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Review of: Enduring Violence: Ladina Women's Lives in Guatemala

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cussion of peasant opposition to collectivization. Unfortunately, we receive little information about what motivated women to take on the risks that men would not. Generally, detailed discussions of changing gender norms and transformations are given short shrift. Furthermore, in the later chapters that discuss the establishment of GACs (the Romanian variant of the Soviet-style kolkhoz), we learn very little about the cultural or intellectual life in these villages. One might consider this local-level situation essential to the relative success or failure of the state's goals, including the inculcation of national ideology and socialist values. Last, while chapters 7 and 8 do include discussion of Romania's multiethnic population—especially the interethnic relations between Hungarians, Germans, and Roma (Gypsies) and their status shifts—one never gets a strong sense of what the most serious ethnic issues were at this time. Perhaps conflict was subdued, but if so, this point itself should be articulated explicitly.

These structural and content criticisms aside, *Peasants under Siege* presents Romanian collectivization vividly and grippingly. Readers gain a masterful interpretation of the extent to which the Romanian government succeeded in upsetting and changing rural social relations and culture in ways that sutured strategies such as physical violence, material incentives, mind games, kin surrogacy, ethnic manipulation, the undermining of religious and parental authority, and so on. The organization seems logical and well thought out.

Kligman and Verdery take pains to point out what aspects of their subject they are able to discuss authoritatively and what remains for future study, which topics they feel are appropriate topics to consider and which must await other types of studies. They express a good deal of humility in rendering judgments and in trying to decide what the communist interlude may have meant for rural Romanians beyond the awful experiences of collectivization. Some scholars may find this approach an overly experiential take on communism, but Kligman and Verdery are correct to restrict their understanding of this period to the representation of their interviewees' opinions and recollections as well as to their own learned interpretations of Romanian archives and collectivization scholarship. Their efforts result in a tremendous contribution to our knowledge of collectivization in the 20th century.

Enduring Violence: Ladina Women's Lives in Guatemala. By Cecilia Menjivar. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2011. Pp. xiv+288. \$60.00 (cloth); \$24.95 (paper).

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With a history of colonial and neocolonial exploitation, a 36-year civil war (1960–96), genocide, and most recently rising homicide rates and an

epidemic of femicide (the killing of women because they are women), Guatemala tragically serves as an excellent case study for examining the mutually constituted forms and effects of political, personal, economic, and social violence. By pointing to the structures that perpetuate such social ills as poor health care, illiteracy, under- and unemployment, sexism, and classism, Cecilia Menjívar uses her book *Enduring Violence* to shed light on the multiple sources of violence that circumscribe women's lives. As Menjívar convincingly demonstrates, the process of identifying and studying institutionalized and structural (and thus less visible) sources of violence as opposed to focusing solely on the more obvious manifestations of gender-based violence related to physical pain and violation, such as domestic abuse and rape, is essential for understanding the broader framework of suffering that women endure.

Menjívar adroitly situates her study within the rich and complex scholarship concerning violence, which in turn informs her theoretical framework. In the process, she makes a valuable contribution to Guatemalan scholarship. Although she does not place her findings as explicitly within the context of postbellum Guatemala or the political violence that preceded it, as such studies of violence as Kevin Lewis O'Neill and Kedron Thomas's *Securing the City: Neoliberalism, Space, and Insecurity in Postwar Guatemala* (Duke University Press, 2011) or Walter E. Little and Timothy J. Smith's *Mayas in Postwar Guatemala: Harvest of Violence Revisited* (University of Alabama Press, 2009) have done, she offers a sophisticated analysis of "the kind of violence that does not shock the observer because it is part of the everyday" (p. 4). As nonindigenous females living in eastern Guatemala, ladinas like the ones Menjívar studied in the department of Jalapa have largely been overlooked in a Guatemalan scholarship dominated by historical and anthropological studies of Mayas in central and western Guatemala. Only recently have scholars begun to expand this geographic limitation (e.g., Brent E. Metz, *Ch'orti'-Maya Survival in Eastern Guatemala: Indigeneity in Transition* [University of New Mexico Press, 2006]) and ethnic focus (e.g., Charles R. Hale, *Mas Que un Indio [More Than an Indian]: Racial Ambivalence and Neoliberal Multiculturalism in Guatemala* [School of American Research, 2006] and Marta Elena Casaús Arzú, *Guatemala: Linaje y Racismo* [F&G Editores, 1995]). *Enduring Violence* is a welcome contribution to this burgeoning literature.

To understand the different contexts in which women are marginalized, Menjívar focuses her attention on marriage, motherhood, malnutrition and other health problems, work, and reputations (like other scholars, she recognizes gossip as a source of women's empowerment as well as their oppression). In one of the most provocative chapters, Menjívar points to the ways religion reinforces structures of violence. Without negating the benefits Guatemalan women have derived from Catholicism and Protestantism, she points to the ways religious doctrines, leaders, congregations, and even spirituality encourage women to endure their suffering

and even accept some responsibility for it. One ladina told her: "The Lord has helped me to be a better person, quieter, a really docile person" (p. 218). The very support that pastors, priests, and community members provide often discourages women from confronting the abusive men and institutionalized inequalities that wreak havoc their lives.

