authors develop a model that highlights moral exclusion as the social psychological basis for violence. The authors propose alternatives based on critical feminist theories to set a peace agenda for activists and social movements.

Miriam Coronel Ferrer tackles peace and nationbuilding issues when she discusses the Philippine context of a state facing off with socialist revolutionary groups threatening its power. The typical solution adopted by these opposing forces is violence, specially currently that the government’s anti-communist stance is being re-stated as anti-terrorism. She also succinctly captures how anti-state forces also use violence to challenge state power. She pushes the point that “Counter-violence as the better or best way to fight state violence cannot be accepted.”

While Chan Shun Hing discusses the changing perspectives in feminist peace discourse, Girlie Villariba provides one such example when we asked her in a one-on-one in “Babaylan women as guide to a life of justice and peace.” She describes the origins of *babaylans* in the Philippines, as well as the practices among babaylans that made such women powerful and significant parts of ancient indigenous Philippine society, and demonstrates the seven values for discovering babaylan consciousness which provides spaces for negotiations and dialogues for peacebuilding.

Kuntala Lahiri-Dutt leads the discussions on peace, conflict and development where she scrutinises the increasingly popular theories of the natural resources curse, natural resources conflicts and natural resources wars. She argues we need to re-think the issues around ownership rights, as well as legal frameworks governing and controlling ownership of the mineral-rich tracts of developing countries. Based on her activist research with mining communities, she shows that mineral resource management is characterised by multiple actors with their multiple voices, and it is important for us to recognise these actors and listen to their voices.

This issue also showcases successful strategies used by the women’s movement in influencing the peace agenda. Lau Kin Chi and Dai Jinhua’s articles demonstrate how the 1000 Peace Women Project and Nobel Peace Prize are two of the practical ways of recognising women’s contributions to peace processes; the nominations challenges the concepts of peace, which is not just the end of conflict, but also other forms of violence, hunger, impoverishment crime, ecological destruction. In addition, “Confronted with the globalised world, feminism should, can and must become an alternative intellectual resource.”

“Women as mediators in Pacific conflict zones” by Sharon Baghwan Rolls documents how women in Fiji, Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands were very much involved in peacebuilding in these countries by engaging in talks with the armed and warring groups specially in their own communities. Through her capturing of talks, she shows how the rhetoric of women as “peace bearers” is deployed by states and how these states and anti-state movements share the same masculinist and militaristic methods that target civilians and women.

Certainly, as this issue shows—any kind of meaningful peace talks between the women’s movements, the peace movements and other social justice movements still has to be strengthened.

As a way of moving forward, I leave you with the questions posed by historian Alejandro Bendaña: “If peacebuilding leads to nation building, whose peace and nation are we dealing with? What is the social context of that peace, nation and state?”³

In peace and solidarity



Rajeli Nicole

Footnotes

1Anurada Chenoy. *Women, Peace and Security: Perspectives from Asia. Theorising and Practising Peace and Security in Gender, Governance and Democracy Monograph. pp. 12-29, Series 1, Vol. 2, 2005.*

2Marieme Helie-Lucas. *French Women of Migrant Descent: Between the Religious Extreme Right and a Coward Left in Gender, Governance and Democracy Monograph. pp. 30-51, Series 1, Vol. 2, 2005.*

3Alejandro Bendaña. *From peacebuilding to state building: One step forward two steps back? in Development—peacebuilding through justice. pp. 5–15, Vol. 48, No 3, September 2005.*