

THE MEMORIALIZATION OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN CONFLICT AND WAR

by

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ABSTRACT

This paper investigates the similarities and differences in memorializing wartime sexual violence through three case studies. The first is Comfort Women memorials in the United States, the second case study looks at the national memorial in Srebrenica in the wake of the Bosnian genocide and its counter-memorial, and the third case study examines the differences between national and counter-memorials after the Rwandan genocide. This paper also examines how and why the meaning of the memorials has changed or why a counter-memorial was established. It relies on newspaper articles, city and county government documents, and interviews with individuals important to the process of creating the monuments as well as those who opposed and continue to oppose the monuments. This paper reveals an absence of rape discourse within war memorialization that is gendered and problematic.

This research examines the way in which the collective memory of war and genocide has been established and preserved at memorials in the United States, Bosnia, and Rwanda. It examines multiple memorial sites dedicated to Comfort Women of World War II, the Rwandan genocide and civil war, and the Bosnia-Herzegovina genocide and civil war. This study explores the way in which these memorials depict gender through different mediums and finds reveal that paternalistic norms and virtuous maternal tropes of memory play significant roles in post-war nation building. Most importantly, this research reveals the absence of rape discourse in the memorialization of war and genocide across a span of seventy years and across three regions of the world. As these examples demonstrate, many people have faced great challenges in commemorating sexual atrocities in the aftermath of mass trauma. This paper melds the study of collective memory, history, and political science together through a feminist lens. An interdisciplinary approach is critical to understanding how wartime atrocities are addressed and memorialized, and why select atrocities, such as sexual violence, were ignored.

Comfort Women

The world was shocked in 1991 when three Korean women who had been abducted into Japanese military brothels during World War II filed a class-action lawsuit in a Tokyo Court. After a half century of shame, anonymity, and hardship, the aged survivors were ready to tell their personal stories and to demand an apology and reparations from the Japanese government on behalf of an estimated 100,000 victims. Halfway across the world in 2010 the first Comfort Women memorial within the United States was erected in New Jersey; now there are ten monuments to Korean Comfort Women within the United States, which has the most monuments in the world outside of South Korea commemorating the suffering of Comfort Women survivors. The meaning of the memorials has changed because the groups and individuals who support them have diversified, the Comfort Women issue has become better known, and the location of the memorials has changed from small and out of the way to large and in the middle of high traffic areas.

“Comfort Women” is a term that describes the “highly organized trafficking system run by the Japanese Imperial Army using the ruse of legitimate jobs for good pay in destitute communities” to obtain sex slaves in WWII.¹ The term “Comfort Women” is the official title given to the survivors of sexual servitude to the Japanese Imperial Military during WWII. The Comfort System did not occur organically; it was a planned policy initiative by top governmental and military officials to stop the spread of venereal disease and mass rapes in the civilian populations of occupied territories.² Most of the women were Korean but a sizeable portion of the women were also Chinese, Filipina, and Thai.³ At the end of the war, the Japanese Army abandoned these women, destroyed the majority of documents about the system before Allied forces arrived, and covered up and hid the women’s plight from the world.

The women’s experiences remained largely hidden until the 1991 class-action case, which sparked international calls for redress. Shortly thereafter in January 1992, when the Japanese Prime Minister visited Korea, former Comfort Women began a protest that has continued each Wednesday to this day, to demand an official apology. Although the Japanese government has not apologized for the Comfort Women system, in July 1992, it released the first report on the Comfort Women issue and admitted the involvement of the Japanese Imperial Military in organizing comfort stations. A caveat to this public admittance of wrongdoing was that the government denied the use of coercion during recruitment and refused to take legal responsibility. One year later, Japan released a second report that acknowledged coercion as part of the recruitment process but attributed the responsibility to private recruiters. In 1994, the Japanese government announced its plan to establish the Asian Women’s Fund (AWF) to provide financial assistance to former Comfort Women. Even in supporting the women, however, the Japanese government sidestepped claiming full responsibility for the Comfort

¹ Caroline Norma, *The Japanese Comfort Women and Sexual Slavery During the China and Pacific War* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2016), 2.

² Sven Saalrt and Wolfgang Schwentker, *The Power of Memory in Modern Japan* (Folkestone, UK: Global Oriental, 2008), 78.

³ Norma, *The Japanese Comfort Women and Sexual Slavery During the China and Pacific War*, 24.

System and the wrongs committed against Comfort Women by having the money come from private donations and not as a form of state compensation. The victims strongly protested against the fund, but the Japanese government refused to change tactics.

The United States joined other countries that had voiced official complaints against the Japanese government by applying the Holtzman Amendment to Japanese war criminals in 1996.⁴ This act had originally stated that anyone fundamentally involved in in the Nazi regime or government would be prohibited entry into the United States or if already in the country, would be deported.⁵ After 1996 the act also applied to Japanese war criminals from World War II. Over a decade passed before the Comfort Women issue came to the forefront of American politics again. The U.S. House of Representatives adopted Resolution 121 in 2007 and demanded the formal acknowledgement and apology of Japan for its involvement in sexual slavery.⁶ State governments, non-governmental organizations, and women's rights groups all banded together in the name of pushing Japan to not only recognize what its governmental/military leaders had done, but also to apologize and offer retributions to the surviving women. These international pressures did not change the official stance of the Japanese government on Comfort Women, but they did lead to the formation of memorials throughout the United States.

Beginning in 2010, immigrant populations in the United States started dedicating monuments to commemorate the suffering of Comfort Women.⁷ By 2015 there were eight Comfort Women monuments in the United States, more than any other country but South Korea.⁸ The monuments differ in size, accessibility, meaning, and community support for their

⁴ Margaret D. Stetz and Bonnie B.C. Oh, eds, *Legacies of the Comfort Women of World War II*, M.E. Sharpe (London: England, 2001), 152.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ United States Congress. House. Committee on Foreign Affairs. *Protecting the Human Rights of Comfort Women*. By Tom Lantos. One Hundred Tenth Cong., First sess. H. Doc. 110-16. Washington: U.S. G.P.O., 2007. 1-92

⁷ "New Jersey City Unveils "Comfort Women" Monument." 2014. *Jiji Press English News Service*. And 'Comfort Women' Monument Must Stay. *The Record (Bergen County, NJ)* 2012.