Throughout her book, Menjívar allows women's voices to point to the structures, institutions, and norms that circumscribe them even if they do not necessarily draw a causal relationship between these forces and their own privations. Listening (and at times participating) astutely, Menjívar is careful not to portray these ladinás as obtuse even though their reluctance to criticize structures of violence and relate those structures to their own suffering stands in stark contrast to other *Guatemaltecas*. Q'eqchi'-Maya women in the western highlands, for example, recognized capitalism and imperialism as sources of their poverty and marginalization (e.g., Greg Grandin, *The Last Colonial Massacre: Latin America in the Cold War* [University of Chicago Press, 2011]).

By studying Kaqchikel-Maya women in the department of Chimaltenango, Menjívar attempts to draw comparisons across ethnic lines that might explain such distinct worldviews. Most often she finds ladinás' situations to be similar to those of their indigenous counterparts in the western highlands. When she discovers distinctions, at times she fails to apply the same critical lens to indigenous women that makes her study of ladinás so enlightening. For example, whereas ladinás complained that poverty compelled them to work outside the home, indigenous women viewed their extradomestic labor as "natural" (p. 190). But Menjívar does not explore how Maya women's labor became naturalized. Can it be traced to a history of forced labor mechanisms or Maya women's long-standing dominance of such independent income-producing professions as market vending and midwifery? What explains indigenous men's and women's valuation of female labor (see e.g., Walter Little, *Mayas in the Marketplace: Tourism, Globalization, and Cultural Identity* [University of Texas Press, 2004]) as compared to ladinós' tendency to discount it?

Although Menjívar contends that she does not want to obscure women's agency, she offers only fleeting glances of female empowerment. Providing a fuller picture of the ways women advanced their own agendas or at least minimized their marginalization would have underscored her larger point about how complex, complicated, and interrelated the micro and macro forces and sources of violence were by showing that at times they were contradictory. For example, Menjívar argues that "the criminal justice system reinforce[s] and formalize[s] violent structures" (p. 47) and that the "law formalizes deep inequalities" (p. 235). Both points are well taken, but ignoring how women deploy the legal system to, for example, escape abusive relationships or expand their autonomy simplifies the complex nature of hegemonic relations. In the same vein, exploring the lives and logic of women who responded to their privations with violence would have enriched her analysis. These critiques aside, Menjívar succeeds in

her goal of underscoring “the need to open up the analytic lens to include a wider range of the sources of suffering in examinations of violence” (p. 238). Indeed, she provides a framework for this exploration in Guatemala and elsewhere.

Class, Individualization, and Late Modernity: In Search of the Reflexive Worker. By Will Atkinson. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010. Pp. viii+245. \$85.00.

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As the title of this volume suggests, *Class, Individualization, and Late Modernity* is concerned both with an analysis of the reworking of class in late modern societies and with the changing place of class as a category of analysis within the discipline of sociology. Taking on various social theories that in one way or another place reflexivity at their core, especially those associated with Ulrich Beck, Zygmunt Bauman, Margaret Archer, and Anthony Giddens, Will Atkinson sets himself the task of testing a key tenet of such theories against what he terms the “ultimate arbiter” (p. 3): empirical research. More specifically, Atkinson sets himself the task of empirically assessing the claim common to such analyses that collective modes of existence such as class are on the wane as agents are increasingly compelled to choose how to live and act. Thus Atkinson explores the thesis that class may no longer “constrain or enable life decisions . . . and no longer produces taken-for-granted ways of living that shape behavior, values, views, and identities” (p. 2). In so doing, he also questions what he sees to be the most problematic aspect of such propositions, namely the decentering of class in sociological analysis.

To proceed with this undertaking Atkinson goes in search of what he terms the “reflexive worker” (p. 3). Drawing on empirical research carried out in the United Kingdom and specifically, on interviews exploring educational and work histories as well as the tastes and classificatory habits of 55 diversely positioned subjects, *Class, Individualization, and Late Modernity* explores to what extent class structures life courses. As this research agenda suggests, Atkinson’s engagement with the reflexivity literature is very much framed through Bourdieu’s relational sociology, and before proceeding to the empirical chapters, he maps out the exact nature of his use of Bourdieu. While recognizing that Bourdieu’s social theory has been drawn upon productively in recent forms of class analysis, Atkinson nonetheless insists that such analyses have done so in a partial fashion. In his view, the consequence of this shortcoming is that many analyses drawing on Bourdieu suffer from inconsistencies, gaps, and misunderstandings. Classes, for example, are understood as actually existing entities with substantial properties rather than radically relational phe-