

field' as an ethnographer who did not have to negotiate access linguistically since she already spoke the local idiom, 'Kaaps' (a version of Afrikaans spoken in Cape Town's townships). Salo also had prior knowledge of the area since she had worked there with anti-apartheid activists in the 1980s and was regularly updated on the issues that dominated everyday life there through a network of public intellectuals who lived and worked in the area, including her brother, who at the time served as the local Anglican parish's priest.

In the significant historical context of South African politics of difference, Salo shared the racial categorization of the people she worked with. Yet, her lived experience as the daughter of a well-to-do family and a graduate of the historically 'white' University of Cape Town as well as her friendship networks with people whom the ordinary residents of the township considered 'insider-outsiders' also posed challenges.

Significantly, Desiree Lewis, the eminent South African feminist scholar, highlights in an insightful preface to Salo's monograph her departed friend and colleague's acute awareness of the situatedness of knowledge production. Salo regarded knowledge as inevitably enmeshed with classed, racialized and gendered experiences and locations.

Salo's friends and colleagues cannot be thanked enough for making the posthumous publication of this important, long-awaited monograph a reality. The publication has added an invaluable and tangible part to the tremendous legacy Elaine Salo, African feminist and anthropologist, left as a scholar, a teacher, a public intellectual, a mentor, colleague and a friend to many.

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Marie E. Berry, *War, Women, and Power: from violence to mobilization in Rwanda and Bosnia-Herzegovina*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (hb £75 – 978 1 108 41618 4; pb £24 – 978 1 108 40151 7). 2018, 271 pp.

Feminist scholars' interest in women's mobilization during wars as fighters, peace-makers and more has destabilized any previous notion that women do not fight in (or against) war. Marie E. Berry's book *War, Women, and Power* tackles an immensely important and underexamined question – in war's aftermath, what accounts for women's increased political mobilization? Berry approaches this question with a fundamental claim that the violence, destruction and disruption of war are followed by openings to reorder social, political and economic structures. The questions that follow are of how women's lived experiences of war and the economic, political and social contexts of these ruptures provide openings for women's increased political participation, as well as what forces constitute the backlash(es) against such mobilizations. The puzzle Berry engages with and her manner of engagement provide immensely valuable insight for broader debates about the transformative moment 'after' war.

Berry develops her argument through an examination of mass violence in Rwanda and Bosnia-Herzegovina, where experiences of violence ruptured all facets of political, economic and social life. Part of being able to understand the challenges and opportunities women face in mobilization after war required Berry to analyse the institutional and structural transformation of mass violence in both places, and in historical context. Berry opens her analysis of each case with

a historically grounded engagement that helps the reader see how the scale and intensity of violence in both places led to demographic, economic and cultural shifts. She does this in a way that is both analytically precise and profoundly humanizing. Throughout the book, the attention to lived experience reminds the reader that none of this is abstract, while at the same time the care and precision of her analytical engagement leaves the reader with no doubt of the intellectual rigour of her claims. Indeed, one of the many lessons one could draw from Berry's book relates to research design in conflict-affected settings – it is meticulous in its rigour and reflexivity, and the impressive, years-long engagement in Rwanda and Bosnia-Herzegovina allows Berry to represent the stories and experiences of women in a way that takes seriously the feminist claim that 'the personal is political'.

Today, Rwanda has the highest proportion of female legislative representatives in the world (61.3 per cent). Berry's analysis of Rwanda aims to understand this in the context of women's wider informal and grass-roots political mobilization. This is paired with an analysis of the limits to women's political mobilization, including analysing what feminist scholars refer to as 'the patriarchal backlash' and the role of the international community. Berry argues that three elements of transformation in Rwanda – demographic shifts (including sex imbalances), economic shifts (such as those that arise from women seeking aid outside the home and increased women-headed households) and cultural shifts (such as the narrative that women were less complicit in the mass violence) – led to the increase in women's mobilization. This mobilization is firstly, and crucially, informal, such as the formation of support and self-help groups. Understanding women's increased participation in parliament requires starting here, from the informal. From there, Berry analyses the confluence of women's increased informal mobilization with the huge influx of international aid programmes that encouraged women to formalize such groups. This was evidenced by the explosion in the number of NGOs after the war, many led by women. In turn, Berry argues, based on experiences with the formalization of NGOs, women began to run for local and national political office. Amidst the positivity of Rwanda's share of women in parliament, all of this must be understood, Berry argues, in relation to the moves by the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) to consolidate power.