⁸ Elizabeth Hoeffel, Sonya Rastogi, Hasin Shahid, and Myoung Ouk Kim. "The Asian Population: 2010 - Census.gov." <https://www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/briefs/c2010br-11.pdf>.

construction. They span from coast to coast with three in California; one each in Michigan, New Jersey, and Virginia; three in New York; and one in Washington, D.C. In 2010, over 50% of the Korean American population resided in the states of California, New York, New Jersey, Texas, and Virginia and D.C. are in the top ten states/districts for the fastest growing Korean population in the United States.⁹ Looking at this data it is clear that the memorials are overwhelmingly located in areas with a high population density for Korean and Chinese immigrants, as well as Korean-Americans and Chinese-Americans. The meaning of the memorials has changed because the groups and individuals who support them have diversified, the Comfort Women issue has become better known, and the location of the memorials has changed from small and out of the way to large and in the middle of high traffic areas. Two specific memorials in Palisades Park, New Jersey and San Francisco, California, the first and latest memorials, respectively, highlight these changes.

The first memorial built in the United States in honor of comfort women was dedicated at the public library of Palisades Park in Bergen County, New Jersey on the 23rd of October, 2010.¹⁰ Original support for the monument came from Mayor James Rotundo; Kim Dong-Suk, a councilman of the Korean American Voters Council (KACE); and local artist Steven Cavallo.¹¹ In a town with over half of its total residents being first or second generation Korean, located in a county where the Korean population accounted for 36.6% of the total population and the first and second generation Japanese population only 8.3%, the monument had significant support.¹² In communities with higher levels of first and second Japanese residents opposition to monuments was higher and controversy more likely but not always inevitable. The monument is

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Chloe Park. "Japanese Effort to Remove N.J. 'Comfort Women' Monument Angers Koreans." *Voices of New York*, May 10, 2012. <https://voicesofny.org/2012/05/japanese-effort-to-remove-nj-comfort-women-monument-angers-koreans/>

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² "Palisades Park Monument to WWII 'Comfort Women' Sparks Historical Tug-of-War," *The Record* (Bergen County, NJ), May 9, 2012. <http://archive.northjersey.com/story-archives/palisades-park-monument-to-wwii-comfort-women-sparks-historical-tug-of-war-1.1202759>; Asian American Federation of New York Census Information Center, *Census Profile: New Jersey's Asian American Population*, 2000.

small, about three by two feet, and is simple in design.¹³ It is a granite slab with a black plaque that memorializes the more than 200,000 women and girls who were forced to be Comfort Women and simultaneously shows that the entire county of Bergen was behind the dedication of the monument since it was supported through both community and government engagement.¹⁴



Figure 1: Palisades Park Comfort Women Memorial during Korean Lawmaker Visit

The monument seemed to be forgotten after the initial unveiling due to its obscure location and small presence, that is, until May 6, 2012 when two delegations of Japanese officials from the Liberal Democratic Party visited Palisades Park to discuss important issues involving “Japanese-U.S. relations.”¹⁵ Upon arrival the true issue was confirmed and demands were laid out with the intent of having the Comfort Women memorial removed.¹⁶ These efforts

¹³ “Palisades Park Monument to WWII ‘Comfort Women’ Sparks Historical Tug-of-War,” 2012.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Kirk Semple, “In New Jersey, Memorial for ‘Comfort Women’ Deepens Old Animosity,” *New York Times*, May 18, 2012. <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/05/19/nyregion/monument-in-palisades-park-nj-irritates-japanese-officials.html>

¹⁶ Ibid.

resulted in a reawakened interest in the monument by the community and the flat refusal of the mayor and deputy mayor to have the monument removed.¹⁷

In response to the Liberal Democratic Party's visit, three Korean lawmakers laid flowers at the memorial on May 9th, in front of a large crowd of Korean-Americans who fervently supported the monument.¹⁸ The mayor and deputy mayor stated at this event to the Korean lawmakers and gathered community members that "the monument was not meant to blame the current Japanese government, but that it was an education tool to teach younger generations about the tragedies of war."¹⁹ This emphasis on the monument being an educational tool instead of a political pressure on the current Japanese government to right past wrongs is clear. The chief of the local Korean-American Parents Association Mrs. Yun Hee Choi condemned the Japanese officials' efforts at removing the monument and stated that "The purpose of creating the monument is to acknowledge the importance of women's rights all over the world and to keep our future generations from repeating it."²⁰ The meaning of the memorial still retains its original educational tone within this statement, but for Mrs. Hee Choi the monument is also an acknowledgement of *all* women's suffering. Although the monument had been intended as an educational tool for current and future generations, for some people within the community, its meaning was expanding. For the Japanese Government's Liberal Democratic Party, the monument was not merely an educational tool but a form of soft power meant to coerce the current government into following the stipulations of the House Resolution 121. It came to symbolize an opposition to their party's view by stating there is evidence the Comfort System existed as a state sanctioned entity that was supported by the military and that the Comfort women were not prostitutes.²¹

¹⁷ Park, "Japanese Effort to Remove N.J. 'Comfort Women Monument Angers Koreans," 2012.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ "Palisades Park Monument to WWII 'Comfort Women' Sparks Historical Tug-of-War," 2012.

²⁰ Park, "Japanese Effort to Remove N.J. 'Comfort Women Monument Angers Koreans," 2012.

²¹ Walden Bello, "The Hashimoto Controversy and Japan's Failure to Come to Terms with its Past," *Inquirer*, May 17, 2013. <http://opinion.inquirer.net/52759/the-hashimoto-controversy-and-japans-failure-to-come-to-terms-with-its-past>

Just four months later, District 38 (Bergen and Passaic counties) introduced resolution 159 in the New Jersey legislature. This resolution, passed on September 24, 2012, condemned the Comfort System and commemorated the Comfort Women while supporting U.S. House Resolution 121 that had been passed five years earlier. Resolution 159 ends with a statement that “calls upon the Japanese government to accept the historical responsibility for the sexual enslavement of Comfort Women by the Japanese Army and to educate future generations about these crimes.”²² It is clear that for New Jersey this memorial’s meaning had become a political statement in addition to its original purpose as an educational tool.

In early 2016, three important actors in KACE, the 1492 Green Club that supported the construction of the monument and is in charge of its continued upkeep, and monument artist Steve Cavallo issued a joint statement on the original intent of the monument at a press conference in response to the Korea-Japan agreement on Comfort Women. Under this agreement brokered in December 2015, the Japanese government agreed to make a one-time contribution to a foundation established by the South Korean government that would answer to the needs of Comfort Women. Both governments also agreed that the implementation of this deal would represent the “final and irreversible” resolution to this issue.²³

Creators of the memorial originally stated it was meant to be used as an educational tool for future generations to learn about past abuses of human rights. It’s original proponents made no mention of the need for the Japanese government to address past wrongs and there were no political undertones.²⁴ But, as the political environment changed, the memorial’s backers expanded its meanings. Currently, this monument represents many things to different people within and outside of the Palisades and Bergen communities. The memorial was established to recognize human rights abuses, seen as a political symbol, and officially regarded as an

²² State of New Jersey 215th Legislature, Resolution No. 159, Bergen, NJ. 2012.

