

Innocence and Victimhood: Gender, Nation, and Women's Activism in Postwar Bosnia-Herzegovina. By Elissa Helms. Critical Human Rights. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2013. xxi, 325 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Photographs. Maps. \$26.95, paper.

This well-researched book adds to the growing body of literature covering the wars in the former Yugoslavia and their reverberations in matters of ethics, politics, and feminism. Tracing “the awkward and ambivalent relationship between victimhood and nation as it is made apparent through the logic of gender” (3), *Innocence and Victimhood* presents important and controversial material collected through participant observation, interviews, and analysis of electronic and printed sources over a period of fifteen years. At the same time, the book has some features that might make its merits not easily visible for potential readers. The focus of the discussion is the issue of “genocidal” (ethnic) rapes, mostly committed by Serbs during the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina in the early 1990s, but also sexual violence by Croats and Bosnians against Serbs and their later ideologized use by nationalists, feminists of various denominations, journalists, film makers, international and foreign intervention agencies, and donors. As Elissa Helms demonstrates, the very term *genocidal rapes*, which was even introduced into the Bosnian Criminal Code, is subject to debate: there is no consensus as to how to conceptualize this crime. Nationalists, especially, consider the rape of “ethnic” women by enemy soldiers a form of genocide; however, genocides aim at the physical annihilation of a people, while in the Bosnian case many women were made pregnant and kept in captivity until it was too late for abortions—they were supposed to produce babies of “non-ethnic” descent. Others, mostly “cosmopolitan” (but not “nationalist”) feminists, see war rapes alongside any other rapes and sexual violence in general as an injury to women, not to the ethnonation. The issue becomes even more controversial, as victimized Bosnian women were overwhelmingly portrayed by international media as Muslim, rural, and backward, and it was often argued that their trauma was especially painful—as compared to urban and educated women—because of their communities’ patriarchal culture, which would seek to silence them.

Thus, a competition for victimhood, which can be a powerful nation-building incentive and an instrument in negotiations with donors and foreign intervention agencies, enters the picture. Under the logic of victimhood, raped women, the avatar of the nation, are symbolically transformed into “raped Croatia” (or Bosnia, or any other land or nation); they are also a living “testimony” to the nation’s innocence and moral righteousness, for an essentialist perspective views women (and thus the nation they represent) as peace-loving and moral. This gender philosophy also helps one understand why males are not easily included in rape discourse and can rarely become symbols of national suffering: if they are raped, their masculinity is contested and thus the nation is undermined; if they turn out to be rapists, the nation would lose its righteousness, the basis for many political and economic claims. Thus, according to Helms, the discourse of ethnic rapes “can often mask profoundly patriarchal ideologies and notions of irreconcilable ethno-national differences” (247). These debates are not confined to pure ideology but have a practical dimension in both international and domestic politics, as the issue of compensation to the war victims arises; while it may be difficult get testimonies in cases of rape, it is not clear how they might stand against male soldiers’ physical injuries. At the same time, international players, as well as some local organizations, while trying to promote peace, facilitate the return of the refugees, and normalize everyday life, may reinforce elements of traditional gender hierarchies and even downplay rape as they seek to protect the victims.

These important and painful debates, told in scrupulous detail, are not the ex-

clusive property of the Balkans: similar issues have resurfaced in Rwanda and elsewhere, and the book could therefore be useful for scholars of contemporary nation building. There seems to be some problem, however, with the way the author chooses to tell her story. The narrative is factual and loaded with dozens of cases, conversations, meetings, encounters, stories, and debates. The work of collecting and classifying the material is enormous, but its analytical treatment is rather economical, with very brief references to other studies and theories. Broader discussion is mostly saved for the conclusion, which seems a bit too late to reach the conceptual breadth that might evolve from this rich material.

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A Discourse Analysis of Corruption: Instituting Neoliberalism against Corruption in Albania, 1998–2005. By Blendi Kajsii. Southeast European Studies. Burlington: Ashgate, 2014. xvi, 207 pp. Appendix. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Figures. Tables. \$107.96, hard bound.

This book addresses the puzzle of a “corruption paradox” in Albania in 1998–2005: though intensive, successful, and internationally led, anticorruption reform was accompanied by increasing levels of corruption. On one hand, Blendi Kajsii cites reports by the World Bank and the Council of Europe that argue that Albania has one of the best public administrations and anticorruption reforms in the Balkans. On the other hand, according to various corruption indicators, Albanian corruption grew significantly during this period. Kajsii quickly debunks alternative explanations for this paradox, such as lack of political will, the application of reforms by international actors which do not fit local problems, and Albanian culture.

Using poststructuralist discourse analysis, Kajsii tracks how the concept of corruption has changed over time in postsocialist Albania, as it became the dominant explanation of everything that went wrong in the country. Since the concept is not fixed, Kajsii does not attempt to explain its cause. Instead, he conducts quantitative and qualitative analyses of newspaper articles, political speeches, and interviews to identify the ideational effects of the corruption discourse. He argues that the dominant corruption discourse legitimated a neoliberal order in Albania, entailing privatization, deregulation, and a general weakening of state institutions. The anticorruption medicine focused on the public sector and failed to notice that state institutions can take a leading role in developing markets. Neoliberal ideas were applied globally in the 1990s as part of the Washington consensus that emphasizes the liberalization of markets and constraining of states.

Kajsii blames neoliberalism’s market-led reforms for various pathologies in the political and economic development of Albania. In terms of ideas, neoliberalism precluded an alternative path for Albania’s economic development, in which the state intervened to protect domestic industries in order to promote economic growth through industrialization. Domestic and international actors did not therefore consider the East Asian model of economic development appropriate in Albania. This is hardly surprising, however, if we consider that from the 1970s to 1991 Albania practiced autarchy, in which the Communist Party relied on a planned economy and import substitution to promote economic growth while closing the country to international trade. Faced with a repressive and intrusive communist state, many Albanians believed that free markets would provide solutions in the postcommunist era.

Kajsii attributes various pathologies to neoliberal ideas, including the increase