

BOOK REVIEW

Laura Micheletti Puaca, *Searching for Scientific Womanpower: Technocratic Feminism and the Politics of National Security, 1940–1980*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014. 261 pp.

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Scientific manpower has a sex. In Korea as well as the United States, it is hard to deny that men dominate the fields of science and technology. According to the 2016 Report on Korean Women in Science, Engineering, and Technology by the Center for Women in Science, Engineering, and Technology, the percentage of women employed in the institutions surveyed is 19.3% which is 1/4 of the percentage of men at 80.7%. The fields of science and technology, it seems, need more women to overcome their male dominance. Here, then, is the question: Would the increase in womanpower make women scientists and engineers more powerful? In other words, is the recruitment of more women the best remedy to fix gender inequality problems in science and technology? If you're looking for an answer to this question, this book might be for you.

The title of the book, *Searching for Scientific Womanpower: Technocratic Feminism and the Politics of National Security, 1940-1980*, gives a clear idea of what this book is about. This book traces numerous efforts—those of female reformers and women's scientific societies are the most impressive—to promote “scientific womanpower” in the U.S. from the Second World War into the Cold War. The author discusses the history of the advancement in women's education and employment over four decades in terms of feminism and national security concerns. Four main chapters and an epilogue tell the story in chronological order. Chapter I shows scientific womanpower issues were associated with the shortage of scientific personnel and national security emergencies starting in WWII. The leadership of Virginia Gildersleeve, a long-time dean of Barnard College, is highlighted. Chapter II deals with the postwar period, a time of insecure peace, when efforts to increase women's participation in science and technology were based on an expanded definition of national defense. Starting at this time, women scientists and engineers formed their own organizations, such as the Society of Women Engineers, for increased status.

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Chapter III starts with the launch of the Soviet Sputnik satellite in 1957, which greatly facilitated the efforts of individuals such as Mary Bunting and collectives such as Sigma Delta Epsilon to recruit and retain women in science and technology. Chapter IV focuses on the promotion of scientific womanpower in the light of the second wave of American feminism and the activities of new women's scientific societies whose interests were more likely to be equality rights than representation in the field, in contrast with the previous generation of reformers and activists who did not even see themselves as "feminists."

I am fascinated with the term "technocratic feminism," which strongly associates the advancement of scientific womanpower with national security concerns rather than women's rights or gender equality issues. The epilogue thus interested me the most, as this is where the possibilities and limitations of technocratic feminism are discussed. The author brings up Summersgate at both the beginning and end of the book. Harvard University president Lawrence Summers's notorious speech undermining women's abilities in science and engineering is persuasive evidence of the problems of technocratic feminism. The increasing number of women scientists and engineers does not automatically lead to gender equality in science and technology: women are still marginalized, hold subordinate positions, and are expected to be good mothers and wives at home as well. These problems are deeply related to the fact that technocratic feminists' efforts have been concerned more with how to recruit female students but much less with how to retain and advance them in the long run. There has been little concern, for example, on how to prevent the careers of women scientists and engineers from being interrupted. Most of all, I appreciate the author's attempt to make otherwise forgotten women and their allies in the promotion of women's education and employment in science and technology visible and call them "feminists." This kind of identification can be controversial, but I find it appropriate as they have historical significance not only in the history of scientific and technological development but also in the history of feminism in the U.S. As the author notes, the strategy of technocratic feminists to use scientific manpower-national security rhetoric is still effective and is used by feminists today.

As a researcher who is interested in "scientific womanpower in Korea," I found reading this book unexpectedly rewarding. This kind of work which identifies women and women's organizations who played leading roles in the promotion of women's participation in science and technology and weaves their own stories into one connected story is absolutely necessary to understand and further ameliorate the current gender imbalance of scientific manpower in Korea and in the US. Some readers, including myself, may be overwhelmed by all the names of scientists, engineers, academic administrators, and scientific societies and committees that appear throughout this book and feel a certain lack of liveliness in the descriptions of their personal experiences related, in particular, to ambivalent attitudes toward feminism as women scientists or engineers. However, I do not blame the author for this lack, which is what would be discussed elsewhere by others, including myself.