²³ "Announcement by Foreign Ministers of Japan and the Republic of Korea at the Joint Press Occasion." Ministry of Foreign Affairs: Human Rights and Democracy in the International Society (Basic Concept of Japan). https://www.mofa.go.jp/a_o/na/kr/page4e_000364.html.

²⁴ Han Seo, “In NJ, Reaction to the Korea-Japan Agreement on Comfort Women,” *Voices of New York*, January 8, 2016. <https://voicesofny.org/2016/01/in-nj-reaction-to-the-korea-japan-agreement-on-comfort-women/>

educational tool for the community to learn from. The impact on the community has been subtle but the memorial's status as the first Comfort Women memorial within the United States and the community's reaction to the Japanese government's pushback to the memorial cannot be understated since it laid the groundwork for future memorials around the country.

As time went on, each subsequent memorial constructed around the country became bigger and had multiple meanings attached to it. By 2015 there were nine memorials to Comfort Women in small cities around the country and on July 21st the City of San Francisco, California Board of Supervisors considered the "Urging the Establishment of a Memorial for Comfort Women" resolution.²⁵ This was the first time a major city had considered creating a memorial for Comfort Women, and from its inception this memorial was the most well-known and multi-faceted in the country. The resolution references past resolutions adopted by San Francisco and the United States such as Resolution No.842-01 from 2001 that urged the government of Japan "to fully acknowledge and apologize for Japan's wartime atrocities", House Resolution 121, and the 2013 San Francisco Resolution No. 218-13 that "condemned Japan's denial of its system of sexual enslavement during World War II and calling for justice for Comfort Women."²⁶ The resolution does much more than just cite past resolutions from the city and national government though. It weaves each resolution and the meanings of past memorials into a comprehensive union. The San Francisco memorial is the first to create a meaning that addresses the rising issue of modern day human trafficking, the decades long movement to strengthen trust in the global community and justice for human rights, education for future generations about past trauma, as well as the rising importance of immigrant communities and women's organizations.²⁷

²⁵ San Francisco Board of Supervisors, *Resolution Urging the Establishment of a Memorial for "Comfort Women"*, No. 342-15, San Francisco, CA, 2015.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

Community support for the memorial was strong and widespread across many different organizations and ethnicities, and on September 22, 2015 the resolution passed.²⁸ The Rape of Nanking Redress Coalition, the Comfort Women Justice Coalition, San Francisco Interfaith Council, Filipina Women's Network, Veterans for Peace, the Korean American Forum of America, and the Japanese Cultural Community Center of Northern California all showed strong support for the monument. In a city with 31% of the population being Asian and 20% of that number Chinese and 5% Filipino it's not surprising to see support for the memorial since others around the country have been supported by large Asian populations.²⁹ What is surprising, though, is this is the first instance in which a memorial was considered in a city where the Korean population is almost non-existent at 1% and lower than the Japanese population at 1.5%.³⁰ The overwhelming support for the monument outside of official organizations came from the Filipino and Chinese communities, a departure from the usually dominant Korean support for Comfort Women memorials. This isn't to say that the Korean community of San Francisco did not support the monument, but that the grassroots effort was not started by that demographic.

The Japanese-American community felt that the two amendments that had been added to the resolution at their behest were not enough. They publicly voiced these opinions at the hearings before the resolution was passed, bringing up concerns that without the other amendments added to the resolution that it would not "reduce the hatred, division, and racism the current tone could create."³¹ The two amendments that were added to the resolution noted that victimization of women did not and had not only occurred in Japan and that Japanese-

²⁸ Tomo Hirai, "S.F. Board of Supes Unanimously Passes 'Comfort Women' Memorial Resolution," *Nichi Bei Weekly*, October 1, 2015. <http://www.nichibei.org/2015/10/s-f-board-of-supes-unanimously-passes-comfort-women-memorial-resolution/> and

San Francisco Board of Supervisors, *Resolution Urging the Establishment of a Memorial for "Comfort Women"*, No. 342-15, San Francisco, CA, 2015.

²⁹ "San Francisco, California Population and Demographics Resources," *AreaConnect*, <http://sanfrancisco.areaconnect.com/statistics.htm>

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ Hirai, "S.F. Board of Supes unanimously passes 'comfort women' memorial resolution," 2015.

Americans were not to blame for Japan's past crimes and had experienced their own injustice in America itself.³² Throughout the hearings some members of the Japanese American community continued to deny the existence of the Comfort System.³³ Supervisor David Campos responded to that "the denial of what happened is a disservice to the Japanese-American community... a disservice to the people of Japan... to all people as human beings" and that the continued denial of a historical fact meant that "we do need a monument, because if people are denying it after all these years, we need a testament to what happened."³⁴ The executive director of the Japanese Cultural and Community Center of Northern California threw in his and his organization's support of the monument stating that "the Comfort Women issue has nothing to do with the Japanese American experience" and that the amendments "have no business being in the resolution, because they have nothing to do with crimes against women in Asia during WWII."³⁵ He finished by saying "it's not our memorial, it's theirs."³⁶

Various groups came together to support the memorial but did so for varying reasons, with different intentions, and over time the meaning grew complex. Supervisor Eric Mar, a key sponsor of the resolution, believed that it was time to "send a clear message of justice, of compassion, and of unity in saying never again" to the world and argued that the memorial was the first step in heightening awareness of human rights abuses.³⁷ Proponents believed that the memorial would send a message "calling for an apology and restitution to Comfort Women directly from the Japanese government."³⁸ Others believed that it was important to memorialize the sacrifices and courage of Comfort Women who spoke out about the crimes committed against them and which helped lead "to the United Nations declaring rape during war as a crime

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Eric Johnston, "San Francisco unanimously adopts measure to build 'comfort women' memorial," *Japan Times News*, Sep. 23, 2015. <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2015/09/23/national/politics-diplomacy/san-francisco-unanimously-adopts-measure-to-build-comfort-women-memorial/#.WFE1V9UrKUK>

³⁸ Eric Johnston, "Comfort Women' Statues Spur Debate," *Japan Times News*, Feb. 27, 2014. <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2014/02/27/national/comfort-women-statues-spur-debate#.WFEwCNUrKUK>

against humanity.”³⁹ San Francisco’s objective for the memorial stated in the resolution, was “to create a public memorial in memory of those girls and women who suffered immeasurable pain and humiliation as sex slaves and as a sacred place for remembrance, reflection, remorsefulness, and atonement for generations to come.”⁴⁰

An aspect of this memorial that sets it apart from all preceding memorials is the objective of creating a “sacred place.” A spiritual purpose attached to a Comfort Women memorial is unprecedented; all previous memorials in remembrance of Comfort Women had served as educational tools and many had included the connection to modern day sex trafficking, but this Comfort Women memorial stands alone as a place that is sacred. This raises the issue of Comfort Women to a different level, making it more than just a historical fact. This memorial seeks to prove that an important violation of human rights took place that has not been properly acknowledged or rectified. It is evident that the memorial seeks to not only encourage remembrance and reflection but also *remorsefulness and atonement*. The only group possible that could make atonement is the current Japanese government. The memorial is meant to be more than an educational tool or a form of soft power to coerce the Japanese government to



right a wrong. This memorial is a sacred place and stands as a testament to the memory of Comfort Women who were almost a forgotten aspect of history.

