women as victims of either Guatemalan men or the Guatemalan state, and yet it would be inaccurate to overlook the gender-based violence that is so evident in criminal cases. Even here, however, Carey emphasises how women could manipulate gendered assumptions, so that, for example, 'victims emphasised their integrity and productivity' even as they drew attention to physical weakness (p. 175).

It is particularly notable in this book, with its fine-grained depiction of people and contexts, that Carey finds stories of affection, compassion and even love to interrupt or complicate the hundreds of cases of abuse, exploitation and discrimination: in chapter 5, a father rushes to the aid of an injured daughter; in chapter 6, which considers insults and family feuds, an indigenous widow takes in a *ladina* woman after she is raped, caring for her over the course of three days. Also notable is the deft treatment of agency. It can be tricky to describe women as agentive in an oppressive regime: on the one hand, it must be acknowledged that the state is dominant; on the other, the author wishes to cast the women as genuinely powerful. How are the two to be reconciled? Carey concludes, in satisfying ways, that even when women did not escape their marginalisation, they addressed it in Guatemalan courtrooms. And he acknowledges that 'power was everywhere, but people were not always obsessed with attaining, maintaining, or expanding it' (p. 236). This makes his conclusion that 'poor *indígenas* influenced the criminal justice system as mediators' especially convincing (p. 231). The Guatemalan state was, indeed, dominant, and both because and despite it, Guatemalan women asked the state for justice.

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Jelke Boesten, *Sexual Violence during War and Peace: Gender, Power, and Post-Conflict Justice in Peru* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan and United States Institute of Peace, 2014), pp. xi + 231, £66.00, hb.

This book is both disturbing and enlightening. In it, Jelke Boesten reflects on her long-term research enquiry into sexual violence in Peru and the responses to this violence during and after the period of political conflict (1980–2000). Although the discovery of systematic wartime rape raised an outcry in some circles, this did not compel the judiciary to take action. Thus, even though Peru's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) brought to light 538 cases of wartime rape for which evidence could be raised and 16 cases for which evidence had been raised, not one of these cases proceeded to trial. This, argues Boesten, was not because the judiciary does not work in Peru or because all human rights violations go unpunished. So why has sexual violence persistently been ignored? Boesten's analysis starts with abuses committed by the armed forces and explores why the perpetrators of sexual violence have remained exempt from prosecution. The fact that the state forces were primarily responsible for sexual violence during political conflict 'reinforces the idea that such violence builds on and reproduces institutionalised structures of violence and inequality'. Furthermore, 'the impunity of these crimes further normalises such violence and perpetuates its persistence in peacetime' (p. 4). Boesten thus moves the discussion beyond the sufferings of individual women to explore the embedded societal values regarding gender and gendered violence and how these underpin legal and policy practices in peacetime. By carefully unpacking the meanings and workings of sexual violence, her broader aims are to open up institutional structures and underlying social

values to scrutiny and challenge and to suggest where progressive changes might be made that could improve access to justice especially in post-conflict settings.

The brilliance of this short book lies in Jelke Boesten's ability to bring together and draw out links between wide-ranging research materials in order 'to understand and explain the complexity of a discursively constructed common sense that makes sexual violence possible and accountability unlikely' (p. 14). Testimonies of sexual violence recorded by the TRC (and already in the public domain) provide an important backdrop. Then by combining critical discourse analysis and critical theory Boesten sets out to 'read' the layered meanings of sexual violence from testimony and literary narratives, legislation and policy documents, and interviews she conducted with police, lawyers, members of human rights organisations, social workers, and violent men. The chapters address the military's use of the sexual violence and emergence of distinct rape regimes in wartime: the implications of sexual violence at a socio-political level, as integral to the reproduction of inequalities; the treatment of gender and gendered violence in transitional justice and by truth commissions; impunity; and the multiple links between wartime and peacetime gender-based violence. In the final chapter, Boesten pinpoints key issues that her analysis has uncovered where new thinking about legal and policy change could focus.