This brings us to the limits of women's political mobilization and the patriarchal backlash, as clearly evidenced by the seeming paradox that women who hold increased power (economic and/or local or national political office) are more likely to experience increased domestic violence. This is a global lesson, and Berry points to what this can tell us more broadly about the persistence of patriarchy. In addition to the patriarchal backlash, women's political mobilization is limited in Rwanda by the nature of the political settlement and state consolidation of power. This appears paradoxical given the international attention that Kagame gets for his 'feminist stance', but Berry effectively points to both political repression and the 'hierarchies of victimhood' of the mass violence as fracturing women's organizing. Finally, perhaps one of the most crucial findings of the book relates to the role of the international community in limiting women's political mobilization. Here, Berry's findings support those of others who decry the top-down nature of international intervention that is prescriptive, patronizing, and designed to align with donor agendas rather than supportive of the already existing bottom-up organizing that is driven more by women's own needs. One might argue that here, too, in the peacebuilding industry, (racialized) patriarchy persists. Taken together, Berry's book is invaluable for the way it centres gender in the question of war's transformative effects. This is crucial not only to further and support

lively debates among feminist scholars, but to persuade anyone interested in war's transformative effects that gender always matters.

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Joanna Allan, *Silenced Resistance: women, dictatorships, and genderwashing in Western Sahara and Equatorial Guinea*. Madison WI: University of Wisconsin Press (hb US\$79.95 – 978 0 299 31840 6). 2019, 360 pp.¹

This book by Joanna Allan is a comparative study that analyses the resistance to the colonial and postcolonial regimes in Western Sahara and Equatorial Guinea from a gender perspective. Those familiar with the complicated political situation in these two former Spanish colonies in Africa, of which we are constantly reminded by the use of pseudonyms by the informants, will appreciate the courage of this work given the conditions under which it has been carried out. The research spans across Spanish colonial archives and fieldwork in Equatorial Guinea, the Saharawi refugee camps in Tindouf, Algeria, and Morocco-occupied Western Sahara.

The book is divided into three parts, with two chapters in each. The first part is dedicated to the colonial regime. The second covers the politics of gender in post-colonial states – in this case the Saharawi state in exile in the refugee camps of Tindouf, and in Equatorial Guinea. The third focuses on how repression and resistance are gendered in postcolonial regimes, specifically in the Western Sahara occupied by Morocco, and in Equatorial Guinea. In each part, one chapter is dedicated to each of the two territories. In this balanced distribution of analysis, the researcher manages to link both cases through constant comparisons and theoretical references, and by shifting the focus from the analysis of gender to geopolitics and from hegemonic discourses to daily resistance.

As the author herself recognizes, this distribution could be problematic. Access and the breadth of fieldwork had very different conditions in each location. This imbalance leads to greater development of the Saharawi case, which is more thoroughly illustrated. In addition, these different spaces and chronological periods have already been covered asymmetrically in the existing academic literature. In the case of Western Sahara and the Saharawi refugee camps, this work is riding the wave of the academic boom of monographs accompanying it from both historical and anthropological perspectives. The situation with research on Equatorial Guinea and the Western Sahara occupied by Morocco is very different, as the academic attention to these locations is much more limited, although not completely absent. The comparison of these two unequally researched spaces is a key challenge for Allan's approach, an endeavour that is achieved thanks to intense theoretical work.

One of the author's starting points is feminist theory, of which she makes extensive use throughout her research; she maps specifically gendered situations of oppression and the ways in which women have been resisting them. The idea of

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