Figure 2: San Francisco Comfort Women Memorial

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ “Comfort Women” Justice Coalition, “Comfort Women San Francisco Memorial Call for Artists,” “*Comfort Women*” Justice Coalition. Last modified July 2016. <http://sfgov.org/arts/sites/default/files/Comfort%20Women%20Memorial%20Project%20Synopsis%207.11.16.pdf>

The movement to create memorials for Comfort Women in the United States began with small Korean-American interest groups and in communities with high populations of Korean-Americans and Korean immigrants. The first memorials were small, placed in areas that didn't receive high traffic and were forgotten until Japanese officials attempted to have them removed. The national interest in memorializing the memory of Comfort Women increased as Asian American populations also grew and attempts to bury the history of comfort women heightened. More recent memorials were better funded, placed in more visible areas, larger, and received more support outside of the Korean-American community. Korean interest groups, Chinese interest groups, Filipino interest groups, human rights supporters, and feminist organizations gained traction with city governments and fought for memorials to ensure that "history is not buried" or whitewashed.⁴¹ The memorials' meanings also expanded from being a reminder of the past and an educational tool to connecting the history of Japan to modern day human trafficking in the United States. The meaning of the memorials became multifaceted as different organizations and segments of the population began attaching their own meanings. For some, these memorials are a reminder of the past and a warning for the future; for others, they are a way to draw parallels between world history and current events. For a growing number of people, the memorials transcend the space on which they were built and become a sacred place. Setting aside public space to commemorate the struggle that less than one percent of the American population is connected to isn't unprecedented; setting aside public space to commemorate the suffering of women victimized by sex trafficking is. As long as Japan does not take full responsibility for the Comfort System and formally apologize to the Comfort Women, larger cities will continue to create prominent memorials.

⁴¹ Jeonghyun, "Comfort Women Activism in the US," 2016.

Bosnia-Herzegovina

Between the years 1992 and 1995, the Muslims of Bosnia-Herzegovina were targeted by genocide. Bosnian Serbs attacked Bosniak-dominated towns in eastern Bosnia, forcibly expelling civilians from the region in a brutal process that the United Nations later identified as ethnic cleansing. By the end of 1993, Bosnian Serb forces controlled nearly three-quarters of the country, and by the summer of 1995 only three towns—Srebrenica, Zepa and Gorazde—remained under control of the Bosnian government. Although the violence was widespread across Bosnia, the genocide that took place in Srebrenica in 1995 has been regarded as the most violent period of the Balkan conflict and the worst European genocide since the Holocaust of World War II. Srebrenica was not only a refuge for close to 40,000 Muslims fleeing Serbian forces; it was also one of the United Nations (UN) “safe zones” that had been established by a UN resolution in 1993. Following the resolution, Srebrenica was placed under the protection of UN peacekeeping forces. However, the Dutch troops charged with protecting refugees who assembled in a battery factory failed to intervene when the Serbs invaded and have since been held responsible for allowing the Serbs to take control over the region. Once Srebrenica had fallen under Serbian control, Serbs took away and murdered at least 8,000 Muslim men, then left their bodies in mass graves throughout the Srebrenica countryside.⁴² Some of the women were forced into busses and taken away, many of whom survived under horrific conditions, including rape and physical abuse.⁴³ Within months of the massacre, the Dayton Peace Accords ended the war through the creation of a complicated geo-political entity that today comprises the country of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Bosnian Muslims had been targeted by Serbs due to the Serbian nationalist agenda that laid claim to the southern Slavic region of Bosnia after the break-up of Yugoslavia. This led to conflict since that area is home to mostly Bosnian Muslims, but also Croatians of Catholic

⁴² Selma Leydesdorff, *Surviving the Bosnian Genocide*. (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2011), 64.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

origin and Serbs who identify as Eastern Orthodox. Serbian nationalist narratives portrayed Bosnian Muslims as a threat to Serbian nationhood due to their supposed biological and cultural ties to the Turks who had brutally conquered the region in the past.⁴⁴ Serbs justified aggression against Bosnian Muslims by invoking past Ottoman oppression and portraying Bosnian Muslims as dangerous religious and racial outsiders who posed a substantial threat to Serbian nationhood and safety. This narrative was a complete construction meant to incite fear since Bosnian Muslims are overwhelmingly secular. The emphasis on religion was a response to an absence of other ethnic markers, such as language, territory, or physiology, which could be used to create a nationalized identity for Serbs separate from others in the region. This blurring of identity was spread by Serbian forces and supported by political leaders, the media, and religious figures who warned of the dangers of Bosnian Muslim domination.⁴⁵

The Srebrenica massacre represents the culmination of a Serbian policy of ethnic cleansing, with gender informing the goals of genocide in a number of ways. Bosnian Muslim men were enslaved, tortured, mutilated, and killed while Bosnian Muslim women were simultaneously enslaved, raped, tortured, mutilated, impregnated, and sometimes murdered.⁴⁶ It is no mistake that rape occurred in such high numbers, as Serbs believed forced pregnancy would expand the Serbian nation. These children could not belong to the mother's constructed ethnic group under the patriarchal norms of Serbian society, but would instead be Serbian due to the father's ethnic superiority and strength.⁴⁷ Post-war feminist critique considers both the death of men and the rape of women as acts of genocide even if the women survived because the intent was to destroy the culture and family of Bosnian Muslims.⁴⁸ By controlling the biological

⁴⁴ Ivan Ivekovic, "Nationalism and the Political Use and Abuse of Religion: The Politicization of Orthodoxy, Catholicism and Islam in Yugoslav Successor States." *Social Compass* 49, no. 4 (December 2002): 529.

⁴⁵ Gerard Powers, "Religion, Conflict and Prospects for Reconciliation in Bosnia, Croatia and Yugoslavia." *Journal of International Affairs* 50, no. 1 (1996): 242.

⁴⁶ Janet Liebman Jacobs. "Women, Genocide, and Memory: The Ethics of Feminist Ethnography in Holocaust Research." *Gender & Society* 18, no. 2 (April 2004): 231.

