

Book Publication

**WEAPON TABOOS
GENEALOGIES OF PARIAH WEAPONS**

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Research on arms control scarcely reflects critically upon the framings underlying arms control policies or on the functions served by the global architecture of arms control.

This book brings together an interdisciplinary group of historians, jurists, and international relations thinkers to critically analyse the conceptual framing of certain types of weapons that made their pariah status possible. It aims to unveil the historical evolution of, and changes in, norms concerning pariah weapons from the nineteenth century to the present.

The book defines “pariah weapons” as weapons that are singled out as “pariahs” (socially despised outcasts) and whose use is treated as taboo in international policy debates in different eras. It does not limit the scope of “pariah weapons” to weapons whose use is explicitly prohibited by legally binding international agreements (such as dum-dum bullets and anti-personnel landmines), but includes those weapons whose use has been considered for prohibition in international policy debates (such as “aggressive weapons” before the Second World War).

Rather than uncritically using terms such as “inhumane weapons”, “WMD” and “certain conventional weapons”, the book examines the specific historical contingency from which such terms and framings of weapons were produced, used, forgotten or re-interpreted. It challenges the assumptions and ideas underpinning the norms themselves, as well as the social, cultural, political and historical contexts in which the norms were developed. It gives particular salience to the relations between norms, power and political and material interests, and challenges those who argue that the prohibition of particular categories of weapons is unambiguously emancipatory.

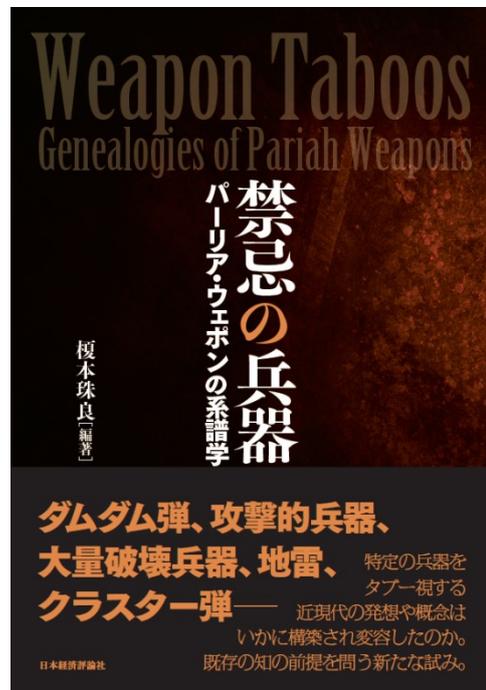


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