

of transitional justice policies. Indeed, being able to distinguish between symbolic self-revelation, lustration, and decommunization is just one of many advantages that a study focusing on three countries avoids.

However, not being in a position to conduct large-n analysis does preclude careful small-n analysis. Yet the closest the Pettai and Pettai study comes to empirical analysis are the three tables placed in the concluding chapter, which follow the taxonomy presented in chapter 1. For each of the three countries, the cells mark transitional justice intensity (using shades of grey) between 1992 and 2012. This is a good way of summarizing the dense historiographical detail provided in the preceding chapters, but 50-plus shades of grey cannot stand in place of true empirical analysis.

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Ethnic Conflict and War Crimes in the Balkans: The Narratives of Denial in Post-Conflict Serbia. By Jelena Obradović-Wochnic. London: I.B.Tauris and Co., 2013. ix, 257 pp. Appendix. Notes. Bibliography. Index. \$92.50, hard bound.

The process of dealing with the past in post-Milošević Serbia has attracted much scholarly interest. Since the trials of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and domestic courts were the main mechanism of transitional justice, researchers have engaged in assessing the ICTY's work and effects (Diane F. Orentlicher, *Shrinking the Space for Denial: The Impact of the ICTY in Serbia* [2008]; Jelena Subotić, *Hijacked Justice: Dealing with the Past in the Balkans* [2009]); cooperation with the ICTY (Victor Peskin, *International Justice in Rwanda and the Balkans: Virtual Trials and the Struggle for State Cooperation* [2008]); and their media presentations (Amer Džihana and Zala Volčić, eds., *Media and National Ideologies: Analysis of Reporting on War Crime Trials in the Former Yugoslavia* [2011]). The book under review approaches the subject of dealing with the past from below, using participant observation, field notes, and interviews conducted in Serbia in 2006.

Apart from an introduction and brief overview of the 1990s conflict in the former Yugoslavia, the book is divided into five main chapters. Each deals with one major theme of past recognition, as it was revealed in the interviews: the '90s, knowledge, denial, victimhood, and conspiracy theories. The opening chapter presents a general impression of the '90s as a decade of "sickness, insanity and horror," a time that "was not normal." It describes a multilayered break with "normality" as a collapse of "borders, known political systems, the country/countries, standard of life, friendships, companies, morals" (63). Jelena Obradović-Wochnic rightly points to the often unacknowledged suffering of distanced audiences, the shared feeling that "you feel like it's war, but you just don't see fighting anywhere" (101). This starting point allows her to build the subsequent arguments, which, instead of mistrust and dismissal of individual trajectories, take them seriously and with undivided trust.

The following chapter provides an innovative interpretation of public knowledge and silence. The author interprets troublesome silences as an attempt to reach "narrative closure," combining media presentation with personal experiences and rumors. Silences as attempts to forget show that "something terrible had taken place; there is a 'mourning'" while cover-up language is used as "a plaster being applied to conceal a wound" (108). This understanding of silence, avoidance, and forgetting as signs of the dealing with the past is enabled by shifting the connotations of "confrontation" from positive (regret and apology) to negative ("silences, negotiation and navigation through vast amounts of disturbing knowledge, information and images" [128]).

Silences signal the knowledge of crimes, rather than its lack, but this process “belongs to a very private domain” (111). It could not be spoken easily, let alone discussed publicly. Hence, she concludes, NGO strategies that aim at public discussion of the past are actually unable to reach or resonate with the audience.

The following chapter discusses different strategies of denial and distancing, whether regarding the crimes or the perpetrators. She finds that “there were implicit acknowledgments of the atrocity itself, together with different degrees of distancing” (135). The examples provided include all the classical cases of denial, from transfer of guilt to insecurity about events and confusion. Two main narratives used to make sense of events and to justify persistent denial, Serbian victimhood and antiwestern sentiment, are discussed in the last two chapters. The author provides an excellent interpretation of the use of conspiracy theories as subversion of and resistance to the dominant discourse of the ICTY, mainly enforced through the work of human rights NGOs in Serbia.

Throughout the book, Obradović-Wochnic highlights the failures of transitional justice initiatives in Serbia, contrasting them to the experiences and expectations of the general public. In doing so, she purposely avoids distinguishing between “our” and “their” victims and crimes, which sometimes leads to prima facie contradictions. For example, she is unable to decide whether the media in Serbia did or did not show atrocities during the war, since both claims were supported by respondents. The possibility that both are true, since crimes against Serbs were presented in detail while other crimes were silenced, is left unmentioned. Careful reading of other, sometimes overlong excerpts from interviews supports this conclusion, since only once does a detailed depiction of a crime, followed by emotional and moral disgust, not refer to Serbian victims. Although additional rigor in argumentation might be welcomed, the book still offers an important insight into the narratives about the past shared by those “who observed it, or experienced it in subtle and complicated ways” (223). In the attempt to look beyond the dominance of ethnic nationalism in Serbia, it balances silences with denials, merging them into convincing, albeit exculpatory, narratives about the past.

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Peacebuilding in Practice: Local Experience in Two Bosnian Towns. By Adam Moore. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013. xii, 225 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Maps. \$45.95, hard bound.

Mostar and Brčko, the two Bosnian towns that are the subject of this study, are generally seen as the loci of peacebuilding projects that produced quite different outcomes. Each was the focus of intense conflict and ethnic cleansing during the 1992–95 war, and both were de facto partitioned by the end of it. Both towns were also the subject of intense international involvement aimed not only at rebuilding them physically but also uniting them socially and politically. Yet the intense international involvement in Mostar is generally seen as a failure, the city remaining largely divided physically, socially, and politically between Croats and Bosniaks. Brčko, on the other hand, is often seen as an example of a more successful intervention. In this book, Adam Moore provides a careful analysis of the differences in peacebuilding projects and their outcome in the two towns.

Methodologically, *Peacebuilding in Practice* is an exemplary study of postwar Bosnia. Moore engaged in eighteen months of fieldwork between 2004 and 2012, gain-