⁴⁷ Paul Kirby. "How Is Rape a Weapon of War? Feminist International Relations, Modes of Critical Explanation and the Study of Wartime Sexual Violence." *European Journal of International Relations* 19, no. 4 (December 2013): 803.

⁴⁸ Sherrie Russell-Brown. "Rape as an Act of Genocide." *Berkley Journal of International Law* 21, issue 2 (2003): 355.

production of Bosnian Muslim women, the Serbian military and government attempted to destroy all future chances of Bosnian Muslims surviving.

On October 25, 2000, the Office of the High Representative (OHR), the international governing body overseeing the administration of Bosnia-Herzegovina, designated land in Srebrenica for a memorial “to those who met their deaths in the July 1995 slaughter.”⁴⁹ This decision was extremely unpopular with Bosnian Serbs who maintained that they had acted in self-defense. They overwhelmingly resisted the creation of a memorial to genocide (especially within Serbian territory) that commemorated Muslim victimhood and Serbian criminality.⁵⁰ This battle of wills in how to remember the war resulted in a stalemate that only ended once the OHR decided that its decision would remain final and there would be a national memorial cemetery in Srebrenica to provide “the final resting place and a site for those who perished.”⁵¹

The prevailing reason for the establishment of a national monument in Srebrenica was through women’s activism. Women who survived the massacre at Srebrenica - predominately mothers and grandmothers - created the Mothers of Srebrenica to bring attention to the absence of a national monument to memorialize the genocide and civil war. They routinely engaged in protests and worked at bringing the limelight to their missing male family members using their status as “good women”. The one-dimensional identity of struggling widows and mothers gave a powerful strength to their demands. In addition to protests the Mothers sent out extensive polls and found that many citizens supported the creation of a national cemetery and memorial at the Srebrenica site because the physical location had such a strong connection to suffering and violence that it would never be the same again.⁵²

⁴⁹ Office of the High Representative (OHR) (2000) Decisions on the location of a cemetery and monument for the victims of Srebrenica. Available at: http://www.ohre.int/decisions/plipdec/default.asp?content_id=219.

⁵⁰ Johanna Mannergren Selimovic. “Making Peace, Making Memory: Peacebuilding and Politics of Remembrance at Memorials of Mass Atrocities.” *Peacebuilding* 1, no. 3 (September 2013): 345.

⁵¹ Office of the High Representative (OHR) (2000) Decisions on the location of a cemetery and monument for the victims of Srebrenica. Available at: http://www.ohre.int/decisions/plipdec/default.asp?content_id=219.

⁵² Olivia Simic. “A Tour of a Site of Genocide: Mothers, Bones and Borders.” *Journal of International Women’s Studies* 9 no. 3 (2008): 322.

Although women's activism catalyzed the establishment of a national memorial in Srebrenica, the space does not fully account for the suffering all Bosnian Muslims during the genocide. It is meant to be a space that memorializes the death of Muslim men and suffering of Muslim women at the hands of Serbian forces and includes a national cemetery and memorial museum. When approaching the official memorial grounds one must drive through land that has not been sanitized. Bombed out buildings and still deserted villages mark the route to Srebrenica. These ruins lend themselves to the feeling of a violated land and people; they are a precursor to the formal memorial and prompt the viewer to feel a solemn sense of stillness and destruction.



Figure 3: Bombed out building on road to memorial site

The national cemetery, constructed much like a war cemetery for fallen heroes, houses more than 6,000 grave sites for men and boys recovered from multiple mass graves over the years. Only recently have women been included within the cemetery as more mass graves are found around the countryside that include women.⁵³ Each grave site is marked with an identical marble obelisk, reminiscent of traditional Islamic grave stones. The men and boys are remembered as powerless victims who were not protected by the international community and therefore were unable to protect their families. This theme, the singular focus upon the male victims and their sacrifice, is echoed in the museum.

⁵³ Admir Muslimovic. "Srebrenica Victims Buried at Genocide Anniversary Commemoration" *Balkan Transnational Justice*, July 11, 2018. <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/srebrenica-victims-buried-at-genocide-anniversary-commemoration-07-11-2018>.

The museum is within the original battery factory that housed the refugees, where they were to have been protected by UN peace keepers. The factory still has almost all of the original machinery to preserve the authenticity of the space. All of the exhibits in the museum seek to show the suffering of the murdered and tortured sons and fathers as well as the suffering



Figure 4: Obelisk grave marker

endured by surviving widows and mothers. Select men's lives are featured through glass cases that contain personal belongings and plaques that tell the viewer a short account of the deceased's life and how he was murdered. An assortment of artifacts and visual imagery preserve the memory of the acute suffering many men experienced throughout the genocide. The one exhibit

dedicated to female victims focuses on the trauma of being separated from family members and shows scores of photos of women with young children sitting in small groups together, being forced to march while holding their belongings and children, or crying after their last separation from male children and husbands. Near the end of this exhibit, videos show select women recounting their experiences and talking about the prolonged suffering they and their families live through to this day because of the loss of their male relatives.⁵⁴

Women's victimhood is the only frame of remembrance used within the national memorial at Srebrenica. It is important to note the suffering experienced by women who were mothers and wives, but the depictions of women are one-dimensional and not completely accurate. Women's suffering included much more than losing a husband, father or child. It is

⁵⁴ Ibid.

estimated that as many as 60,000 women were raped.⁵⁵ From the start to finish of the war, soldiers of the Serbian military were actively encouraged to rape Bosnian Muslim women.⁵⁶ One major site of gang rape early in the civil war was in 1992 in the town of Foča.⁵⁷ Girls and women were transferred to detention centers which would become known as rape camps where Serb forces physically and psychologically tortured the women and girls in a systematic manner.⁵⁸ The soldiers were given free access to the detention centers and were allowed to select a girl or woman to do with what they pleased. These women were raped repeatedly and treated as the property of Serb soldiers. In many cases women were forced to cook and clean after their captors, were sold to other men, and some were murdered.⁵⁹ Throughout Bosnia, rape camps were set up, including at Srebrenica, but still these atrocities and this unique form of suffering goes unacknowledged.

Srebrenica is a site of national remembrance and stands as the main symbol for Muslim suffering. It ignores the acute suffering of thousands of women and has a single-minded focus on the massacre of thousands of men and the loss suffered through by the women. This one form of suffering has become the international focal point for remembrance. Other forms of ethnic cleansing and genocidal abuse have been effectively erased which has dire consequences for future reform and current post-conflict healing. There is no mention of sexual violence at the memorial, the enslavement of women is ignored, and the hundreds of women who died goes unacknowledged.

