

historians, among whose numbers I count myself, must frequently confront: the availability of the elite's papers and the concomitant dearth of similar materials for the non-elite. This begs the question many of us ask ourselves: by foregrounding the elite, whose papers exist, do I contribute to obscuring the role non-elite women played in defining, practising and furthering feminism or other movements?

Marino's book wrestles the mantle of feminist leadership from US and British women, and places it on the worthy shoulders of Latin American feminists, whose contributions many historians have largely overlooked. In so doing, it deepens and clarifies our understanding of the hemispheric feminist movement and of the highly significant contributions these six women made – both as individuals and in conjunction with each other – and makes us realise how advanced Latin American feminists were and how correspondingly backward were those from the United States. I enthusiastically recommend this book for undergraduates, graduates and the general public. Marino convincingly establishes that, far from being apprentices of the US feminist movement, these Latin American feminists were its vanguard.

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Fiona Macaulay, *Transforming State Responses to Femicide: Women's Movements, Law and Criminal Justice Institutions in Brazil*

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Lorena Fuentes

Ladysmith

While gender-based violence (GBV) affects women and girls everywhere, Latin America holds some unfortunate notoriety for its 'femicide problem'. Notably, the region is also the site of tremendous progress in legislating against femicide, thanks to the efforts of feminist and women's movements, who have organised both within and outside of formal state structures to generate visibility and demand action on the problem. While definitions of the concept vary, broadly speaking femicide, or femicide, refers to the gender-motivated killing of women and girls, which often culminates in socially and politically tolerated murder. Many studies of femicide in the region have focused on its root causes: for example, historical processes related to colonisation, civil wars and entrenched discriminatory social norms, while other studies have examined the nature of implementation gaps in laws against femicide. Fiona Macaulay's book, *Transforming State Responses to Femicide*, takes us beyond these important critical analyses of the causes, consequences and seemingly intractable problems around femicide prevention and response. Drawing upon mixed methods research and the principle of appreciative

inquiry – ‘an approach that focusses on institutional strengths and capacities, rather than on weaknesses’ (p. 5) – Macaulay’s book sheds light on some of the more effective and innovative approaches that have enabled Brazilian justice-sector agencies to tackle femicide. Most compelling, by detailing *how* these positive developments were made possible, Macaulay’s book provides a uniquely policy- and practice-oriented roadmap that is often missing in studies of femicide.

While Brazil’s femicide law was passed in 2015, the book begins by detailing how earlier legislation and activism around GBV, and particularly domestic violence (DV), laid crucial normative and institutional capacity scaffolding for the 2015 law and some of the effective state responses that followed. Specifically, Macaulay focuses on Brazil’s 2006 Maria da Penha law, which marked a watershed in drawing national attention to DV, and thus in prompting both increased reporting amongst women and notable improvements in institutional responses. For example, the law laid out a requirement that women victims of DV were entitled to free legal aid, which Macaulay notes catalysed capacity-building amongst state-level public defender’s offices, each of which was also charged with setting up distinct women’s rights units. Despite these advancements, however, ‘the number and the rate of murders of women kept rising steadily’ (p. 33), which suggested persistent gaps in the Maria da Penha law’s coverage of femicide.

Macaulay details how the expeditious approval of the femicide law in March 2015 was due to a combination of factors related to good timing, political will across multiple sectors and stakeholder groups, and openness to compromise. Indeed, many ingredients were required to enable feminist and women’s rights actors within and outside the state to seize ‘a legislative opportunity’ (p. 33). First, a key group of feminist civil society organisations, feminists in Congress and lead judicial bodies were on board and invested in moving the process forward. Second, at the same time that this legislative process was starting to unfold, UN Women was looking for a country in which to pilot its Model Protocol for investigating and prosecuting femicide; Macaulay explains that Brazil was selected in part because of justice system capacity and inter-institutional working relations across state and non-state bodies that had been generated by the earlier Maria da Penha law. Perhaps most notably, in order to ensure passage of the law in time for International Women’s Day, women’s rights stakeholders made the strategic decision to accept an altered definition of femicide – one that conservative forces had attempted to defang of some of its feminist thrust by replacing ‘gender’ with ‘sex’.

In her especially compelling Chapter 3, Macaulay takes the reader through the factors and processes that enabled the operationalisation of the femicide law. As Macaulay explains, once written into law, improvements in state responses to femicide were ultimately going to depend on actors within the criminal justice system – and particularly the police – building (and using) effective strategies to improve practices and procedures. From this implementation perspective, Macaulay argues that the ‘National Gender-informed Guidelines for the Investigation, Prosecution, and Trial of Violent Deaths of Women’ provided a ‘key stimulus’ (p. 43) to improvements because the Guidelines were open-ended, rather than prescriptive in nature – the latter an important enabling feature in a decentralised criminal justice context like Brazil’s, where local institutions are

protective of their autonomy. In practice, this meant that some of the overarching problems related to recording, recognising and investigating femicide were tackled at the state level and, in many cases, effective strategies were diffused horizontally 'as a result of organic contact between officers of different forces' (p. 59). For instance, because the femicide law catalysed a new category of aggravated homicide (rather than a distinct crime), it required that police modify the terminology they used when they filled out the initial crime report. In certain cases, efforts from advocates within and outside law enforcement agencies to oblige police to replace 'crime of passion' with 'femicide' were met with resistance, and it was only with more organised pressure from outside these agencies that such changes materialised. Thus, while suggesting that the 'cognitive and bureaucratic routines of the Brazilian police have undergone ... transformations' (p. 60), Macaulay is careful to underscore the role that pressure from the women's movement, as well as the initiatives and inputs from 'pracademics' (academic practitioners) and 'policy entrepreneurs' with training in gender-sensitive approaches to femicide investigation, has played in enabling these transformations (p. 58).

Despite emphasising the positive strides made in state responses to femicide, in Chapter 4 Macaulay acknowledges that stubbornly entrenched patriarchal attitudes and beliefs that normalise GBV and femicide have stalled progress in the domain of prosecution and punishment. For example, Macaulay notes how 'exculpatory strategies' related to citing men's 'honour' (p. 71) still find their way into femicide cases and trials. Interestingly, Chapter 5, 'Preventing Femicide', seems to suggest that the 'tertiary' and 'secondary' prevention strategies that leverage tracking technologies and risk assessment tools, respectively, have brought mostly positive results in protecting high-risk victims and deterring high-risk perpetrators (p. 86). Macaulay does not spend much time considering the potential drawbacks of spatialised security approaches that flag 'high-violence communities' for police presence, nor the limitations of technological solutionist approaches to GBV prevention, though some of these strategies could be seen as controversial in light of research showing how women and other marginalised communities are often made more vulnerable by militarised police presence.

Overall, the book's focus on strategies that *are* working and detailing *how* these have been operationalised provides a rare and welcome study of 'bright spots' in state responses to femicide. The book also reflects an important epistemological intervention: in drawing out key lessons and actionable insights from the Brazilian experience that could have purchase in other contexts, Macaulay disrupts the often-assumed North–South direction of knowledge and 'best practice' policy flows. This book will serve as a key resource for scholars and activists combining rigorous academic research with GBV and femicide policymaking and advocacy, as well as for those interested in gender-sensitive approaches to security and justice-sector reform.

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