Boesten builds her arguments with clarity and precision. She considers carefully her choice of wording and phrasing, for this is a complex field with many pitfalls. She takes issue with some recent work that treats rape only as a weapon of war, and provides a timely and thought-provoking synthesis of current thinking on why societies and their institutions have persistently ignored sexual violence in peacetime as well as war. The problem with the 'weapon of war' thesis she highlights is that it impedes an understanding of the non-war purposes served, diversity of victims targeted, and ambiguities surrounding dichotomies upheld in national and international law, between victim and perpetrator, coercion and consent. Instead, Boesten argues, sexual violence, including rape, was used in Peru as a strategy to intimidate and submit not only those suspected of political militancy but also the Andean population as a whole. Sexual violence served to uphold violent masculinities, gendered hierarchies and social inequalities rooted in prevailing ideas of hetero-normativity, race and class. As a result, those communities bearing the brunt of sexual violence tended to emerge weaker and more divided in the aftermath, a situation that Boesten can document with respect to increased levels of violence inside both family and community and the incapacity of communal authorities to take action.

In her analysis of the work of Peru's Truth Commission, Boesten suggests that its objectives were organised around extending compassion in exchange for speaking of pain. While understandable, at heart this reflected a 'tutelary logic' that framed those giving testimonies on sexual violence only as victims. Left outside the TRC's script was a shared sense of indignation from which demands for restitution and justice could develop. In the field of post-conflict justice, an unfortunate tension (and dichotomy) became clearly notable in Peru. This was between the victim-centred, truth-seeking processes of the TRC on the one side and the perpetrator-centred judicial processes on the other. While truth commissions proved better platforms than the courtroom for victim-survivors to speak out and make claims for justice, the perpetrators are absent; they do not speak. This has served to reinforce the gender binary and disallowed a reconfiguration of gendered roles and hierarchies that are immersed in class, sexuality and race. In the courtroom, Boesten finds that charges of sexual violence have been legally thwarted for three main reasons: how

rape is defined, lack of acceptable evidence, and lack of perpetrators. Yet with regard to each of these aspects, laws can be changed.

The central points made by Boesten are not necessarily 'new', but in this book they speak out in a new way. With its emphasis on making change happen, it is aimed at a wider audience than academia. Hopefully it will circulate widely among groups who are in a position to take action and who can propose and implement legal and policy change.

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Heidrun Zinecker, *Gewalt im Frieden: Formen und Ursachen der Gewaltkriminalität en Zentralamerika* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2014), pp. 602, €99.00, pb.

For the past two decades, the northern triangle of Central America (Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras) has been experiencing alarmingly high murder rates. Paradoxically, so it may seem, this spike in homicides occurred once wars and political repression had ended. Research into violence in the isthmus tends to focus on individual countries or particular forms of violence, for example the street gangs. Heidrun Zinecker, an international relations scholar at Leipzig University, takes a comparative approach to the subject. *Gewalt im Frieden* ('*Violence in Peace*') is an ambitious attempt to understand the causes of violent crime in Central America. Specifically, this extensive study analyses why in a region with historical-structural similarities, three countries (the northern triangle) feature elevated homicide rates and two countries (Costa Rica and Nicaragua) do not. Based on more than 250 semi-structured interviews, conducted mostly between 2005 and 2007, as well as a wide range of primary and secondary sources, the book proposes a theoretical framework and tests it in three empirical chapters. Zinecker argues that a combination of structural and agency factors explain the five nations' susceptibility to, and reality of, violence. Whereas the existence of democracy and market economy correlate with a low susceptibility to violence in Costa Rica, regime hybridity and rent economy in the other four countries make them vulnerable to violence. Yet, Nicaragua has characteristics that are absent in the northern triangle (notably a democratic security strategy, a professional and community-oriented police, and local political participation) and therefore has much lower homicide levels than its northern neighbours.

Zinecker draws on comparative politics and criminological theories to suggest that political-economic structural factors (high remittance and maquila rates, political exclusion, and defective rule of law) create susceptibility to violence, whereas criminological structural and agency factors (anomie, relative deprivation, and frustration) produce the reality of violence. A structure of social controls, however, can interrupt this circuit. The basic idea of this complex framework is that individuals may turn to violence as a substitute for access to the market and political inclusion. The argument holds in the case of street gangs, whose members achieve respect and status among their peers through the use of symbolic violence. Outside these groups, would individuals who feel deprived not commit monetary offences, rather than violence? In order to clarify these and other doubts, the theoretical framework would need to be tested more widely. On the other hand, Zinecker's variables can explain why people *may* kill, but not why they *do* kill. Establishing homicide motives is of course beyond the scope