Gender is vital when analyzing the national memorial since it is the defining characteristic of the creation of Bosnian Muslim men's victimhood. The cemetery and museum force the viewer to remember the men through their heroic deaths, while the women are

⁵⁵Michele Hirsch. "Conflict Profile: Bosnia." *Women Under Siege*. February 8, 2012. <https://www.womensmediacenter.com/women-under-siege/conflicts/bosnia>.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ Alexandra Stiglmayer. "The Rapes in Bosnia-Herzegovina – Alexandra Stiglmayer." *Remembering Srebrenica*. June 16, 2017. <https://www.srebrenica.org.uk/what-happened/the-rapes-in-bosnia-herzegovina-alexandra-stiglmayer/>.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

depicted only as mothers who suffered the loss of their husbands. Women and men often remember the trauma of war and genocide differently, a phenomenon that has been termed “split memory.”⁶⁰ The memorial at Srebrenica is a good example of this split memory on display through exhibits that completely erase the over 50,000 mostly female victims of mass rape.⁶¹ Although Serbs used mass rape and forced pregnancy throughout the civil war to achieve ethnic cleansing, the national memorial fails to even allude to the practice. Certain wartime atrocities almost solely experienced by women have been effectively silenced.

While the Mothers of Srebrenica continues to be silent about wartime rape, the Association of Women Victims of War (AWVW) established a counter memorial that’s sole focus is wartime rape. The AWVW created a database with an archive of all known incidences of sexual violence during the genocide. It is meant to be used by anyone in the public and is used as an educational tool.⁶² In addition to this database, the AWVW created a physical structure for remembrance, a small building that has documents and photographs hung on every available piece of space located



Figure 5: Bookcase at AWVW Memorial Site

in Sarajevo. On the first wall there are a number of photos of the few women who have publicly accused men of rape, next to their photo shows a photo of the man they have accused. The next exhibit shows photos from the international war crimes tribunal and of the physical locations where women were sexually abused. Another exhibit is of newspaper clippings covering any court case about sexual violence during the war, and finally a large section of one wall features a map that marks every single location a victim has identified as the spot where she was abused.⁶³

⁶⁰ Joan Ringelheim. “Gender and Genocide: A Split Memory.” In: Lentin, R (ed.) *Gender and Catastrophe*. London: Zed Books, (1997)

⁶¹ Janet Jacobs. “The Memorial at Srebrenica: Gender and the Social Meanings of Collective Memory in Bosnia-Herzegovina.” *Memory Studies* 10, no. 4 (October 2017): 429.

⁶² Jacobs, “The Memorial at Srebrenica: Gender and the Social Meanings of Collective Memory in Bosnia-Herzegovina.” 432.

⁶³ Ibid.



Figure 6: Exhibit at AWWA site

Absolutely every single space is taken up by some artifact proving that mass genocidal rape occurred during the war. The entire space serves as a not only a space for remembrance but also action. Bookcases store legal documents and activist work as well as testimony by rape survivors. Only here is the collective memory of women who are not mothers suffering through the loss of their male relatives recognized. Women are depicted as multi-dimensional with varying identities and types of suffering. The history and events of genocidal rape are not erased here in this space. Rather than only operating as memorial, this counter-memorial protests patriarchal norms and is a hub of activity for women's activism. Rape survivors occupy a fragile position within Bosnian postwar society. This, in addition to patriarchal norms intertwined with nation building has made it nearly impossible for the collective memory of the war to include genocidal rape. The absence of rape discourse or remembrance within the national memorial shows that gendered war atrocities does not truly matter in postwar nation building efforts or international discussions.

Rwanda

Rwanda is a small country in East Africa that experienced a genocide in 1994 categorized as “the fastest and most vicious genocide recorded in human history.”⁶⁴ Although shocking in its ferocity and intensity, the Rwandan genocide stemmed from tensions between the Tutsis and Hutus that had built for decades. Political parties used history as a tool of

⁶⁴ Binaifer Nowrojee, "Shattered Lives: Sexual Violence during the Rwandan Genocide and Its Aftermath." *Human Rights Watch Women's Rights Project*, September 1996. doi:10.1163/2210-7975_hrd-3169-0164.

suppression through the abuse of public memory. Extremist Hutu politicians created extermination rhetoric, in which Tutsis were an alien people that were a threat to the Hutu people, to use as a fear-mongering tool. This rhetoric became even more “credible” when the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPA), an army of refugees displaced in the neighboring country of Uganda, began to demand admittance into Rwanda. Extremist Hutu politicians heralded their return to Rwanda as the beginning of the end and began calling for the complete and total annihilation of all Tutsis.⁶⁵ The genocide was predominantly perpetrated against the Tutsi population, but a sizeable portion of the Hutu population was also affected. At least 1,074,017 Tutsi were brutally murdered in the span of only one hundred days.⁶⁶ Human Rights Watch, the U.S. State Department, and Amnesty International reported many cases of summary execution, civilian killings, disappearances, and rapes perpetrated by armed groups against civilians.⁶⁷ The genocide effectively damaged the social cohesion of Rwanda that the country is still attempting to fix. Part of the method for fixing this divide by the government and citizens alike has been establishing commemoration sites and recording history through the memories of survivors.

War and genocide have a very different impact on women and men, as the atrocities committed are very much gendered. After the Rwandan genocide, a dire lack of clean water, widespread poverty and increased abject poverty, destruction of the public education system, a sharp rise in the HIV population, and a broken medical service industry all failed women in particular.⁶⁸ Due to the widespread killing of men during the genocide, about 70% of the country’s population following the conflict was female.⁶⁹ Women immediately began to form organizations to fill the void left by governmental collapse. Women’s advocacy led to new legislation being passed that resulted in the highest percentage of women in parliament

⁶⁵ Alan J. Kuperman, *The Limits of Humanitarian Intervention: Genocide in Rwanda*. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2001: 13.

⁶⁶ Nowrojee. "Shattered Lives: Sexual Violence during the Rwandan Genocide and Its Aftermath."

⁶⁷ Sexual Violence in Armed Conflict Dataset. November 2016. <http://www.sexualviolencedata.org/>.

