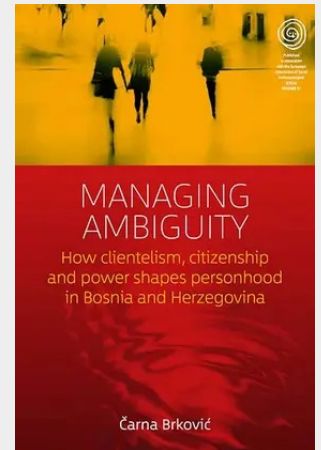


Managing Ambiguity

How Clientelism, Citizenship, and Power Shape Personhood in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Why do people turn to personal connections to get things done? Exploring the role of favors in social welfare systems in postwar, postsocialist Bosnia and Herzegovina, this volume provides a new theoretical angle on links between ambiguity and power. It demonstrates that favors were not an instrumental tactic of survival, nor a way to reproduce oneself as a moral person. Instead, favors enabled the insertion of personal compassion into the heart of the organization of welfare. Managing Ambiguity follows how neoliberal insistence on local community, flexibility, and self-responsibility was translated into clientelist modes of relating and back, and how this fostered a specific mode of power.

First ethnographic study of favors in a former Yugoslav country; First ethnographic study of a welfare system in a former Yugoslav country; It explores how the same people pursue favors across several fields (social protection, healthcare, humanitarianism), rather than just to focus on one field; It offers a new theoretical interpretation of the role of ambiguity in neoliberalism.



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