⁶⁸ Rachel Ibreck. "The Politics of Mourning: Survivor Contributions to Memorials in Post-Genocide Rwanda." *Memory Studies*3, no. 4 (2010):338. doi:10.1177/1750698010374921.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

worldwide and placed gender equality central to the Constitution.⁷⁰ While the government has vowed to fix the traditional exclusion of women from positions of power within civil society and government, Rwandan society has been slow to change longstanding cultural views.⁷¹ Rwanda also has a strong history of deference to authoritarian government. Civil society activists are hindered by the state if they attempt to portray the memory of the genocide in any way that does not match government discourse.⁷² Any organization critical of the government is usually accused of having genocidal ideas or being too political followed by the threat of dissolution.⁷³

The Rwandan state uses government initiatives to try and gain legitimacy and control the message used within commemoration practices.⁷⁴ Many state officials have realized that controlling how the genocide is remembered allows them to sanitize it and use it for political purposes. Commemoration is not only about remembrance, although that is supposed to be its sole purpose. Many governments use commemorative practices to instead *conceal* problematic truths and reestablish sovereign power in the wake of mass violence such as genocide and war.⁷⁵ Jenny Edkins argues that genocide is a severe violation of trust and security but that it also creates an opportunity, or opening, for citizens to criticize and alter their government.⁷⁶ States realize their legitimacy as the authority responsible for security is questioned during post-genocide reconstruction and start to take control over commemoration.⁷⁷ Rwanda is still in control of the official memory of the genocide and the national memorials as a political tool. Public remembrance is a type of civic activism that Rwanda is wary of since it can operate as

⁷⁰ Gregory Warner. "It's The No. 1 Country For Women In Politics - But Not In Daily Life." NPR. July 29, 2016. <https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2016/07/29/487360094/invisibilia-no-one-thought-this-all-womans-debate-team-could-crush-it>.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibreck. "The Politics of Mourning: Survivor Contributions to Memorials in Post-Genocide Rwanda." 339.

⁷³ Pietro Sullo. "Post-Genocide Justice in Rwanda: Ordinary Courts." *Beyond Genocide: Transitional Justice and Gacaca Courts in Rwanda International Criminal Justice Series*, September 2018, 113. doi:10.1007/978-94-6265-240-8_4.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Jenny Edkins. *Trauma and the Memory of Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 2003.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

political critique. Survivor testimony is especially tricky if it does not fit state approved memory since it functions as protest. Memorialization in Rwanda is inherently political and in conflict with survivor memories.

Survivor associations have been the primary driver of memorialization in the aftermath of the genocide. The groups vary in size from national organizations to local ad hoc groups. One of the most prominent survivor organizations is Ibuka, which has a national presence that trickles down to the local level in many communities.⁷⁸ Ibuka was founded in December 1995 with the purpose of “representing genocide survivors on issues of memory and justice, including social justice.”⁷⁹ On the national level Ibuka organizes commemorations, and at the local level it provides support for communities to create and maintain smaller memorials. Many times resources are an issue for Ibuka due to their scope that includes meeting the needs of survivors outside of memory work such as healthcare and trauma services.⁸⁰ As a nonprofit it also has unstable funding forcing it to depend donations.⁸¹ Despite being one of the largest survivor organizations in Rwanda, their lack of funding often forces Ibuka to partner with other groups such as the Genocide Widows Association and the Student Survivors Organization.⁸² These three organizations are united in their dedication to memory work but their perspectives are not the same. Tensions are sometimes prominent between the different national organizations and many times these civic groups are influenced by the state.⁸³ Despite these tensions and differences in perspective, there is a clear network continually making an effort to produce a comprehensive memory of genocide and memorialization.

Many survivor organizations began as community based ad hoc groups in the aftermath of the genocide. Since the post-genocide regime was focused on economic and social collapse

⁷⁸ Timothy Longman and Théoneste Rutagengwa (2006) ‘Memory and Violence in Postgenocide Rwanda’, in Edna G. Bay and Donald L. Donham (eds) *States of Violence, Politics, Youth, and Memory in Contemporary Africa*, Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press. 240

⁷⁹ *Ibid*, 241

⁸⁰ *Ibid*

⁸¹ *Ibid*, 243

⁸² Ibreck. "The Politics of Mourning: Survivor Contributions to Memorials in Post-Genocide Rwanda." 340

⁸³ *Ibid*

survivor groups had to take the lead on preserving and burying the remains of the dead.⁸⁴

Corpses were either buried in shallow graves or left lying around the countryside. Relatives had to provide their dead with honorable burials with little to no support. Due to state edict that required corpses to be buried on public land in cemeteries, it was the responsibility of the state to provide land and resources for the burial of victims of the genocide.⁸⁵ While land was allocated by the state, many of the victims were buried in rushed mass graves or forgotten.⁸⁶ The first step in remembrance by survivors was improving the burial sites. Many early efforts at the local level were described as “haphazard initiatives of people doing it through sentimental reasons” and were to combat grief.⁸⁷

One of the first local memorials created was constructed at Nyamasheke in 1995 and has served as the prototype for many of the over 500 local memorials that exist today. The Nyamasheke memorial was created through survivors and relatives of the dead organizing a committee that was self-tasked with finding out who had died during the genocide. Many of those missing were discovered to be dead and buried in a mass grave or were still not buried causing relatives to form the Nyamasheke committee.⁸⁸ They then requested funds from different sources such as the Ministry of Youth, Sports and Culture, which at that time was in charge of genocide memory.⁸⁹ Another source of funding was the national survivors association Ibuka and a foreign NGO.⁹⁰ All over the country, similar groups of survivors worked towards finding out the fate of loved ones and improving burial sites into memorial grounds.⁹¹

⁸⁴ Gérard Prunier. *The Rwanda Crisis: History of a Genocide*, 2nd rev. edn. London: Hurst and Co. 127.

⁸⁵ "New Law Allows Burial outside Public Cemeteries." *The New Times*, November 16, 2012. <https://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/read/59777>.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ Ibreck. "The Politics of Mourning: Survivor Contributions to Memorials in Post-Genocide Rwanda." 336.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 337.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

Six other national memorials were also created through survivor efforts and are maintained through the state. One of these is the Kigali Genocide Memorial, a large space with extensive grounds that include a burial site, garden of reflections, wall of names, amphitheater, and a library.⁹² The burial site has three mass graves of equal size in one row. Each plot is covered in smooth concrete surrounded by manicured vegetation and a covered walkway for visitors to walk the perimeter.⁹³ There are no statues or plaques other than a sign identifying the space as a mass burial site. Since 2001, over 250,000 victims have been buried at this memorial, and every year more are brought from around the country.⁹⁴ Next to the burial site is the garden of reflection, which is meant to “provide a place for quiet contemplation about the history of the Genocide against the Tutsi” and is supposed to “allow visitors to reflect on how we all have the personal responsibility to prevent discrimination and mass atrocity.”⁹⁵



Figure 7: Burial grounds at Kigali



Figure 8: Gardens of Reflection at Kigali



Figure 9: Wall of Names at Kigali

The wall of names is in honor of all those who died in the genocide and is a continual work in progress as more victims are identified. It is a black marble slab with the names carved much like those at the American Vietnam Veterans Memorial. On

⁹² "Kigali Genocide Memorial." Kigali Genocide Memorial. <https://www.kgm.rw>.

⁹³ "Burial Place & Gardens – Kigali Genocide Memorial." Kigali Genocide Memorial. <https://www.kgm.rw/memorial/burial-place-gardens/>.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

the other side of the grounds is a 1,200 seat amphitheater that was constructed in honor of the 20th anniversary of the genocide. It is meant to host “memorial events, educational workshops, dramatic performances, cultural and historical events and film screenings” throughout the year.⁹⁶ The site has an extensive library of books and articles about the Rwandan genocide that is open to the public for research and educational purposes at no charge. Perhaps the most important aspect of the Kigali memorial is that it houses the Genocide Archive of Rwanda, a digital collection that contains photographs, testimonies, videos, maps, all memorial locations, news stories all concerning the history behind the genocide and reconstruction efforts post-genocide.



Figure 10: Amphitheatre at Kigali

Three permanent exhibits at the Kigali memorial are the focal point of the site. Exhibition one, “The 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi,” starts with a brief snapshot of Rwandan society before its colonization, followed by a detailed section highlighting the planned nature of the genocide that includes personal accounts and photos of survivors.⁹⁷ This exhibit ends with a discussion of how Rwandan society has worked at overcoming the genocide in the post-genocide era. The second exhibit, “Wasted Lives,” is a small one showing a broad history of genocide around the world and highlights conflicts that are not internationally recognized as

⁹⁶ “Amphitheatre – Kigali Genocide Memorial.” Kigali Genocide Memorial. <https://www.kgm.rw/memorial/burial-place-gardens/>.

⁹⁷ “Exhibitions – Kigali Genocide Memorial.” Kigali Genocide Memorial. <https://www.kgm.rw/memorial/burial-place-gardens/>.

having included genocide such as those in Armenia and Cambodia.⁹⁸ The third exhibit, “Children’s Room,” is solely dedicated to the child victims of the Rwandan genocide through photos.⁹⁹



Figure 11: Exhibit 1 of Kigali Museum

The entire nation is invested in the memorialization of the genocide but none of the memorials or exhibits are about only women and especially not about the rape of women. Only some books/articles in libraries or archival information speaks to the sexual violence women experienced even though it left a deep impact on society such as the high level of HIV and hundreds of pregnancies that resulted from rape. The absence of women’s unique suffering and memory of trauma from the national and local memorials in Rwanda is noticeable and loud in its silence. Part of the response to this absence of rape discourse has been alternate forms of memorialization through varying artistic mediums. Photojournalist Jonathan Torgovnik documents the stories of thirty women who were raped during the 1994 genocide. His work includes a set of photographs of women and their children who were born from rape that are supported by the mother's words. He felt that it was imperative he go back to Rwanda on his own to chronicle the stories of the women with their words after sitting through what he termed

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

the “most horrific interview” he had ever done.¹⁰⁰ His objective for the collection is to show the “consequences of genocide as manifested in the stories of these women because they went through the most horrific thing any human being can experience, short of being killed.”¹⁰¹ Their families were killed in front of their eyes and if still alive have shunned them. Most of the women in the collection suffer from HIV/AIDS as well as a problematic relationship with their children augmented by their failure to provide quality education and future prospects. In many cases, the women are ostracized and alone for having been raped, especially if they bore a child of rape. The stigma associated with a “child born of rape” is strong within a patriarchal society like Rwanda since “children are identified with the lineage of their fathers” and the enemy.¹⁰² This cultural attitude and the ostracization of the women and their children from the community fulfills the perpetrators’ most heinous intentions.

Torgovnik's book features thirty portraits of children born out of rape that occurred during either the genocide or post-genocide. Each portrait is accompanied by a photo of the mother with her child and a few cases show other relatives and a translated interview with the mother. The photographs are mostly taken within or near their home. This project gives the women and their children agency. They wish to be represented in the public memory of the Rwandan genocide and by having their photo taken and their own words used to describe the violence, photojournalist Torgovnik provides them an opportunity denied by their communities and government. While the genocidaires have succeeded in ostracizing the women from their communities, they have not succeeded in erasing their experiences from public memory. This collection disrupts the sanitized version of the Rwandan genocide that ignores the unique trauma

¹⁰⁰ "Jonathan Torgovnik: Intended Consequences." Canon Professional Network. April 01, 2008. Accessed October 10, 2018. https://cpn.canon-europe.com/content/interviews/jonathan_torgovnik.do.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Torgovnik, Jonathn. *Intended Consequences Rwandan Children Born of Rape*. Aperture, 2009. 92.

of women. It is in direct constant with the social, cultural, and political processes that marginalize these women.¹⁰³



Figure 12: Three photos from the "Intended Consequences" Collection

Conclusion

Rape is often used as a weapon in conflict to intimidate a group of people set apart from the perpetrator with the goal of achieving some political end. Gender will intersect with the

¹⁰³ Frank Möller, "Rwanda Revisualized: Genocide, Photography, and the Era of the Witness." *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political* 35, no. 2 (2010): 130. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40645290>.

other aspects of the woman's identity. In some cases the other aspect will be religion like it predominantly was in the Bosnian-Herzegovinian genocide, nationality like the Comfort Women, or ethnicity in the Rwandan genocide. Sexual violence is not meant to only humiliate the woman but to also degrade the entire group she "belongs" to. The violence she experiences becomes an assault upon the entire community and the shame of that violence is rarely acknowledged and hardly ever memorialized. Sexual violence is not only committed against women but also men within the victimized community, the cases are fewer and data is even harder to come by as the shame is magnified for a male victim in some senses.

All of the memorials examined reflect how difficult it is for nation-states and segments of the civilian population to acknowledge wartime violence that is gendered and sexual in nature. The counter-memorials in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Rwanda ensure that memory is not forgotten by not excluding women's unique experience of war and genocide. The Comfort Women memorials within the United States operate as counter memorials to Japanese insistence that the memories and experiences Comfort Women had are not historically accurate.

The process of memorialization is inherently political and rife with conflict. Comfort women memorials within the United States are continually protested by Japanese politicians, the Bosnian memorial grounds and national commemorations continue to refuse to acknowledge the widespread rape of Muslim women, and Rwanda's government stifles any memory that does not fit within the official commemoration messaging. Patriarchal norms intertwined with nation building has made it nearly impossible for the collective memory of the war to include genocidal rape. The absence of rape discourse or remembrance within the national memorial shows that gendered war atrocities does not truly matter in postwar nation building efforts or international discussions. It is vitally important that memorials accurately portray the memory of everyone and that there be an acknowledgment of wartime rape in order to work towards sexual violence in wartime becoming taboo.

Figure Citations

AWVW. 2018. *Figure 5: Bookcase at AWVW Site*. Photo.

Jacobs, Janet. 2016. *Figure 3: Bombed out building on road to memorial site*. Photo

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